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VISUALIZING HISTORY:
CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN ARTISTS AND THE MAKING OF
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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

BY

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For my grandfather, Buerl L. Guernsey (1932-2002), who introduced me to Native American arts. Thank you Grandpa for instilling your passion and love for the arts in me. Love you always.

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Abstract

History is a constructed body of knowledge about the past, and how it is recorded helps give form to the identity of a culture and its people. But history is also contested ground, defined both by narratives intentionally included and those intentionally forgotten or suppressed. It connects people and events over time, linking past and present, and the manner in which its narratives are constructed and interpreted affects the lives of those in the present.

Until recently, historians often marginalized the violence and genocide enacted by the settler-colonial governments of North America, i.e. the United States and Canada, towards North America's Indigenous peoples. However, efforts have been made to change the writing of North American history. Since the 1990s, contemporary Native American artists have increasingly challenged the construction of history. This dissertation synthesizes the broad contributions of contemporary Native American artists, working through mediums of performance, photography, and installation, as they fashion their own narratives of North American history. I particularly explore how these artists "write" history from Indigenous perspectives and what new knowledge and interpretations their art contributes to the history of North America.

By confronting North American history through art, they not only provide new insights into the past, but also simultaneously address and interpret the present. I assert that these artists are creating *visual* histories, and thus, in a sense, are engaged in a project similar to that of contemporary historians. This research challenges and encourages a rethinking of "the consensual national narrative" by offering a visual counter-narrative to mainstream history, and by asserting Native American cultural authority over history. The work of Indigenous artists warrants a stronger presence in the larger discourse of North American art and history, and my dissertation endeavors to amplify their voices. If we decenter the role of writing in History and consider art as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge – what histories are revealed? Whose stories become visible and whose voices are amplified when the *visual* is considered as important as the written word?

Chapter 1 – Introduction

> *History is contested ground. Who tells it, who 'owns the past,' can leverage significant power.*[1] – Colin G. Calloway & Neal Salisbury

> *Every issue has been approached by indigenous peoples with a view to* re*writing and* re*righting our position in history. Indigenous peoples want to tell our* own *stories, write our* own *versions, in our* own *ways, for our* own *purposes.*[2] – Linda Tuhiwai Smith

The year 1992 marked the quincentenary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. The "numerous grandiose events [that] were proposed in conjunction with the quincentennial"[3] formed a catalyst for a Native response critiquing Columbus's legacy. Native American peoples and indigenous rights groups "sought ways to educate the public [and] pushed for the amplification of a revisionist history that forced reexamination of colonialism and privileged indigenous rights and marginalized perspectives."[4] Between 1991 and 1994, a plethora of exhibitions featuring an Indigenous response to the Columbus quincentenary toured the United States and Canada.

One such exhibition was *The Submuloc Show/Columbus Wohs*, curated by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Flathead-Cree-Shoshone), which opened in January 1992.[5] The exhibited works explored "issues surrounding [the encounter with Columbus] through personal, family, and tribal

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[1] Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury, "Introduction: Decolonizing New England History" in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury, eds. (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003) 13.
[2] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, Second Edition, 2012) 29.
[3] Mia Lopez, "A History of Revisionism: Contemporary Art and Columbus/Indigenous People's Day." *Untitled (Blog),* Walker Art Center, October 14, 2014, http://blogs.walkerart.org/visualarts/2014/10/14/a-history-of-revisionism-contemporary-art-and-columbusindigenous-peoples-day/ .
[4] Ibid.
[5] After traveling to twelve venues throughout the United States, *The Submuloc Show* closed in February 1994. For a review of the exhibition, see W. Jackson Rushing, "Contrary Iconography: *The Submuloc Show*." *The New Art Examiner* (Summer 1994) 30-35.

histories."[6] The exhibition also confronted stereotypical images of Native peoples in American visual culture, as well as stereotypical understandings of native art "that correspond with pre-conceived notions of 'traditional' culture."[7] *The Submuloc Show*'s catalogue featured statements from the artists included in the exhibition, many of which echoed the exhibition's intent to confront Columbus's legacy through Native American art. By presenting a "visual commentary on the Columbus Quincentennial from the Perspective of America's First People," *The Submuloc Show* offered its audience a reinterpreted history of "Columbus's discovery" of the Americas by celebrating Indigenous survival and resistance through aesthetic expression. The exhibition, along with numerous others responding to the quincentenary, put contemporary Native American art in the public eye and presented a counter-narrative defined by Native perspectives to the public, asking them to rethink their understanding of history.[8]

History is a constructed body of knowledge about the past, and how it is recorded helps give form to the identity of a culture and its people. It consists of historical documents – such as photographs, maps, treaties, oral accounts, and much more – all of which contain the retelling and interpretation of events, and recorded memories. As a culture's, society's, or nation's narrative, history comprises large events, small events, and the stories of individual people. But history is also contested ground, defined both by narratives intentionally included and those intentionally forgotten or suppressed. It connects people and events over time, linking past and present, and the

[6] Carla A. Roberts, "Introduction," in *The Submuloc Show/Columbus Wohs: A Visual Commentary on the Columbus Quincentennial from the Perspective of America's First People*, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, ed. (Phoenix: Atlatl, 1992) v.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Other exhibitions from the 1990s that featured revisionist history from a Native perspective include *Our Land/Ourselves*, University Art Gallery, University at Albany, SUNY, 1991; *INDIGENA: Contemporary Native Perspectives,* Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa, 1992; *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada,* National Gallery of Canada, 1992; and *Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art*, organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1998.

manner in which its narratives are constructed and interpreted affects the lives of those in the present.

Until recently, historians often marginalized the violence and genocide enacted by the settler-colonial[9] governments of North America, i.e. the United States and Canada, towards North America's Indigenous peoples. However, efforts by recent historians and Indigenous scholars have attempted to change the writing of American (United States) history. In the 1990s, anthologies, including *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past,* edited by William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, reinterpreted the myth and history of the American West. More recently, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's 2014 book, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, attempted to re-envision American history from a Native perspective and to acknowledge the colonial framework present -but unmentioned – in much of recorded U.S. history. Despite valiant efforts by scholars such as Oritz, much of the American populace has little to no understanding of Indigenous histories or experiences, as evidenced by the recent struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline, the ongoing murdered and missing Indigenous women epidemic, and the continuing controversies surrounding sport mascots that perpetuate stereotypes about Native Americans.

Since the 1990s, contemporary Native American artists, including Robert Houle and RYAN! Feddersen, have increasingly challenged the construct that is North American history. I

[9] According to Scholar Natchee Blu Barnd, the term/concept "settler-colonialism" describes "a form of colonialism wherein nonindigenous or 'settler' populations implant themselves in new lands." He further explains that in settler colonialism, "settlers initiate a fundamental transformation in the demographics, cultures, and physical landscape of colonized lands. Settler presence it the core feature of this mode of domination, with the goal of establishing a new home to solidify territorial claims…As Ania Loomba explains, for settler colonialism to exist, 'the process of 'forming a community' in the new land necessarily meant un-forming or re-forming the communities that existed there already, and involved a wide range of practices including trade, settlement, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, and enslavement.'"
Natchee Blue Barnd, *Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017) 9-10.
Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2015, 3rd ed.) 20. Quoted in Barnd, *Native Space*, 10.

argue that these artistic responses not only rewrite history from Indigenous perspectives, but that they simultaneously assert Indigenous cultural authority over that history. My dissertation explores art as a visual method of writing history, and I seek to discern how history and historical knowledge are visually created, recorded, and transmitted through art. I examine artworks by select contemporary Native American artists that address and contend with both past and present events that are critical to Native nations and communities across North America. I particularly explore how these artists "write" history from Indigenous perspectives and what new knowledge and interpretations their art contributes to the history of North America. By confronting North American history through art, they not only provide new insights into the past, but also simultaneously address and interpret the present. I assert that these artists are creating *visual* histories (a longstanding tradition in Native cultures), and thus, in a sense, are engaged in a project similar to that of contemporary historians. However, their artwork has been under-examined either as visual histories, reinterpretations of the past, or interpretations of the present, and my dissertation endeavors to fill this lacuna in the literature.

In addition to serving as a catalyst for native response, the Columbian quincentenary spurred response among Euro-American historians: the 1990s saw an increase in scholarship focused on revisionist American history. Donald Fixico's 1997 anthology, *Rethinking American Indian History,* emphasized the importance of writing history from an indigenous perspective; of the seven contributors, only two, including Fixico, were Native scholars. Colin Calloway's and Neal Salisbury's 2003 edited anthology *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience***,** sought to decolonize New England Indian history by examining "the intersection, overlapping, and conflict of the scholar's past and the native present."[10] While these anthologies

[10] Calloway and Salisbury, "Introduction" in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, 15.

emphasize indigenous perspectives – both volumes stressed the importance of oral histories, and also included contributions from Native scholars – both failed to consider art's place in the writing of history.

Scholars across disciplines have also addressed the lasting effect of the mythology of the American West on mainstream American history and memory. Art historians Martha Sandweiss, William Goetzmann, and Brian W. Dippie have all explored the role of art in the creation and legacy of the myth and memory of the American West.[11] Meanwhile, historians, including William Cronon, George Miles, Jay Gitlin, and Clyde A. Milner II, have addressed the continuing importance of the American West in mainstream culture through anthologies that re-envisioned and reinterpreted the American West's history and its signifiers.[12] However, neither historians nor art historians have adequately addressed the significance of contemporary Native American art in re-thinking the history of the American West. Artistic representations of the lands and peoples of the American West helped shape the myth and memory of the West, and should be examined not only for aesthetic reasons, but also for the role they continue to play in shaping our understanding of the past, as well as the present. By examining how contemporary Native artists reinterpret history through their art, I seek to counter the focus on Euro-American art and history writing, a focus that ultimately undermines Native peoples' role in re-envisioning history.

Even recent Indigenous scholarship that addresses American history at large often fails to seriously take into consideration Native American art. One of the most recent publications to re-envision American history from Native perspectives is Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples'*

[11] See Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002); William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann. *The West of the Imagination* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009, 2nd ed.); and Brian W. Dippie, *West Fever* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

[12] See *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past,* William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992); and Clyde A. Milner II, ed, *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1996).

History of the United States, which attempts to tell the story of the United States "as a colonialist settler-state, one that…crushed and subjugated the original civilizations in the territories it now rules."[13] Ortiz argues that awareness of United States' settler-colonialist context is essential to history writing in order to avoid the "default" position of American essentialism "and the trap of a mythological unconscious belief in manifest destiny."[14] Ortiz demonstrates that "[w]riting US history from an Indigenous people' perspective requires rethinking the consensual national narrative."[15] However, Indigenous perspectives of history as told through art is strikingly absent from the book.

In contrast, Philip Deloria's 2004 book, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, considers popular culture at large to discuss "'secret' histories of Indian life in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, histories that include Indian people driving cars, playing football, traveling in Wild West shows, performing music, and acting and directing in the early years of film industry."[16] By examining these "secret" histories, Deloria demonstrates how some Native Americans challenged assumptions and stereotypes that were built on "notions of difference and assimilation, white and Indian, primitive and advanced."[17] Although *Indians in Unexpected Places* does not focus specifically on art, the book's emphasis on the "secret" or "forgotten" histories of Native American people compliments the efforts of Native artists, such as Robert Houle, whose work also exposes "forgotten" histories.[18]

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[13] Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014) 13-14.
[14] Ibid., 6.
[15] Ibid., 2.
[16] Philip Deloria. *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004) 7.
[17] Ibid., 14.
[18] The second chapter of *Indians in Unexpected Places*, "Representation: Indians Wars, the Movie," addresses the representation of Native Americans in film, the participation of Native American actors in early films as a form of agency, and the efforts of early Native American filmmakers, such as James Young Deer and Princess Red Wing, to question/challenge dominant expectations "while working within plots and narratives familiar to their audiences." Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* 94.

Dean Rader's 2011 book, *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI,* goes one step further by examining history, not only through the lens of popular culture, but also through the lens of Native American art. The book "chronicles examples of engaged resistance that capture the public's imagination, gives a creative language to resistance, and shows how Native texts engage with American culture [and history] in order to change it."[19] Rader's interdisciplinary approach places Native American art, literature, film, poetry, museums, and the AIM occupation of Alcatraz in conversation in order to define and demonstrate an aesthetic of resistance. *Engaged Resistance* historicizes and contextualizes "the kinds of conversations that…revolutionary [Native] artists are having with the key narratives that compose American and Native American high, popular, and tribal cultures."[20] Of particular importance is Rader's analysis of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's Map Paintings. He analyzes the map paintings through the lens of semiotic sovereignty, and examines the "reappraisals and revisions of the larger narrative of America and American Indian sovereignty" that are told in Smith's cartography.[21] This analysis underscores the "revisionist" history present within contemporary Native artworks and highlights the importance of examining history through the lens of art.

Apart from Rader's landmark book, relatively little scholarship has specifically addressed Native American art as "history" since the quincentenary. Scholars have addressed individual artists' response to mythic traditions or the history of the American West. However, Indigenous artists and their artistic responses have not been addressed together, nor has scholarship investigated their function within a broader framework of artists addressing history. I bring these artists together in order to examine how they are creating new histories, and to synthesize the

[19] Dean Rader. *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011) 2.
[20] Rader. *Engaged Resistance*, 6.
[21] Ibid, 50

commonalities and the differences in how their artworks signify history. I ask, what new insights into contemporary Native art might we garner from such a grouping?

As stated above, I seek to understand how contemporary Native American artists are creating visual histories from Native perspectives. Indigenous cultures in North America (and throughout the world) historically produced and relayed history through oral narratives and images;[22] so, looking at images (and objects) as a historical narrative (or reinterpretation of history) has long been valid in Indigenous contexts. My dissertation builds on important work begun by Rader in examining history through the lens of Native American art. I also endeavor to continue the conversation begun by the quincentenary exhibitions; I seek to follow their efforts to reexamine history by privileging Native perspectives and voices, and by examining forgotten histories and overlooked contemporary events.

For my examination, guiding questions include:

- How are contemporary Native American artists responding to historical narratives, and what artistic strategies are they using to create visual histories?
- In what ways does their work contribute to our understanding of North American history and how does it complicate mainstream history, as well as cultural memory?
- In what ways does their work assert visual and artistic sovereignty over history and memory?

My dissertation favors an art historical approach through the close visual analysis of performances, installations, and photographs. However, my approach is also interdisciplinary, as I read the artworks as historical documents in order to determine what new knowledge they produce. As a Euro-American scholar who has been trained in Western modes of academia, my analyses are informed by training in Western theory. However, I seek to use my scholarly privilege to amplify

[22] The winter counts of Plains nations and the Mayan codices are prime examples of visually record histories.

the messages and voices of Indigenous artists. Therefore, I endeavor to emphasize Indigenous voices and perspectives throughout this dissertation in order to bring them to the forefront of art historical and historical discourse.

Throughout my analyses, I employ multiple theoretical frameworks, which I discuss in greater detail within each individual chapter or case study. Semiotics is of particular importance as I investigate how signification occurs within art, and what role signification plays in creating and disseminating knowledge. As a hermeneutic discipline, semiotics concerns the production and interpretation of signs and "studying semiotics can assist us to become more aware of the mediating role of signs and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing social realities."[23] I contend that art is evidence of, and witness to, the historical and social contexts and realities in which it is created, and furthermore, the processes of signification and re/signification plays a role in the construction of new knowledge.

Hugh Silverman explains the signifier as "the word or the acoustical image, and in the strict sense, it invokes a concept which corresponds to it."[24] A signifier can have multiple signifieds that can change over time depending on the current social and cultural context; I argue it is this malleability that allows the process of re/signification to occur. As Todd Holden explains:

> resignification is a particular kind of semiosis: one where new sign elements (signifiers, signifieds, signs, significations) are lifted from their original contexts and inserted into other semiotic sequences, though not always (indeed seldom) in the position they occupied in their prior incarnation.[25]

[23] David Chandler, *Semiotics the Basics*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 10-11.
[24] Hugh Silverman, "Introduction" in *Cultural Semiosis Tracing the Signifier,* Hugh Silverman, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), 2.
[25] Todd Holden, "Resignification and Cultural Re/Production in Japanese Television Commercials" in *M/C Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 2001). Accessed online via: http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0104/japtele.php .

I investigate what tools, such as parody, productive frustration, and critical distance, contemporary artists employ in their art to enact the processes of signification and re/signification. Through this investigation, I examine what role the signifier plays in the making of historical knowledge in art.

This dissertation also employs visual sovereignty as a framework to examine how artists assert Native cultural authority through the creation of new knowledge. Tuscarora scholar and artist Jolene Rickard introduced the concept of visual sovereignty in her 1995 article "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand." Rickard defined sovereignty as a border that "shifts indigenous experience from a victimized stance to a strategic one," and explored how "sovereignty [takes] shape in visual thought as indigenous artists negotiate cultural space."[26] Although Rickard first applied the concept of visual sovereignty to photography, other scholars of indigenous art and film, such as Michelle Rajeha and Kristen Dowell, have expanded upon Rickard's concept. It now encompasses contemporary Native art of all mediums.[27] I contend that the artistic process is the embodiment of artistic and visual sovereignty; in their production of new knowledge, Native artists assert cultural authority over history by telling their own stories in their own ways.

My dissertation examines the ways in which contemporary artists visually write "new" histories through their chosen medium. As an initial, focused foray into a theoretical and methodological consideration of artists as history makers, this dissertation addresses performance

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[26] Jolene Rickard, "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand," *Strong Hearts: Native American Visions and Voices*, Aperture (New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1995) 51.

[27] See Michelle Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010) and Kristin L. Dowell. *Sovereign Screens: Aboriginal Media on the Canadian West Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013, Kindle Edition). For other applications of visual sovereignty, as well as cultural sovereignty, in the examination of Native art, see Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, "Visual Sovereignty: A Continuous Aboriginal/Indigenous Landscape" in *Diversity and Dialogue: The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art 2007*, James H. Nottage, ed. (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, 2008) 15-23; and Veronica Passalacqua, "Finding Sovereignty through Relocation: Considering Photographic Consumption," in *Visual Currencies: Reflections on Native Photography*, Henrietta Lidchi and Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, eds. (Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland Enterprises, 2009) 19-35.

art, installation art, and photography by Indigenous artists living and working in North America. I take as my focus contemporary artworks – that is artworks made in the past twenty-five years. My analyses explore the ways in which art – in which the *visual* – can reorient the traditional ways in which history in the Americas is studied. And the vast diversity of Indigenous cultures and artists through North America together offer the possibility of many additional avenues of future research using the methodology outlined in this dissertation.

Chapter Two addresses Indigenous performance art through the work of Dana Claxton (Hunkpapa Lakota), Rebecca Belmore (Anishnaabe-kwe), and Gregg Deal (Pyramid Lake Paiute) and examines the ways in which the storage and transmission of knowledge occur within select performances. These performances by Claxton, Belmore, and Deal contend with pertinent events – both past and current – for Native nations and communities across North America, events that are often marginalized or ignored in official histories. I argue that performance art physically expresses sovereignty through Native self-(re)presentation. As a physical expression of sovereignty, performance art aids Native artists in telling their own stories, exposing "forgotten" histories, and inserting Native perspectives into historical narratives. Although performance is a temporal art form, I assert that videos, photographs, and transcripts, become the physical evidence of the new knowledge created by the artists during the performance.

Of particular importance to this chapter is performance studies scholar Diana Taylor's argument for considering performance seriously as an episteme, as a way of knowing and as "a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge."[28] Doing so, Taylor emphasizes, allows us "to expand what we understand by 'knowledge'"[29] and decenters the historic role of writing in

[28] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 16.
[29] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.

the production and transmission of knowledge. Taylor's assertions are the thread that weave together my analyses on performance with my analyses of installation art and photography in chapters three and four, as I expand her approach beyond performance. They are also the foundation of my overarching analytical methodology, as I explore the ways in which art – in which the *visual* – can reorient the traditional ways in which history in the Americas is studied.

Chapter Three concentrates on contemporary Indigenous installation art, and includes analyses of Robert Houle's (Saulteaux) 2010 installation *Paris/Ojibwa,* RYAN! Feddersen's (Confederated Tribes of the Colville: Okanogan, Arrow Lakes, German, and English) 2017 installation *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, and Cannupa Hanska Luger's (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota, Austrian, and Norwegian) 2018 installation *Every One*. These installations, similar to the performances addressed in chapter two, address key events that are pertinent to Native nations and communities throughout North America, but which are often ignored by the official histories of Canada and the United States. Looking closely at the relational qualities of installation art, I show how installation art visually creates, records, and transmits historical knowledge. I address how these qualities foster viewer engagement and invite the viewer to become an active participant in the construction of history.

Chapter Four focuses on contemporary photographic projects by artists Tom Jones (Ho-Chunk), Will Wilson (Diné), and Matika Wilbur (Swinomish-Tulalip), which together embody a desire to create self-defined and self-determined representations of Native peoples, communities, and nations. I investigate how photography and the creative photographic process are part of the collective production and reproduction of knowledge. I argue that photography aids Native artists in telling their own stories, in challenging mainstream historical narratives, and in inserting Native

perspectives into those historical narratives, thus making photography an expression of Indigenous visual sovereignty.

My dissertation synthesizes the broad contributions of contemporary Native American artists, working through mediums of performance, photography, and installation, as they fashion their own narratives of North American history. This research challenges and encourages a rethinking of "the consensual national narrative"[30] by offering a visual counter-narrative to mainstream history, and by asserting Indigenous cultural authority over history. The work of Indigenous artists warrants a stronger presence in the larger discourse of North American art and history, and my dissertation endeavors to amplify their voices. If we decenter the role of writing in History and consider art as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge – what histories are revealed? Whose stories become visible and whose voices are amplified when the *visual* is considered as important as the written word?

Please note that part of chapter two was previously presented as "Violence, Marginalization, and Commemoration: Public Awareness in the Performances of Rebecca Belmore," at the March 2014 Oklahoma Conference of Art Historians, held at Oklahoma State University.

Part of chapter three was previously presented as "Robert Houle's *Paris/Ojibwa*: Re/signifying the American West through Parody," at the (October) 2015 Native American Art Studies Association Biennial Conference, in Santa Fe, NM.

[30] Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 2.

Chapter 2 – Indigenous Performance Art: Writing History through Bodily Expression

Performance art is unique among art forms due to its physicality and emphasis on bodily expression. According to art historian Marcia Crosby, it is "an art form that 'happens at a particular time in a particular place where the artist engages in some sort of activity, usually before an audience...[and] is distinctly different than other modes of visual art practice in that it is a temporal event or action.'"[31] On a broader scope, performance art "traces its history to the early twentieth-century Dadaists and futurists, who traded conventions of academic art for the dynamism of the live event."[32] However, performance studies scholar Diana Taylor asserts that "it is important to recognize that what has been called 'performance art' has roots in *many* artistic forms…bringing together many elements to create something unexpected."[33] And as art historian Nancy Blomberg reminds us, "most non-Western cultures have long embraced performances in ritual and storytelling as integral to their very existence."[34]

According to S.E. Wilmer, Native American performance art has proliferated "since the Red Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s of Indigenous performance activity in such media as theater, dance…film, video, and multimedia."[35] Other scholars propose that:

> Early examples of what we would today call performance works were the creations of some Native Americans [such as poet and performer Pauline Johnson (Six Nations of the Grand River), cabaret performer Esther Deer (Mohawk, ca. 1861-1913), and dancer and actress Molly Nelson

[31] Marcia Crosby (Tsimshian-Haida), "The Multimedia Work of Rebecca Belmore: A Disturbing Uncertainty," in *Action and Agency: Advancing the Dialogue on Native Performance Art*, ed. Nancy Blomberg. (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2010) 22.
[32] Aldona Jonaitis and Elizabeth Kalbfleisch, "Native Performance Art: The Medium is Wide Open," in *Native Art Now! Developments in Contemporary Native American Art since 1992,* Veronica Passalacqua and Kate Morris, eds. (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, 2017) 319.
[33] Diana Taylor, *Performance* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016) 46, Kindle. Emphasis added.
[34] Nancy Blomberg, "Introduction: Setting the Stage," *Action and Agency,* 9.
[35] S.E. Wilmer, "Introduction," in *Native American Performance and Representation,* S.E. Wilmer*,* ed. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011) 1.

> (Wabanaki, 1903-1976)] who from the mid-nineteenth century onward performed aspects of their culture for the non-Native public.[36]

For Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore, one of the first Indigenous performance artists of the Americas to work internationally was a Mi'kmaq man who, hundreds of years ago, "was taken to France where he was placed in a wilderness garden with a deer. There, he was told he was to perform for an audience of nobility."[37] In her essay about the Mi'kmaq man, "Making a Garden Out of a Wilderness," Belmore explains that although he adhered to the instructions given to him, he also took the "liberty of expanding on their idea of his performance by 'easing himself before them all.' I took this to mean that he shat upon the ground."[38]

This rebellious and critical performance by the unknown Mi'kmaq man underscores "[a] significant feature of many early performance works…artists "using their bodies as 'a weapon against the conventions of established art,' a feature that retains its relevance today."[39] I contend that through performance, artists use their bodies as a weapon also against the conventions of *History* – meaning the discipline of history – by visually creating new historical knowledge through bodily expression. Taylor argues for the need to take "performance seriously as a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge" and the recognition that

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[36] Jonaitis and Kalbfleisch, "Native Performance Art," 320.
Jonatis and Kalbfleisch state: "Poet and performer Pauline Johnson (Six Nations of the Grand River, 1861-1913), Esther Deer (Princess White Deer) (Mohawk, ca. 1892-1992), a cabaret performer, and Wabanaki dancer and actress Molly Nelson (Molly Spotted Elk) (1903-1976) toured nationally and abroad. As artists and entertainers of a receptive public, they also addressed political and social issues and used their *physical selves* to confront their audiences with their own colonialist attitudes toward Native people." Emphasis added.
[37] Rebecca Belmore, "Making a Garden Out of a Wilderness," *Action and Agency.* 16.
In her essay, Belmore explains that a small chapbook titled *1492 and All that: Making a Garden out of a Wilderness* by Ramsay Cook, which she read at a friend's house, "cited the writing of a Baptist missionary who recorded a story as told to him by the Mi'kmaq people. This is what [she remembers] of it, One of them, a Mi'kmaq man, was taken to France where he was placed in a wilderness garden with a deer. There, he was told to perform for an audience of nobility: he was expected to kill the deer with a bow and arrow, skin and dress the carcass, then cook and eat it. According to the Mi'kmaq, wrote the missionary, the man adhered to their instructions but took the liberty of expanding on their idea of his performance by 'easing himself before them all.'…[She considers] this Mi'kmaq man to be one of the first performance artists of the Americas to work internationally – hundreds of years ago." 16-17.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Jonaitis and Kalbfleisch, "Native Performance Art," 322.

"performance...functions as an episteme, a way of knowing."[40] In this chapter, I embrace Taylor's assertions and adopt her methodology of reading performance art as an episteme. I analyze how Native performance art can reorient the traditional ways in which history in the Americas is studied by investigating the past and present through the lens of its bodily and visual creation of knowledge.

I further contend that performance art becomes a physical expression of sovereignty through Native self-(re)presentation. As previously noted, by physically expressing sovereignty, performance art aids Native artists in telling their own stories, exposing "forgotten" histories, and inserting Native perspectives and experiences into historical narratives. Drawing upon Taylor's argument that "performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity,"[41] in this chapter I examine the ways in which the storage and transmission of knowledge occur within select performances by the artists Dana Claxton (Hunkpapa Lakota), Rebecca Belmore (Anishinaabe), and Gregg Deal (Pyramid Lake Paiute).

Their performances address and contend with pertinent events, both past and current, for Native nations and communities across North America. Claxton's performance and installation *Buffalo Bone China* (1997) addresses the destruction of the buffalo and the devastating effect it had on Plains cultures, including her own Hunkpapa Lakota peoples. Belmore's *Vigil* (2002) commemorates the missing and murdered women, predominantly Aboriginal, who have disappeared in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside area since the 1980s. Her 2014 performance *One thousand One Hundred & eighty One* once again addresses the disappearance and murders of Indigenous women in Canada, but on a broader, national scale. Deal's *Supreme Law of the Land*

[40] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 16 and xvi, Kindle.
[41] Ibid., 2-3.

(2017) interprets the historic and contemporary actions of state and federal governments in the United States, particularly in relationship to the Dakota Access Pipeline. These events and (his)stories are often marginalized, maligned, or even left-out of mainstream history and media coverage. Visceral performances by Claxton, Belmore, and Deal stand as poignant bodily expressions of these (his)stories.

Through these case studies, I explore how the creation and transmission of knowledge occurs within the performances, and I seek to discern how history and historical knowledge are visually created, recorded, and transmitted through performance. My analysis closely investigates the signification processes taking place within the performances – particularly the process of re/signification and a bodily staging of cultural memory in Claxton's 1997 performance *Buffalo Bone China*; the creation of social awareness through commemoration in Belmore's 2002 performance *Vigil* and 2014 performance *One thousand One Hundred & eighty One;* and the commemoration of and commentary on current events in Deal's 2017 performance *Supreme Law of the Land*. By considering performance as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge – whose stories become visible? What histories are exposed? I contend that through their functions as acts of transfer, performances become "an embodied practice" that offer "a way of knowing," allowing them to become a bodily staging of cultural memory, as well as a bodily expression of history.[42]

Performance, Theory, and the Creation of Knowledge

History at its most fundamental level is written through the telling of personal and community stories, and one of the primary purposes of recording history is the transmission of knowledge. In her 2003 book, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in*

[42] Ibid., 3.

the Americas, Diana Taylor examines the critical role of performance – as embodied and expressive behaviors[43] – within the Americas. She asserts that "performances function as vital acts of *transfer*, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity."[44] As previously noted, she argues for the need to take "performance seriously as a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge" and the recognition that "performance...functions as an episteme, a way of knowing, not simply an object of analysis."[45]

Taylor's characterization of performance as an episteme parallels the goals of many Native American performance artists who, by sharing both personal/familial and community stories, write history from a perspective informed by their experiences as a Native person. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's statement, which opened this dissertation, further emphasizes this goal: "Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes."[46] By seriously considering performance as an episteme, Taylor emphasizes that "performance studies allows us to expand what we understand by 'knowledge.'"[47] In *The Archive and the Repertoire,* Taylor states:

> If…we were to reorient the ways social memory and cultural identity in the Americas have traditionally been studied, with the disciplinary emphasis on literary and historical documents, and look through the lens of performed,

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[43] Taylor states: "'Performance,' on one level, constitutes the object/process of analysis in performance studies, that is, the many practices and events – dance, theatre, ritual, political rallies, funerals – that involve theatrical, rehearsed, or conventional/event-appropriate behaviors…On another level, performance also constitutes the methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events *as* performance." Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 2-3.

[44] Ibid. Emphasis added.

[45] Ibid., 16 and xvi.
Oxford Dictionaries defines "episteme" as: "Scientific knowledge, a system of understanding; specifically (Foucault's term for) the body of ideas which shape the perception of knowledge in a particular period." *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. "Episteme," accessed November 1, 2018, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/episteme.
Merriam-Webster Dictionaries defines "episteme" simply as "knowledge." *Merriam-Webster Dictionaries Online*, s.v. "Episteme," accessed November 1, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/episteme.

[46] Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou), *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, Second Edition, 2012) 29.

[47] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.

> embodied behaviors, *what would we know that we do not know now*? *Whose stories, memories, and struggles might become visible?*[48]

I argue that these statements and questions regarding performed social and cultural behaviors can expand to include performance art. I also argue for a reorienting of the traditional ways in which *history* in the Americas is studied by investigating the past and present through the lens of performance art, rather than through a lens that privileges colonial perspectives, literature, and historical documents. In performances by Claxton, Belmore, and Deal, and performances not examined here, (his)stories are told and instead of being literarily recorded, they are visually recorded. Thus instead of literarily creating knowledge via writing, I contend that the artists are visually creating knowledge through bodily expression. I argue that this also extends to how the performance's viewers learn and obtain knowledge as well – i.e. visually learning and obtaining knowledge rather than literarily.

This reorientation of the study of history and the consideration of performance "as an embodied praxis and episteme…decenters the historic role of writing."[49] In her 2016 book *Performance,* Taylor states: "In its character of corporeal practice and in relation to other cultural practices and discourses, performance offers a way *to transmit knowledge by means of the body*."[50] This emphasis on the body's role in transmitting knowledge is echoed in statements by curator Lee-Ann Martin. In her essay "Performance and Artistic Mobility," Martin addresses the performances of James Luna (Payómkawichum, Ipi, and Mexican-American) and Rebecca Belmore (Anishinaabe-kwe) – *Emendatio* (2005) and *Fountain* (2005) – which were part of the 51st Venice Biennale. She notes how:

> The body has emerged as a dominant subject of contemporary artistic practice in part to articulate cultural difference, as well as the history of

[48] Ibid., xviii. Emphasis added.
[49] Ibid., 16.
[50] Taylor, *Performance,* 36. Emphasis added.

> colonialism that continues to resonate throughout the world. Today, *the body is acknowledged as a complex, highly coded, shifting subject that lives within representation*.[51]

In analyzing performances by Luna and Belmore, she notes that "bodies are powerful registers of history and lived experiences, of endurance and resistance, of decimation and imagination," and that bodies become "complex metaphors for, and [are] inseparable from, contemporary realities and memories of historical conflicts."[52] Thus, through their functions as acts of transfer, performances become "an embodied practice" that offer up "a way of knowing," allowing them to become a bodily staging of cultural memory, as well as a bodily expression of history.[53]

As I am considering the body as a "complex, highly coded, shifting subject,"[54] in my analysis I use semiotics to investigate the role of the signifier(s) to determine how signification occurs within a performance, and what role signification plays in creating and disseminating knowledge. As noted in chapter one, semiotics concerns the production and interpretation of signs and "studying semiotics can assist us to become more aware of the mediating role of signs and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing social realties."[55] Engaging with performance art as an episteme allows us to read a performance's signification process from different angles as we take into consideration the performance's role in constructing not only social realities, but also history and knowledge.

I contend that knowledge, in particular historical knowledge, is created within a performance's signification process and is transmitted through the artist's bodily expressions. The audience – which includes the audience of the actual performance, viewers of a video recording or

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[51] Lee-Ann Martin (Mohawk), "Performance and Artistic Mobility," in *Vision, Space, Desire: Global Perspectives and Cultural Hybridity*, National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 2006) 101. Emphasis added.
[52] Ibid., 102.
[53] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3.
[54] Ibid., 101.
[55] David Chandler, *Semiotics the Basics*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) 10-11.

photographic documentation, or even readers of written descriptions – becomes the recipient of the transmitted knowledge. Archival materials related to a performance (e.g. video recordings, photographs, written descriptions, etc.) become the physical evidence of the knowledge created by the artists during the performance and they enter the "archive."

The archive is often understood as "a repository or ordered system of documents and records, both verbal and visual, that is the foundation from which history is written."[56] According to Taylor, "'archival' memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change."[57] In her seminal book *The Archive and the Repertoire*, she develops the idea of the "repertoire" as "a nonarchival system of transfer"[58] in conversation with the "archive." The "ephemeral repertoire of embodied practice/knowledge" includes embodied acts, meaning "performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, not reproducible knowledge."[59] Taylor stresses that "the repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there,' being a part of the transmission."[60] This requirement of presence and the participatory act of producing and reproducing knowledge through transmission underscores my argument that the audience of performances visually obtain knowledge.

The discipline of History has often given the repertoire a role secondary to the archive, "with the written and archival constituting hegemonic power and the repertoire providing the anti-hegemonic challenge."[61] However, Taylor asserts that, in fact, "the archive and the repertoire often

[56] Charles Merewether, "Introduction: Art and the Archive," in *The Archive*, ed. Charles Merewether (London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2006) 10.
[57] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.
[58] Ibid., xvii.
[59] Ibid., 19 and 20.
[60] Ibid., 20.
[61] Ibid., 22.

work together" and that "each has its own logic and mechanisms of transmission."[62] She further explains that, "[t]he archive and the repertoire have always been important sources of information, both exceeding the limitations of the other….They usually work in tandem and they work alongside other systems of transmission – the digital and the visual to name two."[63] I argue that taking into consideration the knowledge produced through performance art – embodied knowledge stored within the repertoire – together with the archival materials related to the performance creates a deeper historical narrative. When the repertoire and archive are considered in tandem, the historical narrative becomes one that includes the voices of those who have, for too long, been marginalized from the discourses of North American history.

Based on Taylor's assertion that "Performance is a practice and an epistemology, a creative doing, a methodological lens, a way of transmitting memory and identity, and a way of understanding the world,"[64] I now turn to analyzing Claxton's performance *Buffalo Bone China*, Belmore's performances *Vigil* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One*, and Deal's performance *Supreme Law of the Land*.

Dana Claxton, Buffalo Bone China*: *A Visceral Re/signification of History and Myth of the American West

> Aboriginal performance art reclaims the space of the Western art gallery to articulate Aboriginal stories, voices, and experiences....Within the walls of the 'white cube' of the Western art gallery, Aboriginal artists confront colonial histories, enact Aboriginal aesthetics, reflect Aboriginal cosmologies, and sustain Aboriginal communities.[65] – Dana Claxton

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[62] Taylor, *Performance*, 188.
[63] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.
[64] Taylor, *Performance*, 39.
[65] Dana Claxton quoted in "Dana Claxton: Reframing the Sacred and Indigenizing the White Cube" by Michelle La Flamme (African-Canadian, Métis, and Creek), in *Diversity and Dialogue: The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art 2007,* James H. Nottage, ed. (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, 2008) 49.

For more than 30 years, Hunkpapa Lakota artist Dana Claxton has been investigating the ongoing impact of imperialism and colonialism on Indigenous cultures through a multitude of artistic mediums, including film, installation, and performance art. Claxton shares her Lakota heritage and her personal cultural perspective through her interdisciplinary works, often employing "visual symbols and metaphors…to focus on colonialist double standards and destructions of First Peoples, customs, and environments."[66] Many of her artworks address this destruction, examining in particular "the losses experienced by Indigenous people and how we, the descendants of Europeans and other immigrants, played a role in those losses. She binds the two in a way that makes it a story of our shared history."[67] Claxton also queries and disturbs the discourse surrounding this history and one discourse she notably focuses on is the mythology of the American West.

American West mythology has an enduring presence within American culture, history, and memory. Since the beginning of its colonization in the mid-19th century, the American West has been defined and represented through art, literature, and film, and it is through these representations that the myth of the American West was created. This mythology often depicts Native American peoples alternately as "noble savages," a marginalized "vanishing race," or a people disregarded by history. In addition, the violence and destruction of Indigenous peoples and cultures through the colonization of the American West is often marginalized. In recent years, artists, including Claxton, have begun addressing the history, memory, and myth of the American West within their art. Her performance and installation *Buffalo Bone China* (1997) addresses the

[66] Ibid.
[67] Kevin Griffin, "Dana Claxton uses beauty to tell difficult truths about colonialism," *The Province*, November 30, 2018. https://theprovince.com/entertainment/local-arts/dana-claxton-uses-beauty-to-tell-difficult-truths-about-colonialism/wcm/0927ba4f-2c53-475c-b357-54bf9dd4c58f.

devasting effect the destruction of the American bison (hereafter referred to as buffalo) had on Plains nations, including her own Hunkpapa Lakota peoples.[68]

Through the lens of performance, I examine how Claxton re/signified the history and myth of the American West through the bodily staging of cultural memory. "Cultural memory is…collectively formed through the narratives by which it is made"[69] and in telling the historical narratives of Plains cultures, Claxton's performance becomes a part of those cultures' collective cultural memories. As noted by performer and educator Michelle La Flamme, "[i]n Claxton's view, many Aboriginal artists become historians in some capacity, uncovering the truths of Aboriginal experience that are buried under layers of colonial histories."[70] In analyzing *Buffalo Bone China,* I determine how her performance and the corresponding installation complicate the mythology and memory of the American West, and uncover truths in the discourse of settler history in North America.

In 1997, as part of a Tribe Project with AKA Saskatoon Sask, Claxton performed *Buffalo Bone China* (fig. 2.1–2.3)*,* in which she smashed British bone china[71] with a rubber mallet to recall

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[68] Claxton is one of several contemporary artists who use their artwork to examine the devasting effect of the loss of the buffalo. One recent example of such an examination is Kent Monkman's (Swampy Cree-Irish) 2015 mixed-media installation *The Rise and Fall of Civilization*. Monkman's installation also includes shattered bone china in reference to the use of buffalo bone in the production of British fine china. For more information on Monkman's installation, see Kelvin Browne, Sarah Milroy, and Tasha Hubbard, *Kent Monkman: The Rise and Fall of Civilization* (Toronto, Ontario: Gardiner Museum, 2015); and *Kent Monkman: The Rise and Fall of Civilization* exhibition website: https://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/event/kent-monkman-the-rise-and-fall-of-civilization/ .

[69] Renee Baert, *Margins of Memory* (Windsor, Ontario: Art Gallery of Windsor, 1994) 4.

[70] La Flamme, "Dana Claxton," 49.

[71] Claxton specifically sought out British bone china in order to represent the 19th-century bone china made from buffalo bones. "To prepare for showing Buffalo Bone China, artist Dana Claxton smashed a lot of china. It wasn't just any kind of china. It had to be British bone china to represent the china made from bones of the buffalo. That was important because in the 19th century, the U.S. military and government officials stood by and allowed millions of buffalo to be killed by ranchers and other private individuals knowing it would destroy the animal that provided the livelihood of indigenous people of the Great Plains….The afternoon before her performance in 1997, she gave a talk in the art history department at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. The next day, students who heard her talk brought china for her to smash…'Some people brought in Japanese fine bone china but I was only interested in British fine bone china,' she said during a media tour of her exhibition Dana Claxton: Fringing the Cube at the Vancouver Art Gallery." Kevin Griffin, "ART SEEN: Only British bone china allowed for Buffalo Bone China," *Vancouver Sun*, updated November 26, 2018, https://vancouversun.com/news/staff-blogs/art-seen-only-british-bone-china-allowed-for-buffalo-bone-china .

and renounce the use of finely ground buffalo bones in the manufacture of late 19th-century British chinaware. During the performance, a thick plastic sheet hung between her and the audience to protect them from flying pieces of china; Claxton herself wore safety googles and other protective gear. After 45 minutes, the table collapsed, "dramatically ending the performance" [72] as it was unable to take the brunt of Claxton's blows as she crushed the china. She then gathered the remnants into four bundles and "place[d] them in a sanctified circle while an experimental video of buffalo play[ed]."[73]

The video component comprises "archival footage of running buffalo herds…intersected with looped and interspaced images of a white man with a gun, a falling buffalo, and an Indigenous man yelling (fig. 2.4). These scenes are followed by a photograph of a buffalo skull (fig. 2.5), overlaid on the moving image of stacks of pink, gold, and white china on a table."[74] Claxton's mixed-media installation *Buffalo Bone China* (fig. 2.6) combines the shattered fine bone china remnants from her performance, with the experimental buffalo video. As a metaphorical recalling of the "First Nations peoples' loss of the buffalo,"[75] the installation is "a sacred space to honour and remember the buffalo."[76]

Scholars debate the exact number of buffalo that inhabited the plains of North America – ranging from "what is now central Saskatchewan and Alberta down to Mexico" – with some estimates of 25-30 million and some as high as 50-70 million.[77] Until the late 19th-century, reliance

[72] Information regarding Claxton's enactment of *Buffalo Bone China* taken from: Griffin, "ART SEEN."
[73] Tanya Willard, "Starting From Home," *Starting from Home: An Online Retrospective of Dana Claxton*, Vancouver, Grunt Gallery, 2007. Accessed October 25, 2016, http://www.danaclaxton.com/assets/Starting_From_Home.pdf.
[74] Willard, "Starting from Home."
[75] "MacKenzie Art Gallery Dana Claxton: Buffalo Bone China," *MacKenzie Art Gallery*, April 18, 2009. Accessed October 1, 2016, http://www.mackenzieartgallery.ca/engage/exhibitions/dana-claxton-buffalo-bone-china.
[76] Griffin, "ART SEEN."
[77] Dean Lueck and M. Scott Taylor cite an estimate of 25-30 million buffalo; Tasha Hubbard cites an estimate of 50-70 million. See Dean Lueck, "The Extermination and Conservation of the American Bison," *The Journal of Legal Studies* , Vol. 31, No. S2 (June 2002) S610; M. Scott Taylor, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual

on the buffalo was a defining feature of life for the Indigenous peoples who called the western plains of North America home.[78] The buffalo was the primary source of food, as well as materials for clothing and shelter, for most Plains nations.[79] Many of the Plains nations also have a spiritual relationship with the buffalo, which sometimes "serves as a relation who is there to teach the people and provide guidance."[80] When speaking of *Buffalo Bone China,* Claxton expresses the special significance of the buffalo for the Hunkpapa Lakota people, noting that the buffalo are her relatives. She states:

> As humans, we need to be careful not to exterminate other beings – whether four legged, winged, or finned – small or large. We need to cherish all of living beings and ourselves; life is sacred. My ancestors, my culture, the buffalo who is my relative – as well as to unpack avarice in terms of harming Plains people through the extermination of Tanaka. Tanaka is buffalo in Lakota Sioux.[81]

Claxton's statement underscores the significance of all living beings to the overall wellbeing of life, and it highlights in particular the special significance of the buffalo to the overall wellbeing of her Hunkpapa Lakota culture. Colonization of the American West in the late 19th-century, traumatically disrupted this special relationship between the Plains nations and the buffalo.

By 1850, an estimated 10 million buffalo still roamed the Great Plains, but by 1890, only about 1,000 buffalo remained.[82] Many factors contributed to this drastic reduction of the buffalo population in the American West, including the construction of the transcontinental railroads and

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Extinction of the North American Bison," *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 101, No. 7 (December 2011) 3162; and Tasha Hubbard (Peepeekisis First Nation), "Hearts on the Ground: Buffalo Genocide in the 19th Century," in *Kent Monkman: The Rise and Fall of Civilization* (Toronto, Ontario: Gardiner Museum, 2015) 20-32.

[78] Janet Catherine Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, *Native North American Indian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 2nd edition) 130.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Tasha Hubbard (Peepeekisis First Nation), "'The Buffalos are gone' or 'Return: Buffalo?' – The Relationship of the Buffalo to Indigenous Creative Expression," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXIX, 1 & 2 (2009) 68.

[81] Dana Claxton quoted in "Bring to Bay" by Ola Wlusek, in *In the Flesh: Lance Belanger, Dana Claxton, Brad Issacs, Meryl McMaster*, Ariel Smith and Ola Wlusek (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2013) 10.

[82] Lueck, "The Extermination and Conservation of the American Bison," S610.

the settler-colonial – aka Manifest Destiny – belief that the "buffalo had to be tame in order for settlement to occur."[83] The decimation of the buffalo was also part of the U.S. government's plan to quash the supposed "Indian problem" in the Great Plains, and civilians, the US military, and government officials all played a part. According to many scholars, including historian David D. Smits, prior to the proliferation of the buffalo hide market in the 1870s, the US military had an "official" unofficial policy of buffalo killing as part of its response to the "Indian problem."[84] For example, Smits cites a June 26, 1869 report from the *Army Navy Journal*: "General [William Tecumseh] Sherman remarked…that the quickest way to compel the Indians to settle down to civilized life was to send ten regiments of soldiers to the plains, with orders to shoot buffaloes until they became too scarce to support the [Indians]."[85] Sherman's sentiments were shared by his fellow general, Phillip Sheridan, who, in an October 1868 letter to Sherman concerning "Indian hostiles," wrote: "The best way for the government is to now make them poor by the destruction of their stock, and then settle them on the lands allotted to them."[86]

The government and military had an ally in their decimation of the buffalo: hide hunters. The completion of the transcontinental railroads made it easier for hunters to travel throughout the West and to ship their goods to the eastern United States. In 1871, the efforts of buffalo hide hunters began in earnest due to the development of an industrial tanning process. As scholar Tasha Hubbard explains: "hides suddenly became a commodity, used as factory machine belts and as a source of leather for armies. Once the flesh rotted, the bones were collected and sold and used as

[83] Hubbard, "The Buffalo are gone?" 71. Hubbard discusses how the buffalo became the symbol of the "wild west" and details how "[i]n settler's eyes and minds, Buffalos and Indians were reduced to 'trophies' and causalities of European dominance." (71)
[84] David D. Smits, "The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo, 1865-1883," *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Autumn, 1994), 312-338.
[85] Ibid., 317.
[86] General P. Sheridan, quoted in Smits "The Frontier Army," 323.

fertilizer."[87] Hides were sent to the eastern United States and then on to Europe by the thousands (fig. 2.7). In addition to being collected and sold for fertilizer, "[b]uffalo bones were gathered into massive piles on the prairies (fig. 2.8–2.9) for exportation to England to be used in the production of fine bone china."[88] However, this history of buffalo bone being used in the production of fine china is not well known; it is often ignored and rarely mentioned in the discourse of mainstream American history.

While affluent Euro-American and British citizens dined on fine china, many Indigenous peoples "starved to death after the [buffalo] herds were extinguished and survivors suffered from malnutrition, which made them susceptible to diseases."[89] As Hubbard explains, "[t]he loss of the buffalo was catastrophic for plains Indigenous peoples and is often characterized as part of Indigenous genocide, along with massacres, starvation tactics, forced relocations, destruction of camps and domestic animals, and the spread of epidemics."[90] The colonial project of Manifest Destiny utilized this cultural genocide to "conquer" the Western frontier; it was a genocide committed in the name of "progress" and hidden behind the beauty of fine dining ware.

However, through her art, such as *Buffalo Bone China,* Claxton "queries and disturbs mainstream settler-colonial discourse that conceals, erases or barely mentions the dispossession and oppression of the Indigenous Plains Nations that marked the ascent of settler societies since the end of the 19th-century."[91] It is in this settler-colonial discourse that *Buffalo Bone China* makes an intervention, particularly by exposing the little known history of the use of buffalo bone in the production of fine china in England. Claxton's intervention contributes historical knowledge

[87] Hubbard, "Hearts on the Ground," 25.
[88] Ola Wlusek, "Bring to Bay" in *In the Flesh: Lance Belanger, Dana Claxton, Brad Issacs, Meryl McMaster*, Ariel Smith and Ola Wlusek (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2013) 10.
[89] Hubbard, "Hearts on the Ground," 24.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Lynne Bell, "From a Whisper to a Scream," in *Canadian Art*, February 24, 2011, http://canadianart.ca/features/2011/02/24/dana_claxton/ .

regarding Indigenous peoples' relationship with the buffalo and the devastation wrought upon these peoples by the buffalo's decimation. Her worldview as a Hunkpapa Lakota woman – whose ancestors experienced this devastation first-hand and were displaced by colonization[92] – informs her perspective and historical intervention.

Buffalo Bone China (both the performance and the installation of the same name) is a visceral, bodily, visual record of history. The artwork(s) bring the past forward to the present as it "channel[s] the rage [Claxton] felt and connect[s] colonial interference with present-day Native lives."[93] Claxton's destruction of the bone china reprises the physical destruction of the buffalo. The mound of shattered bone china (fig. 2.10) "resembles a pile of bones: white, polished, glistening in the dim light, and resting on top on another,"[94] and evokes 19th-century photographs (fig. 2.8–2.9) of mounds of buffalo bone awaiting exportation to the eastern United States or England. As noted by journalist Kevin Griffin:

> The round shape of the pile of broken English bone china reinforces the circularity of the work by connecting what happened then with what's happening now. *Buffalo Bone China* doesn't lock the past safely in history. It brings it into the present where its affects live on.[95]

Claxton's destructive performance acts as a catharsis, disturbing mainstream settler-colonial discourse by acknowledging this devasting past.

It is also through her querying and disturbance of mainstream settler-colonial discourse that the process of re/signification takes place within Claxton's performance and installation as it

[92] Claxton is descended from members of Sitting Bull's tribe who fled to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. "Her great-great-grandparents, Kangi Tamaheca and Anpetu Wastewin and their daughter, Claxton's great-grandmother Ayuta Najin Ktewin were of the thousands of Lakota who walked with Sitting Bill to Saskatchewan in 1877." Patricia Deadman, "Dana Claxton: Sitting Bull and the Moose Jaw Sioux," in *Dana Claxton: Sitting Bull and the Moose Jaw Sioux*, Moose Jaw Museum & Gallery (Saskatchewan: Moose Jaw Museum & Gallery, 2007) 15.
[93] Jonaitis and Kalbfleisch, "Native Performance Art," 324.
[94] Wlusek, "Bring to Bay," 10.
[95] Griffin, "Dana Claxton uses beauty to tell difficult truths."

upsets the established signifier of the "Edenic" frontier landscape.[96] The re/signification process is made visceral through the physical destruction of bone china (fig. 2.1 and 2.10), a material of colonization that contributed to the decimation of the buffalo herds, an integral part of Plains nations' life and culture. The concept of the frontier landscape as a "bountiful Eden" exists in the convergence of the mythological and the historical in the American West. This acoustical image[97] of the Edenic frontier landscape serves as the signifier that invokes the signified concept of the American West. The performance of *Buffalo Bone China* complicates the relationship between the established signifier (bountiful Eden) and the signified (the American West), and causes the signifier to take on new meaning. I argue that through performance a transformative process occurs in the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which ultimately re/signifies the historical aspects of the American West, while simultaneously subverting its mythology.

Through Claxton's literal destruction of the material object, *Buffalo Bone China* re/signifies bone china, a sign of status and prosperity within Euro-American and British cultures, into a sign of destruction of the natural resources in the American West and the subsequent destruction of Plains life. By emphasizing the devastation wrought on the natural resources and

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[96] To the American public of the 19th-century, the Western frontier was the line between civilization and savagery, a place to be conquered through the divine right of Manifest Destiny. The American ideals of rugged individualism, industriousness, and freedom were formed through the subjugation of the frontier landscape and its Indigenous inhabitants. Despite the negative impacts of colonization on the Western landscape and Indigenous peoples, this initial formulation of the West in American culture continues to be a presence in American mythology and mainstream memory. Nineteenth-century artists, including George Catlin and Albert Bierstadt, contributed to the myth's creation through their depictions of Western landscapes and Indigenous peoples. However, these depictions often present a romanticized view of the American West, part of which was the West as a "bountiful Eden," an "agricultural wonderland destined for American use."
Anne F. Hyde, "Cultural Filters: The Significance of Perception in the History of the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Aug. 1993) 351-374.
For further discussions on the myth of the American West as an Edenic landscape, see Heike Paul, "Agrarianism, Expansionism, and the Myth of the American West," in *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014) 311-366, retrieved from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxsdq.10.

[97] According to Hugh Silverman, the signifier is "the word or the acoustical image" that "invokes a concept which corresponds to it."[97] Hugh Silverman, "Introduction" in *Cultural Semiosis Tracing the Signifier,* Hugh Silverman, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 1998) 2.

the Indigenous peoples of the western frontier by colonization, Claxton complicates the myth of the West as a bountiful Eden. The recoding of bone china exposes the legacies of colonization and the greed that underscored Manifest Destiny; as a status symbol within Euro-American and British cultures, bone china embodies the lust of Manifest Destiny for the resources and land of the West. This shifts the innocence away from the bountiful Edenic frontier signifier and creates a new signified American West of colonizer exploitation.

Buffalo Bone China also becomes a performative staging of Native cultural memory, as well as history, through its metaphorical recalling of the Plains nations' loss of the buffalo. The silenced screaming in the video (fig. 2.4) becomes a visual remembrance of Native Americans mourning the loss of the buffalo. By representing the despair and loss felt by the many Plains nations, the performance erases boundaries, becoming a trans-indigenous expression of mourning. This mourning is expressed in the memoirs of Pretty Shield, a Crow medicine woman who lived through and witnessed the buffalos' decimation. In her biography, complied by Frank B. Linderman, Pretty Shield stated:

> Ahh, my heart fell down when I began to see dead buffalo scattered all over our beautiful country, killed and skinned, and left to rot by white men, many, many hundreds of buffalo. The first I saw of this was in the Judith basin. The whole country there smelled of rotting meat. Even the flowers could not put down the bad smell. Our hearts were like stone.[98]

This despairing sentiment is likewise seen in the memoirs of Sitting Bull (Hunkpapa Lakota) and Plenty Coups (Apsaalooke), who also lived during the late 19th century and experienced first-hand the atrocities of colonization. Regarding the buffalo, Sitting Bull said "A cold wind blew across

[98] Frank B. Linderman, *Pretty-shield, Medicine Woman of the Crows* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972) 248-51, quoted in *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West was Lost*, Colin G. Calloway, ed. (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996) 131.

the prairie when the last buffalo fell – a death wind for my people."[99] Similar to Pretty Shield, Plenty Coups expressed a physical lament and stated, "When the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened. There was little singing anymore."[100] The emotion and pain expressed in the statements by Pretty Shield, Sitting Bull, and Plenty Coup embodies the cultural memory of the buffalo for many Plains nations. Claxton transmits this painful history and memory through her art as expressed by Ola Wlusek: "the space containing…Claxton's mixed media piece *Buffalo Bone China* emits emotion: the pain of an opened, aching wound exposed to a devastating memory."[101]

I also argue that *Buffalo Bone China,* both the performance and corresponding installation, is representative of what Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, a Lakota professor and social worker, calls "historical unresolved grief."[102] Historical unresolved grief refers to the continuing suffering of Indigenous peoples due to the effects of historical trauma they experienced during the colonization of North America.[103] As Brave Heart explains, "American Indians experienced massive losses of lives, land, and culture from European contact and colonization resulting in a long legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations."[104] She draws parallels

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[99] David D. Smits, "The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo: 1865-1883," *Western Historical Quarterly*, No. 25 (1994) 338, quoted in *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Calloway, 123.
[100] Frank B. Linderman, *Plenty Coups, Chief of the Crows* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962) 311, quoted in *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground*, Calloway, 123.
[101] Wlusek, "Bring to Bay," 10.
[102] Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Ph.D. (Lakota), explores the concept of historical unresolved grief in her paper co-authored with Lemyra M. DeBruyn, Ph.D. "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief," in *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1998) 60-82.
[103] Brave Heart and DeBruyn's paper details the genocide and cultural genocide experienced by American Indians during colonization. They refer to the work of L.H. Legters in particular to explain the American Indian Holocaust. Quoted from Brave Heart and DeBruyn's paper: "Legters…note[s] growing attention to a less murderous form of genocide, sometimes labeled 'cultural genocide that is taken to cover actions that are threatening to the integrity and continuing viability of peoples and social groups' (p. 769). Legters argues further that settler colonies and the concomitant displacement, domination, and exploration increase the likelihood of genocide and outlines the consequences including: '*….preemption or destruction of resources necessary to native survival*.' (pp. 771-772)." Emphasis added.
Brave Heart and DeBruyn, "The American Indian Holocaust," 61-62, quoting from L.H. Legters, "The American Genocide," in *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1988) 768-777.
[104] Brave Heart and DeBruyn, "The American Indian Holocaust," 60.

between the experiences of American Indians and their descendants with the experiences of Jewish Holocaust survivors and their descendants, drawing particularly on "survivor syndrome" and the "survivor's child complex." Brave Heart explains that this syndrome and complex both involve "a perceived obligation to share in ancestral pain as well as identification with the deceased ancestors."[105] She continues: "Further, descendants of survivors feel responsible to undo the tragic pain of their ancestral past…Like the transfer of trauma to descendants from Holocaust survivors, the genocide of American Indians reverberates across generations."[106] Claxton herself expresses such a connection to her ancestors, contrasting the suffering experienced by the Plains Nations with the affluence of the upper-class British and Euro-Americans who used bone china:

> When I think about my relatives starving, while people are eating with fine bone china, I'm like, "Who does that? Who would exterminate such a significant, beautiful being?"…It's a haunting work. It was a haunting experience. And I personally think it continues to haunt the landscape…[107]

Claxton's statement about her haunting experience underscores the representation of unresolved historical grief in *Buffalo Bone China,* demonstrating the reverberation of the effects of genocide across generations. The bone china remnants represent not only the destruction of the buffalo, but also the broken lives of the Plains Indigenous peoples, becoming a physical marker of this devasting history, memory, and unresolved grief.

The bone china remnants, along with performance photographs and the experimental buffalo video – the elements that constitute the installation *Buffalo Bone China* – form the archive for the performance *Buffalo Bone China*. I argue that the installment of this "archive" in different venues – for instance, at the Vancouver Art Gallery as part of the exhibition *Dana Claxton:*

[105] Ibid., 66.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Dana Claxton quoted in "Dana Claxton: Self-Identity," by Curranne Labercane, *Montecristo Magazine*, October 31, 2018, http://montecristomagazine.com/arts/dana-claxton .

Fringing the Cube, on view from October 27, 2018 - February 3, 2019 – reactivates the embodied knowledge of the performance's repertoire. This reactivation allows for a continuation in the transmission of the historical knowledge and cultural memory recorded in *Buffalo Bone China* to a new (or perhaps returning) audience who views the installation. By experiencing the installation and being part of the transmission, the audience participates in the reproduction of this knowledge.

In a 2013 correspondence with curator Ola Wlusek, Claxton stated:

> We have much to learn from animal nations. They don't colonize and for the most part don't exterminate each other. They don't want to eradicate each other, or do continued harm to each other – they allow each other to have space…Animals walk, swim, or fly in balance with the natural world – more than our current societies are doing – humans can learn from animal consciousness.[108]

Claxton's cathartic performance *Buffalo Bone China* – and its corresponding installation – demonstrates how much we need to learn by articulating the traumatic history of her buffalo relatives. By exposing the little known history of the destruction of the buffalo for the production of bone china, Claxton forces the audience of *Buffalo Bone China* to confront the atrocities of settler-colonialism in North America. Through this confrontation and the resulting transmission of knowledge, Claxton inserts a Native perspective into the settler history of the United States and asserts visual sovereignty over the cultural memory of the American West.

This exposing of traumatic histories for Indigenous peoples is an artistic undertaking to which many Indigenous artists commit, including Claxton and Anishinaabe-kwe artist Rebecca Belmore. While Claxton exposed a traumatic history of the past in *Buffalo China Bone*, albeit one that has on-going consequences, Belmore's performances *Vigil* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* contend with a current traumatic crisis facing North America's multitude of Native nations: the epidemic of murdered and missing Indigenous women.

[108] Dana Claxton, quoted in Wlusek, "Bring it to Bay," 14.

Rebecca Belmore: Violence, Marginalization, and Commemoration – History through Social Awareness

> for decades
> I have been working
> as the artist amongst my people
> calling to the past
> witnessing the present
> standing forward
> facing the monumental
>
> – Rebecca Belmore, *Facing the Monumental* (2018)

Since 1987, Anishinaabe-kwe artist Rebecca Belmore has addressed place, history, and identity through the artistic media of installation, video, sculpture, and performance. Her artworks "are nothing if not politically conscious and socially aware, acutely attuned to site and history, to the remembered and the erased."[109] For Belmore, addressing such topics – oftentimes difficult topics due to the settler-colonial history of Canada, the country that surrounds the ancestral homeland of the Lac Seul First Nation, of which Belmore is a citizen – is a part of her job as an artist. According to Belmore:

> The role of an artist is a worker, art-making is a job….I am the artist amongst my people. Every society has its artists, and we have the responsibility to speak about how we are collectively in this moment in time. We have the responsibility to carry the past and look towards the future.[110]

A shared characteristic of Belmore's work is the use of her body as pedagogical tool and the consideration of "the body as means and metaphor,….[as] testament to history and [the] stage of ongoing struggle."[111] Indeed, Belmore herself stated: "I have always had an awareness of my body

[109] James Adams, "Rebecca Belmore on her gradual trek eastward and life as an artist," *The Globe and Mail*, published September 16, 2016, updated May 17, 2018, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/rebecca-belmore-on-her-gradual-trek-eastward-and-life-as-an-artist/article31931732/.
[110] Rebecca Belmore, quoted in "I Am the Artist Amongst My People" by Leanna Betasamosake Simpson, *Canadian Art*, July 11, 2018, https://canadianart.ca/features/i-am-the-artist-amongst-my-people/.
[111] Robin Laurence, "Rebecca Belmore," *Border Crossing*, Vol. 27 Issue 4 (November 2008) 110.

as a place from which to address the whole notion of history and what has happened to us as Aboriginal people."[112]

One contemporary (his)story Belmore has repeatedly addressed in her artwork is the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) in Canada. Although her artworks focus on the epidemic in Canada, this is a crisis in the United States as well.[113] I argue that her performances transcend borders and bring attention to a crisis affecting Indigenous nations and communities throughout North America. Belmore is one of many contemporary artists who address this crisis in their artwork. In chapter three, I discuss Cannupa Hanska Luger's *Every One* (2018), a social collaboration, sculptural installation that works to humanize the data of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, queer and trans community members (MMIWQT).[114]

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[112] Rebecca Belmore quoted in "Rebecca Belmore: Fiercely Political/Politically Fierce" by Shannon Bell, *Canadian Dimension,* Vol. 43, No. 1 (January 2009) 35. Retrieved via EBSCO Host.

[113] As reported by Lucy Anna Gray of *The Independent*, in the United States in 2017, there were "5,646 Native American women entered as missing into the National Crime Information Centre database…with 5,711 in 2016. In the first six months of 2018 there were 2,758 indigenous woman reported missing." Lucy Anna Gray, "Forgotten Women: The conversation of murdered and missing native women is not one North America wants to have - but it must," *The Independent*, August 14, 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/native-american-women-missing-murder-mmiw-inquiry-canada-us-violence-indigenous-a8487976.html .

[114] Belmore's 2010 photographic installation *sister* also contends with the MMIW from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Other contemporary artists who are addressing the devasting story of MMIW include Metis artist, Christi Belcourt, whose *Walking With Our Sisters* (2012-present) is a collaborative art installation featuring moccasin tops (vamps) made by women, men, and children of all ages and races in honor of the MMIW and their families, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca. WWOS advocacy list: http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/our-sisters/

In 2018, the All My Relations Arts gallery in Minneapolis, MN held an exhibition entitled *Bring Her Home: The Stolen Daughters of Turtle Island* (February 2-April 10, 2018); all the artwork included in the exhibition addressed the MMIW crisis. Artists featured included Chemehuevi photographer Cara Romero and Cherokee artist Shan Goshorn. In October 2018, the gallery put out a call for artwork for a 2019 rendition of the *Bring Her Home* exhibition, which runs from February 14-June 21, 2019. http://www.allmyrelationsarts.com/call-for-artist-bring-her-home-2019-stolen-daughters-of-turtle-island/ .

There are many, many other organizations, artists, etc., who are working to bring awareness to this crisis and to bring help to families and communities who have been and continue to be affected.
Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women: https://www.csvanw.org/mmiw/
Native Women's Association of Canada: https://www.nwac.ca
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center: http://www.niwrc.org
Amnesty International – No More Stolen Sisters: https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/campaigns/no-more-stolen-sisters
Save Our Sisters, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women:
https://www.facebook.com/SAVEOURSISTERSMMIW/

Three of Belmore's artworks that contend with this traumatic crisis are her 2002 performance *Vigil* and its corresponding video installation *The Named and the Unnamed,* and her 2014 performance *One thousand One hundred & eighty One.* Through the lens of performance and new genre public art, I examine how these three artworks transmit historical knowledge through their creation of social awareness via the intersection of activism and education.

New genre public art was established in 1977 by Suzanne Lacy's performance piece *Three Weeks in May.* Allen Kaprow and Judy Chicago, two of Lacy's mentors, encouraged her to "consider art as an activist medium that could express both intense emotion and aesthetically sophisticated, formal means by deploying the body in public spaces as the site of art production."[115] Art historian Vivien Green Fryd defines new genre public art as "a socially engaged, interactive culture practice that deploys a range of traditional and nontraditional media in public spaces for public audiences, intersecting activism, education, and theory."[116] The understanding of public art, defined before 1977 as sculpture and installations in public places, shifted with Lacy's performance and new genre public art became distinguished through the level of engagement shared between the artist and their audience.

Emerging ten years after this shift in the definition of public art, Belmore's work aligns with the history of feminist performance art in which the body serves as a pedagogical tool and public site for investigation. Her visceral performances embody issues directly relevant to the lives of North America's Indigenous communities – as well as the general public – and encourage a forceful engagement with her audiences, exemplifying a central characteristic of new genre public

[115] Vivien Green Fryd, "Suzanne Lacy's *Three Weeks in May*: Feminist Activist Performance Art as "Expanded Public Pedagogy." *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Feminist Activist Art (Spring 2007), 25.
[116] Ibid, 23.

art. I contend that it is also through this forceful engagement with her audience that Belmore's performances intervene in the settler-colonial histories of the United States and Canada.

On June 23, 2002, Belmore performed *Vigil* (fig. 2.11–2.12) on the corner of Gore and Cordova Streets as a commemoration of the missing and murdered women, predominantly Aboriginal, who have disappeared in the Downtown Eastside area of Vancouver.[117] According to a 2007 joint report from the Vancouver Police Department and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Missing Women Task Force, sixty-five women were reported "missing" from that neighborhood and "the first woman reported missing…was last seen in the late 1970s."[118] However, a formal investigation by the Vancouver Police Department was not launched until 2001. In 2002, Robert Pickton, a rural pig farmer, was charged with the murder of two of the missing women, and in 2007, he was convicted on six counts of second-degree murder.[119]

Presented as part of the Talking Stick Aboriginal Art Festival, *Vigil* was a commemoration of the missing women of Downtown Eastside in which Belmore used her body as a tool of awareness and remembrance. To begin, Belmore scrubbed the street on her hands and knees, and

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[117] According to scholar Maggie Tate, "[s]ome of the disappearances became known through missing persons reports, a portion of which were eventually linked to buried body parts on the land of Robert Pickton. Others became known through bodies that were discovered but never linked to an identity. As of 2010, 39 of the cases were still outstanding in the legal system."
Maggie Tate, "Re-presenting invisibility: ghostly aesthetics in Rebcca Belmore's *Vigil* and *The Named and the Unnamed*," *Visual Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2015) 20.

[118] Amber Dean, *Remembering Vancouver's Disappeared Women: Settler Colonialism and the Difficulty of Inheritance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015) xix.

[119] Although charged with murdering twenty-six of the sixty-five women listed in the joint-report, Pickton was ultimately only convicted on six counts of second-degree murder, even after DNA or the remains of thirty-three women were found on his pig farm in Port Coquitlam, B.C.
Dean, *Remembering Vancouver's Disappeared Women,* xxv.
Mark Gollom, "How the Robert Pickton case sparked changes to B.C. missing persons investigations," *CBC News*, February 3, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/bruce-mcarthur-robert-pickton-missing-persons-1.4517472 .

In January 2018, an undercover cop posing as Pickton's cellmate recorded Pickton claiming to have murdered 49 women at his pig farm and expressed disappointment that he was unable to make it an even 50. Chris Baynes, "Serial killer Robert Pickton filmed admitting to 49 murders says he 'wanted to do one more.'" *The Independent*, January 24, 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/robert-pickton-video-serial-killer-women-murders-vancouver-canada-a8175716.html .

lit votive candles with the assistance of an audience member, struggling to keep them lit against the wind. Belmore then yelled the names of the missing women she had written on her arm, and ripped a rose through her teeth after each name, stripping the flower of its thorns, leaves, and petals. The performance reached beyond the small gathered audience as distant voices from the neighborhood respond "What?" to Belmore's yells.[120]

After donning a long red dress, Belmore nailed it to a telephone pole and as she struggled to free herself, the dress tore. She then repeatedly nailed and tore the dress, until it hung in shreds from the pole and fence, representing the tattered lives of the missing women. Vulnerable and exposed while wearing a tank top and her underwear, the performance ended with Belmore pulling on jeans and walking over to a large black pick-up truck with James Brown's song *It's a Man's World* blasting from its stereo.[121] *Vigil* was later exhibited as the video installation *The Named and the Unnamed* (fig. 2.13–2.15), which first appeared in a traveling exhibition of the same name that opened in 2002 at the University of British Columbia's Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (*The Named and the Unnamed* exhibition, 2002-2006). *The Named and the Unnamed* installation has been included in numerous exhibitions since then, including Belmore's current retrospective *Facing the Monumental,* which was curated by Anishinaabe curator Wanda Nanibush and opened at the Art Gallery of Ontario in July 2018.[122]

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[120] The "What?" responses are audible in the video recording of *Vigil*. The responses are also noted in Tate's article "Re-presenting invisibility," 26; and Marcia Crosby's essay "Humble Materials and Powerful Signs: Remembering the Suffering of Other," *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion*, Diana Augaitis and Kathleen Ritter (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008) 81. Crosby states: "Two different times, two women answer back from somewhere in the neighborhood, punctuating the silence of the dead."

[121] Description of *Vigil* formulated from viewing the video and the description available on Rebecca Belmore's official website. "Vigil," Rebecca Belmore official website, accessed October 25, 2017, http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/video/Vigil.html.

[122] After closing at the Art Gallery of Ontario in October 2018, *Facing the Monumental* opened on February 1, 2019 at the Remai Modern art museum in Saskatoon, where the exhibition is on display until May 5, 2019.

Twelve years after *Vigil*, Belmore once again addressed the MMIW crisis in her performance *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* (fig. 2.16–2.18). On May 23, 2014, during the Berkshire Conference on the History of Woman[123] and in conjunction with her exhibition *KWE* at the University of Toronto's Justine M. Barnicke Gallery, Belmore performed *One thousand One Hundred & eighty One,* an all-day, site-specific artwork. The title refers to the 1,181 missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada as reported by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in a 2014 national report. Released while Belmore was developing an artwork for the conference[124], the RCMP report revealed:

> Police-recorded incidents of Aboriginal female homicides and unresolved missing Aboriginal females in [the] review total 1,181 – 164 missing and 1,017 homicide victims. There are 225 unsolved cases of either missing or murdered Aboriginal females: 105 missing for more than 30 days as of November 4, 2013, whose cause of disappearance was categorized at the time as "unknown" or "foul play suspected" and 120 unsolved homicides between 1980 and 2012.[125]

One thousand One Hundred & eighty One is a commemoration for these 1,181 missing and murdered Indigenous women – this number includes some of the sixty-five women Belmore commemorated in *Vigil* – as well as the many other Indigenous women whose disappearance or death has not been officially recorded.

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[123] The Sixteenth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women was held in Toronto from May 22 – 25, 2014 at the University of Toronto. It was "the first Canadian 'Big Berks' in collaboration with co-sponsoring units and universities in Toronto and across Canada." Information retrieved from: https://web.archive.org/web/20140525234136/http:/berks2014.com/ .

[124] Personal correspondence with Rebecca Gimmi, Program Coordinator at the Justine M. Barnicke Gallery, September 27, 2018: "A performance was to be scheduled during the Berkshire Conference held for the first time in Canada in our building. As Rebecca was developing a work, the RCMP report on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women was released, siting [*sic*] 1181 documented cases. The number was below the community's estimate but substantial and gave some RCMP-supported data to the crisis."

[125] Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview* (HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF CANADA as represented by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2014) 3. Downloaded/accessed via: http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-national-operational-overview .

Belmore performed *One thousand One Hundred & eighty One* on the Barnicke Gallery's steps, "a major thoroughfare for the public."[126] During the all-day performance, Belmore hammered 1181 nails, one for every women represented in the RCMP's national report, into a log "she had found in Queen's Park, where the provincial legislature sits."[127] According to the Justine M. Barnicke Gallery, no signage or didactics were available during the performance; instead, Belmore personally spoke with passersby who had questions, and "often passerbys [*sic*] had personal relations and stories to share about MMIW and the report."[128] The performance peaked during the evening; "[d]ressed in a neon orange construction vest, [Belmore's] body became hypervisible. This attire was thoughtfully chosen so as to counteract the erasure of Indigenous women who continue to disappear across this land at an alarming rate."[129] Scholar Ellyn Walker described part of the performance thusly:

> At some point [Belmore] began to yell the number 1,181 louder and louder as she continued to hammer – her screeching voice insisted on our collective listening, as anyone within proximity would undeniably hear the repeated number and were thus forced to consider its significance.[130]

Tiring as she completed her laborious, repetitive act – hammering nails over and over again – Belmore worked to the brink of exhaustion. "The demands of her committed performances exhaust the artist both emotionally and physically; spectators are aware of her sweat, the hoarseness of her voice, her labored breath."[131] Although Belmore requested that the performance not be

[126] Personal correspondence with Gimmi.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ellyn Walker, "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," in *Desire Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada*, ed. Heather Davis (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press; and Winnipeg: Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, 2017) 142.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Jonaitis and Kalbfleisch, "Native Performance Art," 323.

documented,[132] the nail-studded log remains as a tactile and visual remembrance of the many lives lost in the MMIW crisis.

Together, Belmore's visceral bodily performances, *Vigil* and *One thousand One Hundred & eighty One*, place the women who have been lost in the MMIW crisis into the history of North America. While *Vigil* focuses on the individual stories – represented through Belmore's recitation of their names – of the women disappeared from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* focuses on the "the overwhelming figure that obscures the individuality of each woman."[133] By performing *Vigil* on the corner of Gore and Cordova Streets, one of the sites of many of the disappearances, Belmore writes the women into the local history of the Downtown Eastside and Vancouver as a whole. However, her performance of *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* in a major public thoroughfare in Toronto represents the far-reaching nature and devastating scale of the crisis. The MMIW crisis is not isolated to one "bad" part of Vancouver; instead, it reaches from Vancouver to Toronto and beyond.

Through their engagement with the audience, social activism, and relevance for Aboriginal communities, I argue that *Vigil, The Named and the Unnamed,* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* can be read as works of new genre public art. In her essay "Have We Ever Been Good?," Charlotte Townsend-Gault noted that "*The Named and the Unnamed*…implies a disruption: an historical and epistemological disruption between humans and the world they inhabit."[134] I argue that *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* also viscerally creates a historical and epistemological disruption; this disruption marks the beginning of the transmission of

[132] Personal correspondence with Gimmi. According to Gimmi, Belmore had requested that the performance not be documented and Wanda Nanibush, curator of Belmore's exhibition *KWE*, agreed. The Justine M. Barnicke Gallery honored Belmore's request.
[133] Walker, "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," 143.
[134] Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Have We Ever Been Good?" in *Rebecca Belmore: The Named and the Unnamed*, Charlotte Townsend-Gault and James Luna (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 2002), 9.

knowledge and the formation of an awareness for the artworks' audience. Belmore forced the audiences of both performances to confront the trauma the missing women experienced by embodying their anguish and using her body as a tool of commemoration. Through a visceral act of remembrance, Belmore addresses the oft-ignored or hidden history of violence against women in North America, particularly Indigenous women, a societal issue directly relevant to the lives of the general public.

While Belmore's performances, such as *Vigil* and *One thousand One hundred & Eighty one*, are informed by the social and political contexts from which they arise, I argue that their purpose goes beyond political activism or commentary. The focus becomes the transmission of knowledge through social awareness, a forced engagement with an ill-informed society that pushes her performances from singular reflections of remembrance to a public pedagogy on issues directly relevant to the public's lives. The performances seemingly seek to elicit a personal reaction from the audience members, which is *internal*, distinguishing it from Lacy's new genre public art, which sought to elicit a *public* and institutional reaction. Belmore's statement regarding her performance work (*Vigil* in particular) supports this distinction:

> I work very hard at trying to create some kind of emotional terrain, *I try to affect the viewer in an emotional sense*. I am interested in feelings. In Vigil, I wanted them to feel. I am standing there, they are standing there, I am hollering the names of the women who are missing; we are aware that their name disappears. I think it creates a reckoning between the viewer and myself.[135]

Kathleen Ritter further reinforces this in her essay "The Reclining Figure and Other Provocations," stating: "Belmore's work is, at heart, a provocation. It resists passive engagement or detached spectatorship on the part of a viewer; *it invokes a response*."[136]

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[135] Belmore quoted in "Rebecca Belmore: Fiercely Political/Politically Fierce" by Bell, 35. Emphasis added.
[136] Kathleen Ritter, "The Reclining Figure and Other Provocations," *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion*, 53. Emphasis added.

I argue that the foundational strength of Belmore's performances lies in their aspect of public awareness and the personal, emotional responses they elicit. This strength is further emphasized through her use of her body as a pedagogical tool. As stated by Dot Tuer in her essay "Performing Memory: The Art of Storytelling in the Work of Rebecca Belmore,"

> In her performances, her body [becomes] a cipher for the ways in which the scars of history are remembered….Through her conceptual embodiment of storytelling, Belmore has produced…a powerful testimony to art as a process of concretizing acts of remembering and resistance, dreaming and mourning.[137]

Though long ignored by the media and treated as afterthoughts by authorities,[138] the women are treated with importance by Belmore as she performs concretizing acts of remembrance and acknowledgement. In encouraging her audience to remember those who have disappeared or been marginalized by society, Belmore causes the public to become further aware of vital societal issues. Through this awareness, Belmore helps to reveal the women's stories, creating visual commemorations of their lives and inserting their stories into the larger historical narratives of Canada and the United States.

Belmore received positive media response from her exhibition *The Named and the Unnamed* (2002-2006), which featured a video installation of *Vigil* as its centerpiece. In her review of the exhibition's 2003 iteration at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Judy Stoffman of the *Toronto Star*, stated "Rebecca Belmore's 'The Named and the Unnamed' is possibly the most moving art

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[137] Dot Tuer, "Performing Memory: The Art of Storytelling in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," in *Mining the Media Archive: Essays on Art, Technology, and Cultural Resistance* (Toronto, YYZ Books, 2005) 167.

[138] In her blog post "Rebecca Belmore: Vigil and The Named and the Unnamed," art historian Lara Evans discusses why it took so long for the Vancouver authorities to investigate the disappearances. She states: "One of the authorities' justification for not taking any action regarding these disappearances for so long is that, in some respects, the women had 'disappeared' already. They left their home communities, often a reserve, for the big city. They were, in a sense, cut off from their homes, their sources of cultural sustenance. The women who disappeared were supporting themselves through prostitution." Lara M. Evans (Cherokee), "Rebecca Belmore: Vigil and the Named and the Unnamed," *Not Artomatic Blog*, May 8, 2010, http://notartomatic.wordpress.com/2010/05/08/rebecca-belmore-vigil-and-the-named-and-the-unnamed/.

exhibition on view in Toronto at the moment."[139] The concluding sentence of the article reads: "'The Named And The Unnamed' lends dignity and meaning to the deaths of Vancouver's most marginalized women – a sad dignity that television cameras and newspaper accounts have failed to do."[140] Although she was a media insider, Stoffman's concluding statement demonstrated the lack of compassion and coverage from media sources of the disappearances and murders. Belmore's performances help to fill this void by visually recording the historical narratives the mainstream media long ignored.

In her blog, *Not Artomatic*, the art historian Lara Evans describes her experience seeing *The Named and the Unnamed* at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia. She describes *Vigil* as a "heart-wrenching commemoration of the number of women who had gone missing in downtown east Vancouver, many of them victims of alleged serial killer Robert Pickton."[141] In her blog entry, Evans states:

> I had never before possessed the patience to sit through a thirty-minute video installation artwork, but this installation succeeded in evoking the immediacy of a work of performance art and I found myself unable to leave….*Belmore puts us, immediately and viscerally, in the position of a public that sees an atrocity, knows it is about to happen again, and does nothing*….She takes an impersonal abstract situation, the failure of an anonymous group of police, civil, and legal authorities to admit that a serial killer is preying on "unimportant" women, and makes it *a very personal, visceral, horrifying experience*.[142]

I argue that these responses to *The Named and Unnamed* could also easily be applied to *One thousand One hundred & eighty One,* since it contends with the same atrocities, only on a broader, national scale. Sparse scholarship and media coverage of *One thousand One hundred & eighty*

[139] Judy Stoffman, "A powerful, spare dignity," *Toronto Star*, June 12, 2003, accessed November 15, 2017 via EBSCOHost.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Evans, "Rebecca Belmore: Vigil and the Named and the Unnamed."
[142] Ibid. Emphasis added.

One – due to Belmore's request not to document the performance – do not lessen the performance's poignancy. Rather *One thousand One hundred & eighty One*'s quasi-invisibility echoes and reiterates the lack of media attention granted the missing women at the time of their disappearance.

The visceral nature of *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* exists not only in Belmore's laborious actions, but also in the form of the log, which subtly resembles a human torso (fig. 2.16). In her essay "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," Walker notes that during the performance, Belmore and curator Wanda Nanibush invited members of the audience to rub their hands over the nails. The audience "both felt and saw the nails as the collective weight of the missing and murdered women – the nails hammered into the subtle shape of the female body."[143] By hammering nails in to the torso-shaped log, Belmore recreated the anguish that most likely accompanied each disappearance. The nails remain (fig. 2.17–2.18), piercing the log's wooden flesh and imbuing it with the pain felt by the women and their families – a visceral, visual reminder of the ongoing crisis.

This brings to mind the role *Vigil, The Named and the Unnamed,* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* play in teaching and reminding the public of the tragic disappearances and murders taking place throughout Canada and the United States. I contend that one way this public pedagogy occurs is within the interplay between the performances' archive and repertoire. The video of *Vigil* that comprises the installation *The Named and the Unnamed* and the nail-studded log from *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* form the archive of these performances. The audiences were witnesses to the creation of the performances' repertoire, and by observing Belmore's public commemorations, they became participants in the transmission of knowledge. Much like Claxton's installation *Buffalo Bone China* reactivates her performance's repertoire, the

[143] Walker, "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," 144.

reinstallation and exhibition of *The Named and the Unnamed* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One's* log reactivates the repertoire of Belmore's original performances and continues the transmission of their embodied knowledge.

As previously noted, Taylor stresses that "[t]he repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there,' being a part of the transmission."[144] Evans' underscored this importance of presence as she described her viewing of *The Named and the Unnamed*:

> [T]he video was projected over a screen backed by approximately fifty light bulbs, the number of bulbs being approximately the same number of women who were known to have gone missing at the time of the performance. The pattern of the light bulbs remains on the retinas long after one has walked away from the piece….Belmore's use of the light bulbs in this installation provides [a] physical presence, an effect on the viewer's body, *a physical response that lingers*….The pattern of afterimages is disorienting. It is almost as if it has become part of your eyes, part of your vision, and is replicated everywhere you look.[145]

I argue that the physical response of a viewer's eyes to the light bulbs (fig. 2.13–2.15), in *The Named and the Unnamed* represents the knowledge transmission taking place; the installation physically imprints the repertoire's knowledge through the bright lights of the archive. As Evans describes, the transmitted knowledge regarding the missing and murdered women "remains on the retinas long after one has walked away."[146] The importance of presence was particularly important for *One thousand One hundred & eighty One's* original audience. By running their hands over the nails (fig. 2.17–2.18), a physical transmission of knowledge occurred as the knowledge of the 1,181 missing and murdered Indigenous women was transmitted through touch. However, I

[144] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.
[145] Evans, "Rebecca Belmore: Vigil and the Named and the Unnamed." Emphasis added.
[146] Ibid.

contend that the nail-studded log continues to transmit knowledge through its lasting physical presence and its existence as a tangible object.

The repertoire in these artworks also embodies the women's absence through the physical materials that comprise the artworks' archive. When exhibited, the video in *The Named and Unnamed* continuously signifies the absence of the missing women through Belmore's shouting of their names. However, she also acknowledges the women, letting "each woman know that she is not forgotten: her spirit is evoked and she is given life by the power of naming."[147] The nail-studded log from *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* is a tactile representation of the MMIW crisis, the nails becoming a visual and physical representation of the missing women. The very presence of these tangible reminders of the missing women draws attention to the women's absence in their communities, creating a public awareness of the crisis. The dissemination of knowledge endures through the social and public awareness created by Belmore's artworks, and this awareness writes the murdered and missing women into the history of Canada and the United States.

In bringing her performances to a personal level, both for herself and for the audience, Belmore's performances distinguish themselves as a new form of new genre public art focused on public and social awareness. Belmore's performances effectively demonstrate the role art plays in transmitting knowledge, for without reminders such as *Vigil* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One*, violence, disappearances, and marginalization of certain groups could be forgotten or ignored by society-at-large. Society-at-large must first be consciously aware of a problem before it can move toward a solution.[148] Although media coverage – both in Canada and the United States

[147] "Vigil," http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/video/Vigil.html.
[148] Efforts are being made in the United States and Canada to address the MMIW; however, those efforts have been plagued in controversies and inaction. In the United States in October 2017, then-Senator Heidi Heitkamp (North Dakota) introduced Savanna's Act, a bill aimed at addressing the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous

– about the MMIW has increased, more needs to be done. The women still need to be remembered, their stories need to be told, and naïve publics need to be informed. The disappearances and violence need *to end*. Belmore asserts:

> Performance is calling things to attention, *making people aware*. We live our lives everyday – we are busy, busy existing. At the same time, we are aware. We just don't think about it all the time. We can't. I take a moment through performance to create a space to acknowledge that what is going on is important.[149]

Belmore's performances take a moment to remember and commemorate these women, acknowledging that they and their lives were and are important.

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women in the US. The bill was named in honor of Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a citizen of the Spirit Lake Tribe who vanished in August 2017 in Fargo while eight months pregnant. Her body was found in the Red River eight days later. Although unanimously passed by the Senate, the bill stalled in the House of Representative's Judiciary Committee because its chair, Rep. Bob Goodlatte (Virginia) prevented the bill from moving forward. The bill expired in December 2018 at the end of the 115th Congress. In order to move forward, the bill will have to be reintroduced during the 116th Congress. Related bills introduced in the House of Representatives also stalled in the House Judiciary Committee.
Mariana Alfaro, "A retiring House Republican is stalling a bill that would protect Native American women," *Business Insider*, December 19, 2018, https://www.businessinsider.com/house-republican-blocks-a-bill-that-would-protect-native-american-women-2018-12 .
Sarah Friedmann, "Savanna's Act Would Address Violence Against Native American Women — But One Lawmaker's Stalling It," *Bustle*, December 2018, https://www.bustle.com/p/savannas-act-would-address-violence-against-native-american-women-but-one-lawmakers-stalling-it-15539239 .
S.1942 - Savanna's Act, 115th Congress of the United States, https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1942 .
H.R.4485 - Savanna's Act, 115th Congress of the United States, https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4485 .
H.R.6545 - Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018, 115th Congress of the United States, https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/6545 .

In 2016, the Government of Canada launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Its focus is to determine "systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence. We must examine the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes that contribute to the ongoing violence and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada." National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls official website, http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/mandate/ . The truth gathering process of the inquiry formally concluded on December 10, 2018, and the final report is expected to be delivered to the Canadian government in April 2019. However, the inquiry was plagued by defections, bureaucratic chaos and personal conflict. For a detailed discussion on the difficulties surrounding the inquiry, see Nancy Macdonald and Meagan Campbell, "Inside The Crisis Threatening Canada's MMIW Inquiry," *Chatelaine Magazine,* September 13, 2017, https://www.chatelaine.com/living/politics/mmiw-inquiry-crisis/, and Brian Hutchinson, "Broken before It Begins," *Maclean's* Vol. 130, no. 5 (June 2017) 34–35, accessed via EBSCOHost.
[149] Belmore quoted in "Rebecca Belmore: Fiercely Political/Politically Fierce" by Bell, 35. Emphasis added.

The performances also reveal the need to confront the darkness of settler-colonial history in the United States and Canada as the MMIW crisis stems from a long history of oppression, racism, and violence against North America's Indigenous peoples.[150] If such brutalities are erased from history, who would demand social or institutional change? How might it occur? In making these women's stories part of the larger historical narrative, Belmore forces naïve publics to confront these ongoing atrocities. As Walker asserts, Belmore's performances remind "us that settler colonialism is a project that should be acknowledged and resisted by everyone who wants to see a more socially just future for Indigenous women on this land."[151]

Many contemporary Indigenous artists, including Belmore and Pyramid Lake Paiute artist Gregg Deal, use their artwork to confront settler-colonialism's ongoing project and its continuing effects on contemporary Indigenous peoples and communities. While Belmore confronted settler-colonialism by raising awareness about the traumatic crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women, Deal confronts settler-colonialism by commenting on the disregard for Indigenous lives, the encroachment onto Indigenous land, and the continuous breaking of treaties through the construction of oil pipelines.

Gregg Deal, Supreme Law of the Land: History through a Bodily, Visual Work of Activism

> My work is a voice, first and foremost. A voice of one single Indigenous person and the experiences and perspectives that I carry. I believe these things are informed by truth, and that truth is the most important thing on the table. Much of this is an effort to enact equality for Indigenous people, literally, figurative[ly], socially, and politically….[My artwork] can contribute and inform, while leaving the issues at hand as the most important.[152] – Gregg Deal

[150] For more discussion about this long history and its effect on the MMIW crisis, see: Dean, *Remembering Vancouver's Disappeared Women;* and Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Christi Belcourt, eds, *Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2018).
[151] Walker, "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," 144.
[152] Email interview with the artist, Gregg Deal, November 28, 2018.

When describing himself, artist Gregg Deal (Pyramid Lake Paiute) says "I'm a painter, a conceptual artist, site-specific [artist], and performance artist."[153] However, it was not until a transformative experience as the assistant for James Luna's 2005 performance *Emendatio* – performed at the 51st Venice Biennale – that Deal "began to see what he once considered a hokey idea [performance art] as a powerful social platform."[154] His performance works are now just one-part of his artistic practice – a practice he began full-time in 2009 and one that can be defined as "visual works of activism."[155] Through these visual works of activism, Deal contends with the "many ways mainstream culture has corrupted and usurped indigenous culture,"[156] addressing topics ranging from cultural appropriation, racism and identity, to the on-going project of settler-colonialism in the United States and its effect on Native peoples.

One such artwork that interrogates the projects of settler-colonialism is Deal's performance *Supreme Law of the Land* (fig. 2.20–2.29), which addresses the controversy surrounding the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Deal debuted *Supreme Law of the Land* on January 27, 2017 as part of the Denver Art Museum's *Untitled Final Friday* activities. The performance was in memory and solidarity of the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts in 2016 to halt the construction of the pipeline. Through the lens of commemoration and commentary, I examine this performance as a bodily, visual work of activism to determine how *Supreme Law of the Land* disrupts the settler-colonial discourse of the United States and intervenes in its corresponding historical narrative. I

[153] Gregg Deal quoted in "Art Talk with visual artist Gregg Deal" by Paulette Beete, *Art Works Blog*, National Endowment for the Arts, September 10, 2014, https://www.arts.gov/art-works/2014/art-talk-visual-artist-gregg-deal.
[154] Kris Coronado, "'Last American Indian' finds challenges in performance art," *The Washington Post*, February 14, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/last-american-indian-finds-challenges-in-performance-art/2014/02/13/08b88100-82ba-11e3-8099-9181471f7aaf_story.html?utm_term=.1b4ae4255473 .
[155] Tim Regan, "Gregg Deal's Performance Art Exposes the Real-Life Effects of the Washington Football Team's Name," *Washington City Paper*, September 23, 2014, https://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/arts/performance-dance/blog/13081200/gregg-deals-performance-art-exposes-the-real-life-effects-of-the-washington-football-teams-name .
[156] Beete, "Art Talk with visual artist Gregg Deal."

contend that Deal can be considered as an "artivist;" according to Taylor, "[a]rtivists (artist-activists) use performance to intervene in political contexts, struggles, and debates. **Performance, for some, is the continuation of politics by other means.**"[157] When addressing how someone would read the overarching narrative of his artistic practice, Deal notes that:

> [T]he narrative is something activist-driven. It has an activist edge but that's just the nature of being an indigenous person in the modern day. I think a lot of my work is exploring the ideas and the philosophies behind being indigenous in the modern day, which equates to activism, because I side on the side of indigenous people being able to assert their own identity.[158]

He underscores this activist-drive narrative in his artwork further when speaking about performance art as a powerful tool for Indigenous artists. He states:

> I think [performance art] is an incredible tool especially for indigenous artists because indigenous art is marginalized so often….Contemporary indigenous artists like myself have *a really strong social message* with [their art] and it's really easy to emphasize and illustrate those social messages *by making myself the work* and putting it out there in a way that people can consume it and they can see it and they can feel it.[159]

This statement encapsulates the essence of *Supreme Law of the Land*, a performance in which Deal used his body as a tool to transmit a social message, as well as historical knowledge, about the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL; fig. 2.19) runs about 1,200 miles from the Williston Basin oil fields' Bakken formation in North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, before joining the Energy Transfer Crude Oil Pipeline in southern Illinois.[160] Designed to transport as many as 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day, DAPL has been met with fierce opposition by Native

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[157] Taylor, *Performance*, 147. Emphasis original.
[158] Gregg Deal quoted in "Art Talk with visual artist Gregg Deal," Beete, *Art Works Blog*.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Renée Jean, "Oil flowing through Dakota Access pipeline," *Williston Herald*, June 2, 2017, https://www.willistonherald.com/news/oil-flowing-through-dakota-access-pipeline/article_6330eeca-472d-11e7-8cac-df7bf2851be5.html.

nations and landowners, whose lands and properties lay in or near the pipeline's path, since its proposal in 2014.[161] The largest and most media-covered of the opposition efforts were the resistance efforts led by the Standing Rock Sioux.

In September 2014, Energy Transfer Partners (DAPL's parent company; hereafter referred to as ETP) announced plans for the DAPL route (fig. 2.19 and 2.30), including a crossing under Lake Oahe at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball River. This location is only a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Reservation and is just one of dozens of river and water crossings along the DAPL route.[162] The Missouri River is the primary water source for the Standing Rock Sioux, meaning an under-river crossing creates a serious pollution threat should the pipeline leak or burst. In addition, according to the Standing Rock Sioux, the pipeline's route also transverses sacred land and burial grounds. Their Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Jon Eagle, Sr. stated:

> The land between the Cannonball River and the Heart River is sacred….It's a historic place of commerce where enemy tribes camped peacefully within sight of each other because of the reverence they had for this place. In the area are sacred stones where our ancestors went to pray for good direction, strength and protection for the coming year. Those stones are still there, and our people still go there today.[163]

In August 2016, the resistance efforts intensified as the Standing Rock Sioux nation filed an injunction on August 4 and sued the Army Corps of Engineers for allegedly failing to:

> [A]dequately consult tribal members before approving the pipeline, and [for violating] the National Historical Preservation Act when it "effectively

[161] For timelines and discussions on the DAPL opposition and protests, see Amy Darlymple, "Landowners Wary of Huge Pipeline Project," *Bismarck Tribune,* May 24, 2015, https://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/landowners-wary-of-huge-pipeline-project/article_4089f349-158d-51e5-bafa-2fd0adc6ebd1.html; Justin Worland, "What to Know About the Dakota Access Pipeline Protests," *TIME,* October 28, 2016, http://time.com/4548566/dakota-access-pipeline-standing-rock-sioux ; and Rebecca Hersher, "Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight," *NPR,* February 22, 2017, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/22/514988040/key-moments-in-the-dakota-access-pipeline-fight.

[162] DAPL route information obtained from George Emmons, "The Unseen Harm: U.S.-Indian Relations & Tribal Sovereignty," *Golden Gate University Law Review*, Vol. 48, Iss. 2, (2018), Art. 8, 198.

[163] Jon Eagle, Sr. quoted in "Dakota Access Pipeline Standoff: Mni Wiconi, Water is Life" by Valerie Taliman, *Indian Country Today*, August 16, 2016, https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/dakota-access-pipeline-standoff-mni-wiconi-water-is-life-FuSZ5CeNIUi-bq1oDyXs1w/.

> authorized construction of the vast majority of the pipeline in and around federally regulated waters without any provision to ensure destruction to culturally important sites."[164]

Eighteen days later, on August 22, 2016, Water Protectors[165] blocked the DAPL construction sites at Cannon Ball, North Dakota, and clashes between the Water Protectors and security guards hired by ETP, police, and national guardsmen continued over the next several months.[166] David Archambault, Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman from 2013-2017, underscored the Standing Rock Sioux's commitment to the fight against DAPL:

> We have a serious obligation, a core responsibility to our people and to our children, to protect our source of water. Our people will receive no benefits from this pipeline, yet we are paying the ultimate price for it with our water. We will not stop asking the federal government and Army Corps to end their attacks on our water and our people.[167]

The Standing Rock Sioux filed several injunctions in an attempt to halt the construction of DAPL.[168] They formed camps on and near the Cannon Ball, ND construction sites (fig. 2.30) and thousands of people joined the Oceti Sakowin (the Great Sioux Nation) in demonstrations against

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[164] Hersher, "Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight."

[165] Scholar Natchee Blu Barnd notes that "[d]uring the confrontations at Standing Rock, Native people who were opposed to the placement of the Dakota Access Pipeline across that land…refused the label of 'protestors.' They insisted on recognition as Water Protectors. Rhetorically, this positioned the oil companies, law enforcement, politicians, and governmental agencies as harming water, and making choices to cause death…The choice to protect water was not framed as a political choice, or as something that one might protest. The name Water Protectors signaled an ontological position that required consideration of a nonhuman world and reflected a cultural framework organizing the relationship between humans and water. The Water Protectors saw their presence in terms of a set of responsibilities that all humans must uphold and that their spiritual teachings made explicit and unequivocal. Any other position meant opposition to life and thus a calculated sacrifice and designated death."
Natchee Blu Barnd, *Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017) 150.

[166] Protest information obtained from Alexander Sammon, "A History of Native Americans Protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline," *Mother Jones*, September 9, 2016, https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2016/09/dakota-access-pipeline-protest-timeline-sioux-standing-rock-jill-stein/.

[167] David Archambault quoted in "Dakota Access Pipeline Standoff," Taliman.

[168] For a summary of the injunctions filed by the Standing Rock Sioux see Worland, "What to Know About the Dakota Access Pipeline Protests;" Hersher, "Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight;" and Sammon, "A History of Native Americans Protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline."

DAPL.[169] More than 100 Native nations were represented among the Water Protectors and hundreds of non-Native allies joined the resistance as well, including representatives from environmental groups and veterans groups.[170]

The NoDAPL resistance at Standing Rock was more than a simple resistance effort; it was a social movement, one that continues on in the efforts of other Indigenous and environmental groups who are taking a stand against pipeline construction throughout the United States.[171] Scholar T.V. Reed defines social movements as "the unauthorized, unofficial, anti-institutional, collective action of ordinary citizens trying to change their world."[172] As a bodily work of activism, I argue that *Supreme Law of the Land* is a part of the NoDAPL collective action, an action that helped to amplify the movement's message and helped cement the Standing Rock resistance in the historical narrative of the United States.

Deal conceived of his performance *Supreme Law of the Land* in December 2016, arranging

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[169] For a video produced by the Standing Rock Sioux regarding DAPL, see "Mni Wiconi: The Stand at Standing Rock," Standing Rocky Sioux Tribe, November 15, 2016. Accessed via: https://www.facebook.com/StandingRockST/videos/1435600033134929/ .

[170] For information on the Water Protectors and their allies, see Saul Elbein, "These are the Defiant 'Water Protectors' of Standing Rock," *National Geographic,* January 26, 2017, https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/01/tribes-standing-rock-dakota-access-pipeline-advancement/ ; and Christopher Mele, "Veterans to Serve as 'Human Shields' for Dakota Pipeline Protesters," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/29/us/veterans-to-serve-as-human-shields-for-pipeline-protesters.html.

[171] Some of the most recent pipeline controversies include the proposed expansion to the Enbridge Pipeline in Minnesota and the proposed replacement line for the Enbridge Pipeline Line 5 in Michigan. For further discussion on the Enbridge Pipeline Line 3 controversy, see Walker Orenstein, "Where the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline project stands, and where it goes from here," *MinnPost*, December 10, 2018, https://www.minnpost.com/environment/2018/12/where-the-enbridge-line-3-pipeline-project-stands-and-where-it-goes-from-here/ ; and Will Parrish and Alleen Brown, "How Police, Private Security, and Energy Companies are Preparing for a New Pipeline Standoff," *The Intercept*, January 30, 2019, https://theintercept.com/2019/01/30/enbridge-line-3-pipeline-minnesota/.
For further discussion on the Enbridge Line 5 controversy, see Trevor Bach, "A Submerged Oil Pipeline Triggers a Winter of Frigid Protest," *The Washington Post,* December 21, 2018, https://wapo.st/2Gjw7ZX?tid=ss_mail&utm_term=.c3d0a690b156; and Paul Egan, "Whitmer takes first step to block Enbridge Line 5 tunnel," *Detroit Free Press,* updated January 2, 2019, https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/01/02/enbridge-line-5-pipeline-tunnel/2465607002/ .

[172] T.V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Cultural and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) xiii.

with the Denver Art Museum to perform at the museum in January 2017. On December 4, 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers halted DAPL construction, saying it intended to "issue an environmental impact statement with 'full public input and analysis' before it approves the river crossing at Lake Oahe."[173] However, as Deal notes, "[a]t the beginning of the…week [he] performed…[President] Trump signed off on an executive order to push thru both the Dakota Access Pipeline and the XL Keystone Pipeline, making the performance on Friday [January 27, 2017] an overtly well timed moment for the issue at hand."[174] Despite the efforts by the Standing Rock Sioux and the collective NoDAPL movement, President Trump's executive order allowed DAPL to became fully operational in June 2017. Although the pipeline was not yet operational at the time of his performance, Deal offered a poignant commemoration of the Water Protectors' efforts and a sharp commentary on the pipeline's approval.

A large, white floor covering defined the performance space, and in the center stood a microphone stand and a small table, which held a small clear, cup of water. To begin, Deal walked to the center of the performance space and unfolded a United States flag, placing it upon the ground and standing on it. After adjusting the microphone, he read Article VI, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States (fig. 2.20), which states:

> This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any state to the Contrary notwithstanding.[175]

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[173] Hersher, "Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight."
Although the Army Corps stated they were soliciting public comments concerning DAPL until February 20, 2017 while they completed their environmental impact statement, they abruptly changed course and on February 7, 2017, they granted ETP the easement allowing DAPL to cross under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe. It issued "a memo saying it intend[ed] to terminate the public comment period and rescind[ed] its notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact assessment."

[174] Personal correspondence with the artist, December 14, 2017.

[175] "The Constitution of the United States," Article VI, Clause 2. Accessed online via The National Archives: https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript#toc-article-vi-.

Deal then read the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 (fig. 2.21), the treaty that "established formal relations between the U.S. government and the northern plains American Indian nations."[176] According to scholar Antonie Dvorakova, the 1851 treaty:

> [C]ontains eight articles, which bound the Native American nations to make peace with one another, to recognize the right of the United States to establish roads and posts within their respective territories, and to make restitution for any wrongs committed by their people against the citizens of the United States. The Native American nations were further supposed to acknowledge the prescribed boundaries of their respective territories….The United States bound itself to protect the Natives against U.S. citizens and to deliver certain annuities. If any Native nation violated a single provision of the treaty, the annuities could be withheld.[177]

The fundamental purpose of the treaty was to ensure the safety of Euro-American settlers who were crossing the Plains in increasing numbers during the latter-half of the 19th century. The treaty also began the demarcation of assigned territories for the Native nations who were party to the treaty. Dvorakova notes that by drawing the boundaries of the assigned Native territories, the United States government "made it possible…to negotiate with specific nations to secure land cessions from them."[178] Establishing the historical context that informed not only *Supreme Law of the Land* as a performance, but also the efforts of the Water Protectors and the NoDAPL movement was key for Deal. In an interview he explained:

> To me the historical references are key. So much of the Indigenous narratives are lost to popular culture and one sided story telling that we lose the nuance of Indigenous existence through a smattering of nationalism and misinformation. The Historical context informs the past and the present and the future, not just in understanding but in moving towards equity and honor. As an Indigenous person, history informs all these things already. They give context, they hold stories, they carry truth, and Indigenous truth is a major thing missing today.[179]

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[176] Antonie Dvorakova, "Treaty of Fort Laramie (1851)," in *Treaties with American Indians: An Encyclopedia of Rights, Conflicts, and Sovereignty,* Donald Lee Fixico, ed. (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2008) 297.
[177] Ibid. The main Native nations who were party to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 include "the Sioux (referring to Lakotas, Dakotas, and Nakotas), Cheyennes, Arapahos, Crows, Assiniboines, Mandans, and Arikaras."
[178] Ibid., 298.
[179] Email interview with the artist, November 28, 2018.

During Deal's recitation of the Constitution and the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, a man dressed in black began cutting away sections of the flag Deal stood upon, throwing them to the side, until only a small square remained under Deal's feet (fig. 2.22). Two other men also joined the performance; dressed in business suits, they arose from the audience and began walking around the edge of the performance space, predatorially circling Deal as he read the Treaty. While one man silently expressed aggravation and disbelief at the Treaty's language, the other man left the performance space and returned carrying two yellow oil bottles (fig. 2.23–2.24). After handing his partner a bottle, the man poured oil into Deal's water cup, polluting the water, while his partner drew upon Deal's face with the oil (fig. 2.25–2.26). Both "businessmen" (hereafter referred to as oil men) then began to flick, wipe, and pour oil on Deal, as well as the paper he read from, until the bottles were empty (fig. 2.27). Once empty, the men threw the bottles at Deal's feet and walked away, leaving Deal alone, covered in oil, as he ended the performance by standing in silence (fig. 2.29).

According to Deal, in *Supreme Law of the Land,* he took the "difficulty and nuance of the NoDAPL effort" and reduced "it down to the basic issue, Treaties."[180] By reading both Article VI, Clause 2 of the Constitution, and the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, Deal established for his audience that Treaties are considered, as outlined specifically in the Constitution, as "the supreme Law of the Land."[181] Through this recitation of historical, legal documents, he brought the past forward to the present, reminding the audience of the promises made by the US government in its treaties with Native nations, promises that have been continuously broken. In an interview, Deal noted the importance of establishing this historical, legal precedent:

> We are convoluting our opinions with ownership and time, often dismissing the historical context of something like Treaties. In this situation, this treaty

[180] Personal correspondence with the artist, Gregg Deal, December 14, 2017.
[181] Constitution, Ar. VI, Cl. 2.

> is protected by the Constitution of the United States (hence "Supreme Law of the Land" title) and the dismissiveness of that incredible fact undermines the very document that many of those who claim not to care about such things politically and socially hold dear.[182]

Through this oral transmission of historical legal knowledge, Deal connected the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 to the present-day DAPL controversy, highlighting the continuing effect colonial interference has with present-day Native lives. The many elements of *Supreme Law of the Land* add nuance to these legal parameters by transmitting knowledge concerning the different aspects of the historical narrative surrounding DAPL and the resultant controversy.

One of the first poignantly physical actions in the performance is the destruction of the United States flag (fig. 2.22). According to Deal, the cutting away of the flag symbolized the loss of Indigenous lands that occurred during the colonization of the land that now comprises the United States.[183] However, the cutting away of the flag is also a visual echo and reminder of the US government's chipping away of Indigenous sovereignty as it continuously undermines the Treaties it made with Indigenous nations, and breaks the promises and agreements contained within the Treaties.[184] Despite the protections promised to the nations of the Sioux (referring to Lakotas, Dakotas, and Nakotas), the Cheyenne, the Arapaho, the Crow, the Assiniboine, the Mandan, and the Arikara in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, the treaty "contributed to the ultimate loss of

[182] Email interview with the artist, Gregg Deal, November 28, 2018.
[183] On a January 28, 2017 Instagram post featuring a photograph from the *Supreme Law of the Land* performance, Deal commented: "I was standing on an American flag measuring 80"x60" that was cut away until I was standing on a small piece. A symbol of loss of land." Instagram post accessed via: https://www.instagram.com/p/BPz50LWA_4J/ .
Deal referred to this symbolization in an interview as well: "The visualization of having the flag under me cut to smaller and smaller pieces, a metaphor for land, was important coupled with the antagonizing of the two white gentlemen in suits. This was all meant to be metaphorical yet literal in it's [*sic*] representation." Email interview with the artist.
[184] For further discussion on the history of Treaties within the United States see Colin G. Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft : Treaties and Treaty Making in American Indian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2013), and Fixico, *Treaties with American Indians.*

almost all Native land involved, which was eventually opened for settlement by European Americans."[185]

Additionally, I contend that the literal destruction of the American flag initiated the process of re/signification in *Supreme Law of the Land,* similar to how the destruction of bone china initiated the process of re/signification in Claxton's *Buffalo Bone China.* Within American culture, the flag is touted as a symbol (signifier) of "freedom" and "liberty and justice for all."[186] By juxtaposing the destruction of the flag with the reading of the Fort Laramie Treaty and the antagonization by the oil men, Deal upsets the flag's established signification as the embodiment of the American ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice. *Supreme Law of the Land* calls into question who these ideals benefit, and ultimately by asking this question, the performance re/signifies the flag as a symbol of oppression and broken promises enacted by the U.S. government towards Indigenous nations. Similar to the recoding of the bone china in *Buffalo Bone China,* the recoding of the flag in *Supreme Law of the Land* exposes again the legacies of colonization and the greed that underscored Manifest Destiny. As a national symbol for the United States, the flag embodies the lust of Manifest Destiny for Indigenous lands and pushes to the forefront the knowledge that the United States was founded on stolen land. By destroying the flag and representing the destruction of Indigenous sovereignty, the performance complicates the cultural belief of the United States as the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

The settler-colonial lust for Indigenous lands and the natural resources of the U.S. was further embodied in the two businessmen, the antagonizers who represented "Big Oil" companies.

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[185] Dvorakova, "Treaty of Fort Laramie (1851)," 298.

[186] For discussions about the symbolism of the Flag of the United States in American culture and history, see Peter Gardella, *American Civil Religion: What Americans Hold Sacred* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Richard Jenkins, eds., *Flag, Nation, and Symbolism in Europe and America* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

Their presence and actions during the performance acted as visual reminders for the ongoing disregard of Indigenous land claims, and the poisoning of Indigenous lands and peoples through pollution.[187] The original DAPL route (fig. 2.30) would have crossed the Missouri River near Bismarck, ND, but authorities worried about the threat it posed to the city's water supply. As reported by journalist Bill McKibben, "[t]hey moved the crossing to half a mile from the reservation, across land that was taken from the tribe in 1958, without their consent."[188] Though concealed by a nicely-dressed exterior, these "men of industry" embodied this dark side of capitalism and settler-colonialism – the disregard for Indigenous lives and land.

In order to soothe his throat as it became rough throughout the performance, Deal drank from the water cup and continued to do so even after the oil men polluted the water (fig. 2.28). I read this action as a representation of the inherent danger of polluted water sources that DAPL embodies for Standing Rock, as well as other reservations and communities located along the pipeline's route. The Lakotayapi assertion "Mni Wičoni" – "water is life or, more accurately, water is alive"[189] – became the prayerful rallying call of the Water Protectors and the NoDAPL movement. As Indigenous scholars Jaskiran Dhillon and Nick Estes explain:

> Mni Sose [the Missouri River] is not a thing that is quantifiable according to possessive logics. Mni Sose is a relative: the Mni Oyate, the Water Nation. She is alive. Nothing owns her. Thus, the popular Lakotayapi assertion "Mni Wiconi"—water is life or, more accurately, water is alive.[190]

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[187] For further discussion on environmental contamination and pollution on Native American reservations and land, see Daniel Brook, "Environmental Genocide: Native Americans and Toxic Waste," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 1998) 105-113; Anita Moore-Nall, "The Legacy of Uranium Development on or Near Indian Reservations and Health Implications Rekindling Public Awareness," *Geosciences*, Vol. 5, Iss. 1 (2015) 15-29; and Sherry L Smith and Brian Frehner, eds., *Indians & Energy: Exploitation and Opportunity in the American Southwest* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2010).

[188] Bill McKibben, "A Pipeline Fight and America's Dark Past," *The New Yorker*, September 6, 2016, https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/a-pipeline-fight-and-americas-dark-past.

[189] Jaskiran Dhillon and Nick Estes, "Introduction: Standing Rock, #NoDAPL, and Mni Wiconi," Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, December 22, 2016, https://culanth.org/fieldsights/1007-introduction-standing-rock-nodapl-and-mni-wiconi.

[190] Ibid. Dhillon and Estes continue on to explain: "You do not sell your relative, Water Protectors vow. To be a good relative mandates protecting Mni Oyate from the DAPL's inevitable contamination. This is the practice of

However, in *Supreme Law of the Land*, instead of representing life, the water that should be refreshing Deal's vocal-chords and body becomes a sign of possible illness due to the water's polluting by the oil men. By evoking the NoDAPL movement, the performance connects the polluting of Deal's body to the polluting of water and land. Instead of being a signifier of life, the water becomes a signifier of probable death through the pollution and destruction of nature.

In personalizing the NoDAPL movement for his audience through the endangerment of his body, Deal also transferred the controversy and resistance efforts from the distant, rural Standing Rock Reservation into the urban space of Denver, Colorado. It is easier to distance yourself from a controversy when it is seemingly far away or when it seems it will not affect you directly. As Taylor notes in her discussion of artivists' performances:

> While most of us are not the victims or the survivors or the perpetrators of these crimes, we still participate in criminal politics. Our governments coordinate systems of repression, and our tax dollars pay for them. With all of the atrocities that continue to be committed throughout the Americas….these artivists help us to remember that we (all) live in proximity to political violence.[191]

By drinking the oil-polluted water, Deal confronted his audience with the potential danger oil pollution represents for the people living along the pipeline's path. He describes a visceral reaction from his audience: "When one of the antagonizers put oil in the water I was drinking as I read to refresh my mouth and throat, people bemoaned that. When I drank it, there was an audible gasp to that action…it mirrors the shock of the literal moments of the Standing Rock actions."[192] This reaction shows that Deal helped his audience to remember their proximity to political violence and societal injustices, for the aggressive actions of the North Dakota state government and ETP stem

Wotakuye (kinship), a recognition of the place-based decolonial practice that Yellow Knives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard calls *grounded normativity*." Emphasis original.

[191] Taylor, *Performance,* 153.

[192] Email interview with the artist, November 28, 2018.

from the long history of oppression, racism, and violence against Indigenous peoples in the United States.[193] As stated by journalist Bill McKibben, "America's shameful history with its native inhabitants is echoing across these riverbanks this late summer [of 2016]."[194]

The audience also reacted to the two oil men, the antagonizers, and their disrespectful treatment of Deal. He explains: "At one point I heard later that someone was going to try and physically stop them from messing with me. That reaction is the reaction of someone enveloped in what they're looking at."[195] Although subdued in comparison with the actual events that occurred at the Standing Rock resistance, Deal's drinking of the polluted water and the disrespect shown to him by the oil men echoed the violence enacted on the Water Protectors (fig. 2.31-2.32) by police through their use of dogs, water cannons in below-freezing temperatures, tear gas, rubber bullets, and many other apparatuses of policing and social control.[196] Through his performance, national history became local history as Deal forced his audience to confront the continuation of settler-colonialism in the present-day. *Supreme Law of the Land* created an intervention the audience's historical memory and brought the NoDAPL movement to the forefront of their historical knowledge. I argue that the audience members' physical and audible reactions to *Supreme Law of the Land* are the conceptual evidence of the transmission of knowledge occurring through the performance.

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[193] For a discussion on the historical context of NoDAPL see Nick Estes, Fighting for Our Lives: #NoDAPL in Historical Context," *The Red Nation* blog, September 18, 2016, https://therednation.org/2016/09/18/fighting-for-our-lives-nodapl-in-context/ ; and Emmons, "The Unseen Harm," 185-206.
[194] McKibben, "A Pipeline Fight and America's Dark Past."
[195] Email interview with the artist, November 28, 2018.
[196] For further information on the violence enacted against the NoDAPL protesters, see Eyder Peralta, "Dakota Access Pipeline Protests in North Dakota Turn Violent," *NPR*, September 4, 2016, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/04/492625850/dakota-access-pipeline-protests-in-north-dakota-turn-violent ; Sue Skalicky and Monica Davey, "Tension Between Police and Standing Rock Protesters Reach Boiling Point," *The New York Times*, October 28, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/29/us/dakota-access-pipeline-protest.html ; and Julia Carrie Wong and Sam Levin, "Standing Rock protesters hold out against extraordinary police violence," *The Guardian*, November 29, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/29/standing-rock-protest-north-dakota-shutdown-evacuation.

In addition, the audience not only participated in the transmission of knowledge, they also witnessed the creation of the performance's repertoire. Similar to the video recordings of Claxton's *Buffalo Bone China* and Belmore's *The Named and the Unnamed*, the video recording, as well as photographic documentation, of Deal's *Supreme Law of the Land* comprises the archive of the performance. Any future (re)performances, viewings of the video, or viewings of the performance's photographs will reactivate the embodied knowledge of the repertoire and continue the transmission of historical knowledge. In fact, on July 27, 2018, a viewing of the video-recording of *Supreme Law of the Land* took place at an *Untitled Final Fridays* at the Denver Art Museum. Deal hosted the event, which explored the intersectionality of art and activism.[197] By attending the event and experiencing the video viewing of *Supreme Law of the Land,* the Final Fridays attendees participated in the transmission and reproduction of the historical knowledge embodied in the performance's repertoire.

As a work of activism – or "artivism," artistic activism – *Supreme Law of the Land* intervenes in the historical narrative of the United States through Deal's visceral commentary on and commemoration of the DAPL pipeline and the NoDAPL movement. Although performed after Trump's approval of the DAPL project, *Supreme Law of the Land* acted as a call for continuous attention to the situation. Deal's performance supported the Oceti Sakowin, the Water Protectors, and their efforts by amplifying their message through his art. As noted by scholar Nicolas Lampert:

> [W]hen artists join [social] movements, their work – and by extension their lives – takes on a far greater meaning. They become agitators in the best sense of the word and their art becomes less about the individual and more about the common vision and aspirations of many. Their art becomes part of a culture of resistance.[198]

[197] For information on the July 27, 2018 *Untitled Final Fridays* see "Untitled: Gregg Deal," Denver Art Museum. Website accessed on December 1, 2018: https://denverartmuseum.org/calendar/untitled-gregg-deal.
[198] Nicolas Lampert, *A People's Art History of the United States* (New York: The New Press, 2013) xi.

As Deal asserts, "Art matters because it informs our world…it will state the state of things, whether we see it or not….I think that there's power in art, politically, socially, culturally. And so I think art is power."[199] His performance *Supreme Law of the Land* demonstrates that art has the power not only to augment important social movements, but also to contribute to the construction of history. By amplifying the message of the Water Protectors, Deal helped to intervene in the historical narrative of the United States, inscribing into history the perspectives and voices of those who have been marginalized. Deal underscores the importance of including marginalized voices in the historical narrative of America:

> I like the idea of being able to say outwardly, even through art, that we're still here and that we have opinions and thoughts and ideas, and that *our existence has been part of the American narrative, and will always be part of the American narrative*, because this is Indian land.[200]

Conclusion

In their essay "Native Performance Art: The Medium is Wide Open," Aldona Jonaitis and Elizabeth Kalbfleisch describe several elements that they assert "speak to the nature of Native performance art:"

> The artist mobilizes his or her own body as a medium. An audience gathers to experience the work of art along with the artist. The resulting works are ephemeral, each occurring at a unique place and time. Location is carefully chosen as the artist engages with his or her environment. Finally, each of these performances extends a message about aboriginality and issues of importance to Native people.[201]

The performances I discussed in this chapter – *Buffalo Bone China* by Claxton, *Vigil* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* by Belmore, and *Supreme Law of the Land* by Deal – employ

[199] Deal quoted in "Art Talk with visual artist Gregg Deal."
[200] Deal quoted in "Gregg Deal shows the living reality of indigenous American culture," Griffin Swartzell, *Colorado Springs Independent,* April 25, 2018, https://www.csindy.com/coloradosprings/gregg-deal-shows-the-living-reality-of-indigenous-american-culture/Content?oid=11900182. Emphasis added.
[201] Jonaitis and Kalbfleisch, "Native Performance Art," 319.

all of these elements in their production and transmission of knowledge. Through their functions as acts of transfer, these performances become bodily expressions of history and cultural memory, which intervene in the historical narratives of North America. As demonstrated through my analyses, when considered as an episteme, performance art allows us to expand what we understand by "knowledge." I contend that the art and performances of Claxton, Belmore, and Deal – among other Native artists – constitute an interruption in the quotidian of mainstream culture by contending with pertinent events for Native nations and communities across North America.

Through their visceral performances, these artists disrupt the dominant culture's privilege of ignorance – created by the settler-colonial governments of the United States and Canada, whose official Histories often malign or ignore those they have oppressed – by forcing their audiences to contend with past and current atrocities enacted on North America's Indigenous peoples through settler-colonialism. Disrupting this privilege by addressing these events and histories helps to insert Indigenous peoples' perspectives into the historical narratives of North America. As Taylor noted, "Large or small, visible or invisible, performances create change."[202] Performance is an artistic medium that is simultaneously "a process, a praxis, an episteme, a mode of transmission, an accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world"[203] and one that contributes to the production and reproduction of knowledge.

The production and reproduction of knowledge is a collective effort, "a series of back-and-forth conversations."[204] The creative expressions of Claxton, Belmore, Deal and other Indigenous artists are part of these back-and-forth conversations. The interactions between the artists and their

[202] Taylor, *Performance*, 10.
[203] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire,* 15.
[204] Ibid., xx.

audiences – whether it is through live performance or interactions with an artwork's archive and repertoire – formulate the conversations. Claxton underscores the importance of dynamic exchange to creative expression. She argues:

> Our creative expression sustains a connection to ancient ways, places our identities and concerns in the immediate, while linking us to the future. To a broader audience, *this expression conveys an Aboriginal worldview, revealing the Aboriginal experience in all of its complexities*. Such expression is an articulation of our culture and *presents an Aboriginal perspective for all those who will listen*.[205]

By articulating their culture and revealing the Aboriginal experience through their performances, the artists generate knowledge. It is through the artist/audience conversations – the collective effort of those experiencing and witnessing the events that form our daily lives – that the historical narrative of North America becomes more complete as the voices and perspectives of those who have been marginalized became part of the discourse. Taylor's assertion that the production of knowledge is a collective effort applies not only to performance art, but also to other art forms, including installation art, as I will demonstrate in chapter three.

[205] Dana Claxton, "Re:Wind," in *Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual & Digital Culture*, Melanie Townsend, Dana Claxton, and Steve Loft, eds. (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 2005) 40. Emphasis added.

Chapter 3 – Indigenous Installation Art: Writing History through Audience Engagement

The term "installation art" is applicable to a diverse set of artistic practices and as such, has no definitive definition. Curator and scholar Lee-Ann Martin explains that "[t]he term 'installation art' has been used increasingly since the 1960s to denote temporary, site-specific artworks designed to surround or interact with the viewer and/or extant architecture in a given exhibition space."[206] Art historians Janet C. Berlo and Jessica L. Horton expand this understanding by noting that "'Installation art' refers to a wide range of artistic practices, emerging primarily since the 1960s, that call attention to relationships among objects, viewers, and spaces."[207] Following a similar rationale, scholar Monica E. McTighe succinctly concludes that "Installation is not a medium but a multimedia practice."[208]

Despite the lack of a definitive definition, scholars do, however, seem to agree on the importance of the viewer's relationship to and experience of installation art. Art historian Claire Bishop argues that the key characteristic of installation art is its "insistence on the literal presence of the viewer" as it "addresses the viewer directly as a literal presence in the space," a characteristic that differentiates it from traditional media such as photography, painting, and sculpture.[209] Art historian Julie Reiss further asserts that "[t]he spectator is in some way regarded as integral to the completion of the [installation] work" because "[t]he essence of Installation art is spectator participation" and "meaning evolves from the interaction between the two [the installation and the spectator.]"[210] As noted additionally by art historian Kate Morris, "[b]ringing [art] down from the

[206] Lee-Ann Martin, "Adjacencies and Distances: Indigenous Installation Art in Canada," in *Native Art Now!*, 216.
[207] Janet Catherine Berlo and Jessica L. Horton, "A Gathering Place: Relationality in Contemporary Native Installation Art," in *Native Art Now!*, 194.
[208] Monica E. McTighe, *Framed Spaces: Photography and Memory in Contemporary Installation Art* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2012) 22.
[209] Claire Bishop, *Installation Art* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 6.
[210] Julie H. Reiss, *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999) xiii.

pedestal allows the work to 'enter the space of the viewer' in a manner that promotes an *embodied* (rather than simply visual) relationship between the two…."[211] These assertions about the relationships between installation art and its audience are further underscored by Berlo and Horton, who state that these relationships "await activation by the bodily presence of viewers…Installation art implies that objects, viewers, things and spaces all share a degree of agency; *each shapes the role of the other*."[212]

Berlo and Horton also assert that it is this focus "on relationships and connections, rather than isolated objects [that] resonates with a much longer history of North American Native art."[213] They note that the year of the Columbus quincentenary saw a proliferation of Indigenous artists using installation practices to explore diverse themes:

> Beyond critiques of colonialism and capitalism, artists began to treat installations as a meeting ground on which mixed cultural referents converge to explore themes such as home, land, religion, gender, globalization, and the *construction of history itself*.[214]

However, they also connect present-day Indigenous installation art with ancient works such as petroglyphs and the Great Medicine Wheel, and argue that "Native artists currently working are frequently inspired by the relational qualities of older Indigenous forms, drawing on such resources to respond to the challenges of their present."[215] I contend that contemporary Indigenous artists are not only responding to the challenges of their present through installation art, but are also visually producing new historical knowledge. I further argue that it is through the relational qualities of installation art that the transmission of historical knowledge occurs.

This chapter explores how the embodied relationships between installations – made by

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[211] Kate Morris, "Introduction to Sculpture, Installation, and Mixed Media," *Native Art Now!*, 123-124.
[212] Berlo and Horton, "A Gathering Place," 194. Emphasis added.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid., 196. Emphasis added.
[215] Ibid., 195.

Indigenous artists – and their audiences aid in continuing the reorientation of the traditional ways in which history in the Americas is studied, which was first explored through Indigenous performance art in chapter two. By investigating the past and present through the lens of installation art's relational qualities, I determine how installation art is part of the back-and-forth conversations in the collective effort that is the production and reproduction of knowledge. I draw upon multiple methodological and theoretical frameworks to examine the ways in which the storage and transmission of knowledge occur within select installations by the artists Robert Houle (Saulteaux), RYAN! Feddersen (Confederated Tribes of the Colville: Okanogan, Arrow Lakes, German, and English), and Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota, Austrian, and Norwegian).

Similar to the performances by Claxton, Belmore, and Deal that I discussed in chapter two, these installations address and contend with pertinent past and current events for Native nations and communities across North America. Houle's multi-media installation *Paris/Ojibwa* (2010) reveals and recovers the (his)stories of Mississauga Nishanaabeg dancers who traveled to Paris with Euro-American artist George Catlin in 1845. Feddersen's thermochromic ink installations *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* (2017) and *Kill the Indian, Save the Man – Borderlands* (2017) address the history of state-sponsored cultural genocide and the expunging of Indian boarding schools from historical records and contemporary education. Luger's social collaboration, sculptural installation *Every One* (2018) works to humanize the data of North America's missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, queer and trans community members (MMIWQT). As with the histories and events discussed in chapter two, the events and (his)stories addressed by Houle, Feddersen, and Luger are also often marginalized, maligned, or expunged from mainstream

history and media coverage. The engaging multi-media installations of Houle, Feddersen, and Luger function as poignant visual expressions of these (his)stories.

Through these case studies, I seek to discern how history and historical knowledge are visually created, recorded, and transmitted through installation art. My exploration of how the creation and transmission of knowledge occurs within the installations extends Taylor's methodology of reading performance as an episteme – which I applied in chapter two – beyond the medium of performance and applies it to installation art. By considering installation art also as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge – I again ask what histories are revealed. Whose stories become visible? I closely investigate the signification processes taking place – particularly the process of re/signification through parody in Houle's 2010 installation *Paris/Ojibwa*; the processes of productive frustration and participation in Feddersen's 2017 installations *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* and *Kill the Indian, Save the Man – Borderlands*; and the process of collaborative commemoration in Luger's 2018 installation *Every One*. Martin asserts that "at its best, installation art expands the viewer's experience beyond the limitations of the two-dimensional."[216] I contend that through these expanded experiences, installation art invites viewers to take part in the production and reproduction of knowledge, making them active participants in the construction of history.

Installation, Theory, and the Transmission of Knowledge

Due to the importance of the viewers' relationship to and experience with installation art, it can be considered a relational art form. Nicolas Bourriaud defines relational art as "an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the

[216] Martin, "Adjacencies and Distances," 217.

assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space."[217] Although Bourriaud's definition of relational art focuses on interactions among the viewers of an artwork, I argue that it also characterizes the interactions between a viewer and the artwork itself. As previously noted, I contend that it is through the relational qualities of installation art that a transmission of knowledge occurs. While the signification processes occurring within installations visually create historical knowledge, it is the embodied relationships and interactions between the artworks and their audiences that transmit the knowledge.

The fundamentals of installation art – materiality, spatiality, and relationality – work together to help foster embodied relationships between installations and their viewers. In his 1966 *Artforum* essay, "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," sculptor Robert Morris discussed how these fundamentals, particularly spatiality and materiality, work together in sculpture so that "the total space…is hopefully altered…by the presence of the object."[218] Regarding the spatiality of large-scale sculptures/art objects, Morris asserted:

> It is necessary literally to keep one's distance from large objects in order to take the whole of any one view into one's field of vision…one's awareness of oneself existing in the same space as the work is stronger….*One is more aware than before that he himself is establishing relationships* as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context.[219]

His assertions are readily applicable to installation art as well; by requiring a viewer to perceive an installation from a distance, the artist creates a need for physical participation from the viewer, who must walk in or around the installation to perceive it from different angles. Through this alteration of an exhibition space – turning the exhibition space into an area of physical participation

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[217] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, and Mathieu Copeland (France: Les presses du réel, 2002) 14. Emphasis original.
[218] Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," *Artforum* (October 1966) 233. Accessed via: http://arts.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/robert-morris-notes.pdf.
[219] Ibid., 231-232. Emphasis added.

rather than stationary contemplation – the artist thrusts the installation into the viewer's physical space, encouraging engagement and fostering a relational experience.

By entering the physical space of the viewer, the installations of Houle, Feddersen, and Luger – among other contemporary Indigenous artists not addressed here – endeavor to "displace…to make a space for [themselves]."[220] As asserted by Kate Morris, large-scale installations, including the works I examine here, "command…the gallery, inviting or compelling viewers to interact with them physically; this literal occupation of space confirms Morris's early suppositions that such spaces are 'altered by the presence of the object.'"[221] This displacement and alteration enacted by installations "shake the spectator out of a passive, spongelike state [to] instead have a self-determined, active experience."[222]

This change in the viewer's positionality due to a relational experience with installation art is further emphasized by Martin. In her essay "Adjacencies and Distances: Indigenous Installation Art in Canada," she states: "The act of physical engagement, such as walking into and/or around the work, activates the viewer and *shifts one's positionality from passive viewer to participant*."[223] It is this shift in positionality that I argue makes the viewer an active participant in the construction of history. As asserted by Diana Taylor, people participate in "the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there,' [by] being a part of the transmission."[224] Because of installation's art insistence on the literal presence of the viewer in the space, I contend that the archive and the repertoire – as defined by Taylor and explored in chapter two – can also be found in installation art, although they may manifest themselves in different ways than they do in a performance.

[220] K. Morris, "Introduction to Sculpture, Installation, and Mixed Media," 120.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Reiss, *From Margin to Center*, xxiv.
[223] Martin, "Adjacencies and Distances," 218. Emphasis added.
[224] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.

Furthermore, I assert that alteration, displacement, the archive, and the repertoire work in conjunction to fully engage the viewer in a bodily experience of installation art, and that this bodily experience plays a part in the production and transmission of knowledge.

As a multimedia artistic practice, installation art lends itself to analysis through many different forms of a theoretical framework, and this chapter makes use of several different frameworks to analyze the selected artworks by Houle, Feddersen, and Luger. First, I contend that all three artists employ "critical distance" in their works. In "Adjacencies and Distances" Martin discusses how Indigenous artists often challenge Bishop's assertion that the key characteristic of installation art is the literal presence of the viewer with the space. Martin asserts that "…Aboriginal artists often challenge [this] definition by strategically placing viewers at a *critical distance* from the 'internal dialogue' of their works."[225] In my analyses, I demonstrate how critical distance is enacted in the installations by Houle, Feddersen, and Luger in a way that fosters engagement with the viewer. This critical distance forces the viewer to engage with the artworks in order to learn from them, in order to discern the installations' "internal dialogue." I argue that this forced engagement is part of the knowledge transmission process and is one aspect of each installation that "activates" the viewer and invites them to participate in the production of knowledge. In addition, I employ the analytical lenses of postmodern parody, participation and productive frustration, and social collaboration. Semiotics is also of particular importance as I investigate how signification occurs within an installation, and what role signification plays in creating and disseminating knowledge. I discuss each theoretical framework in greater detail as it pertains to my analysis within each individual case study.

[225] Martin, "Adjacencies and Distances," 217. Emphasis added.

Employing audience engagement and embodied relationships as the overarching methodological framework, I now turn my attention to analyzing Houle's installation *Paris/Ojibwa*, Feddersen's installations *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* and *Kill the Indian, Save the Man – Borderlands*, and Luger's installation *Every One*.

Robert Houle, Paris/Ojibwa: Reclaiming Anishnabe[226] History through Parodic Subversions

> I am convinced that art has the capacity to raise the spirit…the place and process of creative activity, a place where the artist is at once powerful and vulnerable, is the site of political and cultural change.[227]

> My grandfather said: "Jiishin gegoo wiiseg maa akiing, nishnaabe waabdaan." "If something is going to happen, our people will witness it."[228] – Robert Houle

For more than 40 years, Robert Houle's (Saulteaux) artistic and curatorial career has contended with the legacy of colonization, addressing such issues as sovereignty, representation, and the decolonization of the museum. Throughout his dual careers, his desire for "sovereignty over subjectivity" – what he explains as a "creative desire to declare sovereignty over one's voice, a right to one's own representation"[229] – has guided his exploration and navigation of Indigenous and Western artistic traditions. By bringing these artistic traditions together, Houle's artwork "visually manifests the complex relationship between Indigenous and settler peoples, thereby establishing a strong discursive foundation for the difficult subjects he tackles."[230] As an

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[226] Shirley Madill notes that Robert Houle, as an Anishinaabemowin speaker, prefers the spelling "Anishnabe" as opposed to "Anishinaabe." Throughout this case study, I use Houle's preferred spelling.
Shirley Madill, *Robert Houle: Life & Work* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2018) 84. Accessed online via: https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/robert-houle.
[227] Robert Houle, "Sovereignty over Subjectivity," *C Magazine*, 30 (Summer 1991) 35.
[228] Robert Houle, "Robert Houle, visual artist and 2015 Canada Council laureate - a film by Derreck Roemer," directed by Derreck Roemer, co-production of the Canada Council for the Arts and Charles Street Video, March 24, 2015, video interview, 4:15, https://youtu.be/NNdigmKB7So .
[229] Houle, "Sovereignty over Subjectivity," 30.
[230] Stacy A. Ernst, "Indigenous Sovereignty and Settler Amnesia: Robert Houle's *Premises for Self Rule*," *RACAR: Revue d'Art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review*, Vol. 42 (2017) 108.

"[e]ducator, artist, curator, critic, *and* historian – Houle recognizes no boundaries"[231] in his examination of "historical and contemporary issues affecting Indigenous cultures."[232]

As noted by scholar Shirley Madill, Houle's work "has inspired two generations of Indigenous artists to move bravely beyond traditional methods, embrace mainstream contemporary discourse, and proactively challenge colonial narratives of art history."[233] I argue that Houle also challenges the colonial narratives of History in North America through his critiques of colonization and through his recovery and reclamation of Indigenous histories. An artwork that achieves such a recovery and reclamation is Houle's 2010 multi-media installation *Paris/Ojibwa* (fig. 3.1-3.8), an installation that presents the (his)stories of Mississauga Nishanaabeg dancers, led by Maungwudaus, who traveled to Paris in 1845 as a part of George Catlin's Indian Gallery. Catlin used the dancers – who came from "what was then known as Canada West"[234] – to portray his interpretation of the life and histories of Native peoples specifically from the American West of what is now the United States. And although he devoted his work to recording the lives and cultures of what he thought were the "vanishing" Native peoples of North America, Catlin, through the exhibiting of his Indian Gallery, also reinforced "a view of American Indians that was far removed from reality."[235] Thus, Catlin contributed to creation of the myth of the American West, a mythology that often depicts Indigenous peoples alternately as a people disregarded by history, "noble savages," or a marginalized "vanishing race."

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[231] Michael Bell, "Making an Excursion," in *Kanata: Robert Houle's Histories*, Madge Pon, ed. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993) 8.
[232] Madill, *Robert Houle: Life & Work*, 23.
[233] Ibid., 22.
[234] Robert Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Peterborough: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011) 47.
[235] Sandy Nairne, "Director's Forward," in *George Catlin: American Indian Portraits*, Stephanie Pratt and Joan Carpenter Troccoli, eds. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2013) 7.

Through the lens of postmodern parody, I examine *Paris/Ojibwa* to determine how it re/signifies the myth of the "vanishing race." My analysis also investigates how this re/signification, along with Houle's use of the archive and critical distance, encourages viewer engagement and the role these artistic tools play in the transmission of knowledge. I contend that in *Paris/Ojibwa,* Houle asserts Ojibwa visual sovereignty and recodes history from an Anishnabe perspective by parodying nineteenth-century artistic conventions, such as ethnographic portraiture, as presented in Catlin's Indian Gallery. In analyzing *Paris/Ojibwa*'s parodic subversions, I determine how Houle's recoding of history complicates mainstream memory and makes an intervention in the settler-colonial history of the United States.

Allan J. Ryan's 1992 article "Postmodern Parody: A Political Strategy in Contemporary Canadian Native Art" uses Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody, as well as her concept of postmodernism, to demonstrate a method of reading contemporary Native art that "reveals [a] significant political agenda."[236] He explains that Hutcheon's theory "seems to offer a perspective on the present and the past which allows an artist to speak *to* a discourse from *within* it, but without being totally recuperated by it." [237] In this case study, I follow Ryan's suggestion of approaching contemporary Native American art through Hutcheon's postmodern framework of parody to examine the concept of "re/signification," or a recoding of signs within art.

Hutcheon's theory defines parody as an "integrated structural modeling process of revising, replaying, inverting and 'trans-contextualizing' previous works of art."[238] According to Hutcheon:

> Parody is one mode of coming to terms with the texts of that "rich and intimidating legacy of the past." Modern artists seem to recognize that change

[236] Allan J. Ryan, "Postmodern Parody: A Political Strategy in Contemporary Canadian Native Art." *Art Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 3, Recent Native American Art (Autumn 1992) 59.
[237] Ibid. and Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988) 35, quoted in Ryan, "Postmodern Parody," 59. Ryan notes that the word "recuperated" is used in the sense of "co-opted."
[238] Ibid. 11.

> entails continuity, and have offered us a model for the process of transfer and reorganization of that past. Their double-voiced parodic forms play on tensions created by this historical awareness.[239]

Houle reorganizes the history and legacy of the American West – as well as the United States at-large – through an indigenous epistemology by revising, replaying, and parodying nineteenth-century cultural and artistic conventions in his art. It is through his parodic subversions that an intervention is made in the historical narrative of the United States. I also contend that it is through his parodic subversions that the process of re/signification takes place, and my analysis uses semiotics in order to examine his use of parody as a tool of re/signification.

As noted previously in this dissertation, studying semiotics can "assist us to become more aware of the mediating role of signs and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing social realties."[240] The artworks of Catlin and others constructed the social realities of the nineteenth-century American West for the American public, and their constructions have persisted doggedly through time. The *reconstruction* of social realities in the American West by contemporary Native American artists, such as Houle, help to intervene in the mainstream historical narrative of the American West by subverting aspects of its mythology and by exposing forgotten histories.

As with my analysis of Claxton's performance *Buffalo Bone China*, I specifically use semiotics in my analysis of *Paris/Ojibwa* to investigate the role of the signifier, which includes the concepts of the "vanishing race," in signifying the convergence of the mythological and the historical in the American West. In my analysis, the acoustical image[241] of the "vanishing race"

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[239] Ibid. 4.
[240] Chandler, *Semiotics the Basics*, 10-11.
[241] As noted in my analysis in chapter two of the performance *Buffalo Bone China* by Dana Claxton, Hugh Silverman defines the signifier is "the word or the acoustical image" that "invokes a concept which corresponds to it." Silverman, "Introduction," *Cultural Semiosis Tracing the Signifier,* 2.

serves as the signifier that invokes the signified concept of the American West.[242] Houle's use of parody complicates the relationship between the established signifier (vanishing race) and the signified (the American West), and causes the signifier to take on new meaning and ultimately re/signify the historical aspects of the American West, while simultaneously subverting its mythology. In complicating this semiotic relationship, I argue that the process of re/signification taking place within *Paris/Ojibwa* becomes a form of visual sovereignty by revealing the "lost" history of the Mississauga Nishanaabeg dancers.

As previously noted, Houle's 2010 multi-media installation *Paris/Ojibwa* responds to George Catlin's Indian Gallery by presenting the stories of Mississauga Nishanaabeg dancers (fig. 3.2) who traveled to Paris with Catlin in 1845.[243] First exhibited at the Canadian Cultural Center in Paris in April 2010, the installation consists of a theater set, complete with a sound component and futuristic video projection, as well as sketches and working documents Houle produced during the creation of *Paris/Ojibwa*.[244] The theater set "reimagines a grand 1845 Parisian salon in which two different cultures, Ojibwa and Parisian, make contact, evoking the lingering memory of the historical Maungwudaus and his Ojibwa dance troupe performing for the Parisian court."[245]

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[242] The signified is an invisible concept – in this case study the American West – referred to by the signifier; the signified is a tacit element that is "literally absent yet functionally present because it has been invoked." Quote: Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, *Semiotics and Communication: Signs, Codes, Cultures* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1993) 23.

[243] The members of the dance troupe included: Maungwudas, Say-say-gon, Ke-che-us-sin, Mush-she-mong, Au-nim-much-kwah-um, A-wun-ne-wa-be, Wau-bud-dick, U-je-jock, Noo-din-no-kay, Min-nis-sin-noo, and Uh-wus-sig-gee-zigh-gook-kway (wife of Maungwudaus). Names listed and transcribed in Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 48. Houle obtained the names from George Catlin, *Catlin's Notes of Eight Years' Travels and Residence in Europe, with his North American Indian Collection*, originally published in 1848.

[244] Carla Garnet and Celeste Scopelites, "Foreword." *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa*, 4.
In his review of *Paris/Ojibwa,* journalist R.M. Vaughn described the video projection as a "pulsing, morphing digital animation that takes the viewer from the rough terrain of woodsy Canada to an effete Parisian salon and on the swirling spirit world." R.M. Vaughn, "Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa explores history as a construct," *The Globe and Mail*, June 3, 2011. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/robert-houles-parisojibwa-explores-history-as-a-construct/article625100/ .

[245] "Foreword," *Paris/Ojibwa*, 4.

Houle conceived of the installation after an encounter with a sketch by the French artist Eugène Delacroix, *Cinq études d'Indiens* (1845; fig. 3.3) while conducting archival research during his 2006 residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.[246] Further research by Houle revealed that Delacroix based his sketches on members of Maungwudaus's dance troupe, whom Delacroix saw perform in Paris in 1845. This important role of Delacroix's archive in Houle's conception of *Paris/Ojibwa* connects the artwork to the "archival impulse," a concept which art critic Hal Foster classified in the early 2000s.[247]

Foster explains that archival artists "are drawn to historical information that is lost or suppressed, and they seek to make it physically present once more."[248] Such artists, Foster continues, achieve this by elaborating on "the devices of the found image, object, and text, and [archival artists] often favor the installation format as they do so, the nonhierarchical spatiality of which they use to [their] advantage."[249] Houle's archival research in Paris drew him to the overlooked history of Maungwudaus and his dance troupe, and through *Paris/Ojibwa* – a "project of reclamation, revitalization, and recovery"[250] – he makes their history physically present once more.

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[246] Madill, *Robert Houle: Life & Work*, 20 and 45. Madill explains the importance of archival research to Houle's artistic practice: "In the history of Canada numerous documents tell stories of conquest and expansion, trade and development, in which colonial aspirations harmed countless Indigenous peoples. *First Nations have been excluded from the telling of such history*. Houle's impeccable research into official and unofficial documents involves the *extensive recovering of information* related to a *true history of First Nations*. For his site-specific work, he begins with research on the location and its previous history, whether it be of a museum, government institution, or particular piece of land." *Robert Houle: Life & Work*, 71. Emphasis added.

[247] Houle created his own paintings based on Delacroix's sketches, an undertaking that Odawa artist Barry Ace called a "re-awakening of spirit." The paintings were one of the components of *Paris/Ojibwa* when it was exhibited in 2010 at the Canadian Cultural Center in Paris. Barry Ace, "A Reparative Act," in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa*, 35.

[248] Hal Foster, *Bad New Days: Art, Criticism, Emergency* (London: Verso Books, 2015) 68.

[249] Ibid.

[250] Matthew Ryan Smith, "The Archive in Contemporary Indigenous Art," *First American Art Magazine* (Fall 2016) 26.

I contend that Houle's archival impulse in his creation of *Paris/Ojibwa* also played a part in creating *Paris/Ojibwa*'s repertoire. Through the conception and bodily creation of the individual components of the installation – including the salon theater set, the video projection, and the paintings based on Delacroix's sketches – Houle imbued each component with the reclaimed (his)story of the Mississauga's dancers. Each time *Paris/Ojibwa* is exhibited, the relational experience the installation fosters with its viewers reactivates the embodied knowledge of the artwork's repertoire. Historical knowledge is then transmitted to the viewer through the parodic subversions Houle used to create the installation. I discuss these subversions – particularly how they are manifested in the salon theater set – and their role in the transmission of knowledge in my analysis below.

Houle's reconstructed nineteenth-century Parisian salon – the main focus of my analysis because it best illustrates his use of parody – consists of an elevated marble floor and two walls "formed from four individual panels that were built and painted at [Houle's] studio in Toronto."[251] Each of the four panels contains a portrayal of a figure whose back is toward the viewer (fig. 3.4); the four figures represent the *medáwenene* (Shaman), *megahzoownene* (Warrior), *nóojemowenene* (Healer), and *nahmidwenene* (Dancer),[252] alluding to four members of Maungwudaus' dance troupe who contracted smallpox and died while in Europe. The small paintings located beneath each of the four portraits are abstract representations of micro-organisms (fig. 3.5) based on images Houle saw on a Louis-XIV style buffalo robe from the mid-1700s (fig. 3.6), which is located at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. Houle appropriated the micro-organism imagery to represent the smallpox virus that decimated Maungwudaus's troupe. Lining the top of each wall panel are

[251] Wanda Nanibush (Anishinaabe), "Contamination and Reclamation: Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa," *FUSE Magazine*, December 29, 2010, http://fusemagazine.org/2010/12/961.
[252] Anishinaabemowin names for the figures obtained from David McIntosh, "Travelling Light: *Paris/Ojibwa*," in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa,* 16.

the individual names of Maungwudaus and four members of his troupe (fig. 3.7). A pedestal topped by an urn anchors the front corner of the salon's stage set.

Paris/Ojibwa is Houle's physical manifestation of a time portal to 1845, a time when Catlin presented Maungwudaus and his troupe as living exhibits of an ancient, "vanishing" culture. The elaborate salon set carefully imitates the beautiful, refined neo-classical decoration – including a patterned marble floor and pilasters – that would have featured in nineteenth-century French architecture. Regarding his artistic practice, Houle notes that:

> I've always been primarily concerned with making a beautiful object because I feel that is the only way to attract a total stranger. You know, to attract attention, you try to create magic…Not that an object's or a work of art's *raison d'être* should be its beauty…but..for me, that's how I communicate and that's how I expect viewers of my work to look, to respond to [his] work, because of its beauty, because of its physicality and materiality. And at the same time, also, [he] know[s] that once [he] do[es] that, once [he has] gained a viewer's attention, [he] knows that [he] can communicate other ideas – *maybe somehow [he] can teach them something too*.[253]

Houle uses the beauty, materiality, and physicality in *Paris/Ojibwa* to gain the viewer's attention in order to teach them about Maungwudaus and his dance troupe. The set embodies multiple instances of re/signification through its decoration and construction. These richly layered signifiers draw the viewer in and encourage a relationship of engagement through which the viewer can learn the (his)stories of the Mississauga dancers.

Houle's imitation of a nineteenth-century French salon interior embodies the critical repetition of postmodern parody as defined by Hutcheon. From the seventeenth century until their decline in the late nineteenth-century, French salons were an intellectual institution of the upper class in which culture was cultivated.[254] Often overseen by women, the salons were a place where

[253] Robert Houle, "Conversation with Robert Houle," in *Kanata: Robert Houle's Histories*, 18. Emphasis added.
[254] The term "culture" is used here in the sense of a refined understanding and appreciation of the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement.

literature and art were discussed, and the refined decoration was constructed to promote intellectual conversations.[255] Maungwudaus' troupe performed as part of Catlin's Indian Gallery for King Louis-Philippe and his queen, Maria Amelia, in the salon at the Tuileries palace in Paris. Concerning the creation of the salon set, Houle states:

> Creating a space where Maungwudaus and the dancers may have performed, and leaving it empty as if they had just left was crucial in connecting the touch of a cold marble and granite floor to a flashpoint of cultural clash and shock. Imagine dancing in moccasins to choreography created for the ground outside, the natural, the indigenous, the exotic, all confined and altered by "civilization."[256]

This cultural clash and shock aids in recreating this flashpoint experience for the viewer, an experience that echoes the interactions between the Mississauga dancers and the Parisians who saw them perform. Houle noted that he "wanted to somehow bring what might have occurred at that time, how people might have interacted with each other in the spirit of 1845 compared to today."[257] The clash also emphasizes the parodic subversions Houle created in *Paris/Ojibwa*. The neo-classical interior decoration of the salon is subverted through the inclusion of the four portraits of the Shaman, Warrior, Healer, and Dancer, as well through the presence of the smallpox virus paintings. These subversions question the "civilization" of the salon space that once confined the dancers.

The virus paintings (fig. 3.4) upset particularly the signification of French salons as a place of culture and refinement, and their utilization re/signifies the salon as a place of disease and death, as it was through contact with Europeans that the dancers contracted smallpox. Scholarship on

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[255] For further information on salons and their role in French society and culture see: Steven D. Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Benedetta Craveri, *The Age of Conversation,* trans. Teresa Waugh (New York: New York Review Books, 2005); and Amelia Gere Mason, *The Women of the French Salons* (Westphalia Press, 2016).

[256] Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 50.

[257] Robert Houle quoted in "Paris/Ojibwa: Interview with Robert Houle," by Denise Frimer, *C Magazine* (Issue 112, Winter 2011) 25-26.

Catlin's Indian Gallery often ignores the fate of the three dancers, as well as that of Maungwudaus's wife and three children.[258] Herman Viola's essay "The American Indian Genre Paintings of Catlin, Stanley, Wimar, Eastman, and Miller" notes that Catlin replaced his white actors with "various troupes of Indians who happened to be touring Europe at the time, paying them to perform to improve attendance."[259] Viola, however, does not name or mention Maungwudaus's Ojibwa troupe, leaving them nameless and thus denying them agency. Benita Eisler's 2013 biography on Catlin, *The Red Man's Bones*, describes Catlin's employment of the Iowa troupe led by White Cloud and the troupe's devastation by smallpox in detail. Concerning the Ojibwa troupe, Eisler devotes only six pages in which only Maungwudaus is mentioned by name, although she does note the troupe's decimation by smallpox.[260]

I argue that this marginalization of the Ojibwa dancers' story in the scholarship and literature surrounding Catlin's "show" is representative of historical or settler amnesia. Scholar and curator Candice Hopkins asserts that historical amnesia is one of the lingering effects of imperialism and defines it as "an active forgetting that forms the basis of the national narratives of countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil, among others."[261] Art historian Stacy A. Ernst contends that settler amnesia is a collective form of amnesia, one that "relates to the specifics of the colonial situation, and involves forgetting the prior claims of

[258] One author who does detail Maungwudaus's life is historian Donald B. Smith, although his discussion focuses more broadly on Maungwudaus's life and experiences in Europe, rather than just his time with Catlin's Indian Gallery. See Donald B. Smith, *Mississauga Portraits: Ojibwe Voices from Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) 126-163.
[259] Herman Viola, with H. B. Crothers and Maureen Hannan, "The American Indian Genre Paintings of Catlin, Stanley, Wimar, Eastman, and Miller" in *American Frontier Life*, Ron Tyler et al. (New York: Abbeville, 1987), 133.
[260] See chapters 25-27 for Eisler's discussion on White Cloud's Iowa dance troupe and Maungwudaus' Ojibwa dance troupe. Benita Eisler, *The Red Man's Bones* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013).
[261] Candice Hopkins (Carcross/Tagish First Nation), "On Other Pictures: Imperialism, Historical Amnesia and Mimesis," in *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art*, Greg Hill, Candice Hopkins, and Christina Lalonde, eds. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2013) 22.

Indigenous people and the violence and dishonesty that shapes a colonial nation-state."[262] Ernst further notes that settler amnesia is a key aspect of building settler states because "remembering such history raises uncomfortable questions."[263]

However, *Paris/Ojibwa* raises uncomfortable questions about the colonization of North America and its legacy by forcing its audience to confront and remember the decimation of Native peoples by European diseases. The installation also memorializes the lives of Maungwudaus and his troupe, rendering them as individuals rather than an ambiguous group of "Ojibwa dancers" and acknowledging that their lives and experiences were and are important to the historical narratives of North America's settler-colonial nation-states. By engaging with the Ojibwa dance troupe's past through *Paris/Ojibwa*, Houle brings "the tale of these dancers…forward to our times" and inserts them into a history that has ignored them.[264] Houle's "aesthetic choices privilege that Indigenous position"[265] and disrupt the historical and settler amnesia that surrounds Maungwudaus and his troupe. And in disrupting this amnesia, *Paris/Ojibwa* transmits to its viewers the historical knowledge of the Ojibwa dancers, placing their stories into the viewer's historical memory. This disruption works in tandem with the other signification processes and subversions occurring in *Paris/Ojibwa* to add further nuance to the viewer's understanding of the dancers' (his)stories.

Houle subverts the salon form further by turning the walls from structures into a type of sculpture (fig. 3.8). As salons are actually individual rooms within buildings, they are structures that contain space and form the boundaries of that space. However, the walls of the *Paris/Ojibwa* salon are not structural, emphasized by the supporting buttresses visible when the salon is viewed from behind. They contain only the set's empty space, thereby drawing the viewer's attention to

[262] Ernst, "Indigenous Sovereignty and Settler Amnesia," 114.
[263] Ibid.
[264] "Foreword," *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa*, 5.
[265] Ernst, "Indigenous Sovereignty and Settler Amnesia," 108.

the "salon" as a site on which Houle's construction of history and visual parodies are played out. Contemporary galleries and museums – institutions founded in Euro-American culture – now exhibit *Paris/Ojibwa*, allowing Houle to exert control over European cultural patrimony. Houle takes the walls that were once used to "contain" the Native dancers and appropriates them in a process of re/signification, asserting Native cultural sovereignty over a space once claimed exclusively by European cultural sovereignty.

This overt appearance of a stage set emphasizes the theatricality of the space, drawing the viewer's attention to the artificiality of the installation. Depending on how the viewer approaches the installation, they are required to walk around it in order to view the "salon"; this requirement activates the viewer, changing their positionality from a passive viewer to a participant as they walk around the set to examine its individual parts. Combined with its life-size scale, the set's artificiality contributes to *Paris/Ojibwa*'s alteration of the gallery space. Houle describes such an alteration:

> Looking at the installation orthographically from the pedestal, and diagonally across the floor, the two right-angled walls removed simulate two elevations, thus opening it up to the entire gallery space. The theatrical, trompe l'oeil, marble floor, never quarried, never danced upon, situates the viewer in front of a European interior, *an alternate view*.[266]

This alternate view takes the viewer out of the gallery and transports them to nineteenth-century France. The installation also provides the viewer an alternate view of history – a view in which the stories of the Mississauga dancers are no longer ignored, an *Anishnabe* history.

The artificiality of the salon set also emphasizes the artificiality and superficiality of Catlin's Indian Gallery. In 1845, Maungwudaus and his dance troupe (fig. 3.2) were part of the traveling exhibition and live show, *Catlin's Indian Gallery of Portraits, Landscapes, Manners and*

[266] Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 44. Emphasis added.

Customs, Costumes, etc.[267] In 1837, his Indian Gallery opened in New York, after which it traveled to Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, and in 1839, Catlin took his Gallery to London.[268] In the descriptive catalogue for his Indian Gallery, Catlin described the purpose of his gallery thus:

> I wish to inform the visitors to my Gallery that, having some years since become [*sic*] fully convinced of the rapid decline and certain extinction of the numerous tribes of the North American Indians; and seeing also the vast importance and value which a full *pictorial history* of these interesting but dying people might be to future ages – I sat [*sic*] out alone, unaided and unadvised, resolved, (if my life should be spared), by the aid of my brush and my pen, to rescue from oblivion so much of their primitive looks and customs as the industry and ardent enthusiasm of one lifetime could accomplish, and set them up in a *Gallery unique and imperishable*, for the use and benefit of future ages.[269]

In order to attract a larger audience, in the late fall of 1840, Catlin added "live" performing Native Americans to his show.[270] At first, Catlin's family and friends dressed up and performed as Native Americans, even imitating war dances, and in 1843, Catlin hired a troupe of Ojibwa dancers, under the management of Arthur Rankin, to perform in his Gallery.[271] This led to the subsequent employment of Native performers by Catlin, which culminated in the hiring of Maungwudaus and his troupe in 1845.

Different Indigenous performing troupes were interchangeable in Catlin's Gallery; in London, both an Ojibwa troupe and the Iowa troupe led by White Cloud performed. When the

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[267] Catlin began his documentation of the lives, customs, and culture of Native American peoples in 1830 and over the course of six years, he visited over 50 tribes throughout the United States. The paintings and drawings he created during this time, along with Indigenous objects that he collected, make up the collection that Catlin exhibited in his Indian Gallery. He created the Gallery as a means of preservation, and due to his artistic and collecting efforts, the Gallery included over 500 paintings, of which 310 were portraits, as well as regalia, utensils, and weapons.
[268] Viola, with Crothers and Hannan, "The American Indian Genre Paintings," 133.
[269] George Catlin, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Catlin's Indian Gallery; Containing Portraits, Landscapes, Costumes, Etc., and Representations of the Manners and Customs of the North American Indians* (London edition, C. & J. Adlard Printers, c. 1840), 3. Emphasis is Catlin's. Accessed online via Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution: https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/george-catlin-papers-5435/series-4/reel-5825-frames-254-279 .
[270] Benita Eisler, *The Red Man's Bones* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 278.
[271] Ibid., 295-300.

Iowa returned to America in 1845, Catlin hired Maungwudaus and his troupe when they arrived in Paris in August 1845.[272] In his essay, "A Transatlantic Return Home through the Magic of Art," Houle notes that "Maungwudaus was well aware that they were seen as visiting 'curiosities….'"[273] In a self-published manuscript, Maungwudaus wrote:

> We went to France; stayed five months in Paris with *Catlin's Indian Curiosities*. Shook hands with Louis Phillipe and all his family in the Palace called St. Cloud; gave them little war dance, shooting with bows and arrows at a target, ball play; also rowed our birch bark canoe in the artificial lake amongst swans and geese. There were about four thousand French ladies and gentlemen with them. We dined with him in the afternoon in his Palace. He said many things concerning his having been in America when he was a young man. He gave us twelve gold and silver medals; he showed us all the rooms in his house.[274]

If Native performers were unavailable to be a part of "Catlin's Indian Curiosities," Catlin's family members and friends played the part instead. This performative artificiality further emphasizes the part Catlin's Indian Gallery played in formulating the myth of the vanishing race, as well as other stereotypes concerning Indigenous peoples.

Catlin's Indian Gallery, along with Wild West shows, such as those of Buffalo Bill Cody and the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch, as well as other traveling performance groups, recreated an image of life on the American frontier for a live audience. In their employment of Native performers to stress the "authenticity" of the shows, these theatrical groups helped create the persona of the "show Indian." Along with myriad forms of visual culture, the performing "show Indian" helped formulate the image of Native American peoples in popular culture and memory, which led to the proliferation of stereotypes, including the "noble savage" and "vanishing race."

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[272] Ibid., 330-332.
[273] Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 49.
[274] Maungwudaus (George Henry), *An Account of the Chippewa Indians Who Have Been Travelling Among the Whites in the United States, England, Ireland, Scotland, France, and Belgium*, originally published in 1848, quoted in Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 49. Emphasis added.

As a result, the theatrical shows perpetuated narratives of Manifest Destiny and removed agency from the Native performers by requiring them to perform the role of mythologized, "vanishing Indians."

However, in *Paris/Ojibwa*, Houle asserts the agency of the Ojibwa "show Indians" hired by Catlin and physically reclaims their identity through the presence of some of their names in the salon's frieze (fig. 3.7). As curator Wanda Nanibush noted, Houle "overturns the discourse of Indigenous Peoples as disappearing or disappeared by returning the 1845 performers to contemporary Paris in his Paris salon."[275] Houle also complicates American history and mythology by denying the viewer the faces of the four Ojibwa figures in the salon paintings. In his paintings, Catlin provided the viewer with portraits (faces), which, due to his artistic ethnographic focus, were interpreted as symbolic types (tribes) rather than as individuals. Houle's critical response is to upend the portraiture aesthetic by providing the viewer with names that act as abstract signifiers and denying the viewer a portrait of the people the names signify. In his review of *Paris/Ojibwa,* journalist R.M. Vaughn acutely observed that, "[t]he invisibility of the faces is a sharp commentary on both the invisibility of this unpleasant story…and, more important, the near-invisibility of the aboriginal participants' half of the story."[276] In pairing his version of "types," in response to the "types" created by Catlin, with the names of historic figures, Houle invokes the absence of the dancers who died from smallpox.

Houle also creates a critical distance between the viewer and the internal dialogue of *Paris/Ojibwa* by portraying the four figures from behind (fig. 3.4) and denying the viewer a glimpse of the figures' faces. Scholar Shirley Madill underscores this critical distance by nothing that "[t]he horizon lines over the figures' heads deflect ethnographic curiosity [of the sort which

[275] Nanibush, "Contamination and Reclamation," *FUSE Magazine*.
[276] Vaughn, "Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa explores history as a construct."

drove Catlin's work] and redirects the gaze over their shoulders."[277] By redirecting the viewer's gaze over the figures' shoulders, the four panels also draw the viewer away from the gallery space and the setting of a nineteenth-century French salon, and transport them instead to a different place.

Houle states that "[t]he four elegiac paintings in the installation are a pictorial representation of abstracted shapes and forms that leave traces of time, of paint and colour. They interrogate space, and integrate a location where the Ojibwa will return symbolically one last time."[278] The landscape features in the background of each painting "comes from a photograph taken from the cemetery near the marsh grasses that [his] grandfather used to harvest for his cattle and horses next to Lake Manitoba."[279] It is a view (fig. 3.9) from the Sandy Bay First Nation cemetery, the First Nation where Houle was born and spent his early childhood. Thus, Houle employs sculpture (the entirety of the salon set) and painting (the four panels) in *Paris/Ojibwa* to "bring a distant site into [the] imaginative proximity"[280] of his viewer, connecting the viewer not only to the distant site of nineteenth-century France, but also to the Mississauga dancers' homelands as his installation seeks to return the dancers home.[281]

This critical distance carries through the rest of the salon set as well; although the absence of two walls opens the salon to the viewer, the viewer is not allowed to walk upon the constructed theater set. Kept at a distance, the viewer is prevented from examining the portraits, the virus paintings, the names in the frieze, and other details of the "salon" up-close; the internal dialogue

[277] Madill, *Robert Houle: Life & Work*, 45.
[278] Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 44.
[279] Ibid.
[280] K. Morris, "Introduction to Sculpture, Installation, and Mixed Media," 125.
[281] Speaking further about the four paintings, Houle states: "The painted figures, a shaman, a warrior, a dancer and a healer, become abstract monochromatic icons whose indigenous roots connect to the landscape in each painting. Together they are poetic, symbolic, transatlantic return home through the magic of art, the spiritual aspect of memory." Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home through the Magic of Art," 56.

of the installation can only be discerned if the viewer observes the salon from various positions. Regarding *Paris/Ojibwa*, scholar Nelcya Delanoë asserts:

> Taken by the hand of one of its descendants, *Anishnabe* history, though *slashed* by conquest, resumes its course…It's up to viewers to position themselves at the crossroads of these networks of meanings and dialectical sensations and to savour the pleasure of history once again on the move. Rejecting the sublime and mortifying stasis of stereotypes created by conquest, Robert Houle re-introduces First Nations' history into the dance of time, origins, encounters and survivance. And he launches it directly at us.[282]

Paris/Ojibwa activates the viewers by requiring them to concentrate in order to observe the salon's crossroads of meanings and dialectical sensations from afar, thus fostering an embodied relationship with the viewer. I contend that this activation places the viewer's focus on discerning the installation's internal dialogue through their own bodily experience of the installation, making them a participant in the transmission of knowledge.

In her essay on Houle for the 2003 Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art, artist Bonnie Devine discusses how Houle's memorializing works provide "a missing narrative in the history of North American and an important assertion of sovereignty, resistance, and defiance."[283] Through his multiple uses of parody in *Paris/Ojibwa*, Houle provides the missing narrative of Maungwudaus and the Mississauga dancers, and disrupts the settler amnesia that surrounds their (his)stories. The installation's deep layers of signifiers encourage its viewers to engage with this missing history, making the viewers participants in Houle's construction and transmission of Anishnabe history. As Houle states in the catalogue for *Paris/Ojibwa*:

> [H]istory is claimed through the aboriginal representation of an actual event based on a drawing and a travelogue…*Paris/Ojibwa* is an empty room made from deconstruction…When it comes to looking at and "reading" the installation, it is *Anishnabe* history, which speaks of healing from the

[282] Nelcya Delanoë, "Making the Past Dance," in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa*, 29. Emphasis original.
[283] Bonnie Devine (Ojibwa), "Robert Houle (Saulteaux)," in *Path Breakers: The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art, 2003,* Lucy R. Lippard, ed. (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in conjunction with Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003) 55.

> ravenous gaze of pending disappearance. It is *a voice of endurance* claiming the sacred heritage of a sweat lodge representing the universe and connecting the participants to the past, the earth and spiritual world.[284]

By inserting an aboriginal representation of Anishnabe history – and thereby inserting the Mississauga dancers' (his)stories – into the historical narrative of the United States, Houle asserts visual sovereignty over First Nations experiences and claims Indigenous cultural authority over myth, memory, and history. With a reclamation of Anishnabe history as his objective, Houle treats *Paris/Ojibwa* as a "landmark…where knowledge exists."[285]

Houle is one of many contemporary Indigenous artists who treat installations as landmarks where knowledge exists. By inviting their audience to actively explore the landmarks, these artists encourage their audience to discern the historical knowledge stored by the installation through its relational qualities. While Houle encourages such an experience by creating richly layered signifiers for the viewer to decipher, emerging artist RYAN! Feddersen invites her audiences to reveal and witness history through the touch of their own hand.

RYAN! Feddersen, Kill the Indian, Save the Man: Revealing History through Touch

> I see art as a way that we get to know the world around us, and how we orient ourselves within culture and society. This includes our past, present, and future. Many Americans have come to compartmentalize history and think it does not pertain to them. I believe the opposite is true; that we cannot fully understand the present or future without *the knowledge and lessons of our past*. – RYAN! Feddersen[286]

Specializing in interactive and immersive artworks, RYAN! Feddersen (Confederated Tribes of the Colville: Okanogan, Arrow Lakes, German, and English) is a mixed-media installation artist whose artwork grapples with difficult topics such as climate change,

[284] Houle, "A Transatlantic Return Home Through the Magic of Art," 44 and 55. Emphasis on "Anishnabe" original; emphasis on "a voice of endurance" added.
[285] Madill, *Robert Houle; Life & Work,* 71.
[286] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018. Emphasis added.

gentrification, consumer culture, white supremacy, and obscured histories. Creative engagement between her artwork and the viewer is a fundamental aspect of Feddersen's artistic practice. As way to "honor an Indigenous perspective on the relationship between an artist and community," Feddersen's interactive and temporary artworks employ "humor, play, and creative engagement to create opportunities for personal introspection and discovery."[287] Feddersen states, "In Native communities, art isn't supposed to be put on a pedestal or in a vitrine. It's for community use. That's why my work can be touched. *My art exists as people are interacting with it.*"[288] Through these interactions, Feddersen encourages her viewers to contemplate – and sometimes question – the present by learning and discovering lessons from the past.

Regarding the colonialist past of the United States, Feddersen notes:

> The stories of so many people, plants and animals have been obscured by state and industrially sponsored programs in order to justify and promote genocide, colonial endeavors, the expansion of the military industrial complex, resource extraction, environmental degradation, and many other destructive efforts most people would not agree to if they understood the facts. One way I believe in working against these programs is to continue to learn and teach these stories. An informed population makes wiser, longer sighted decisions and is harder for conmen and demagogues to manipulate.[289]

Her 2017 mural installations *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* and *Kill the Indian, Save the Man-BorderLands* (fig. 3.10-3.18) are two artworks in which Feddersen works against the programs of genocide and colonial endeavors by contending with the dark history of Indian boarding schools in the United States. The title refers to a statement from Richard H. Pratt, the founder of Carlisle

[287] RYAN! Feddersen, personal website, "About." Accessed June 3, 2017 via: http://ryanfeddersen.com/about/ .
[288] RYAN! Feddersen quoted in "Artist RYAN! Feddersen flips the script on Native American stereotypes" by Brangien Davis, *Crosscut*, July 5, 2018, https://crosscut.com/2018/07/artist-ryan-feddersen-flips-script-native-american-stereotypes .
[289] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018.

Indian School – the first off-reservation boarding school in the United States, which opened in 1879. In a speech given in 1892, Pratt stated:

> A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. *Kill the Indian in him, and save the man*.[290]

Pratt's statement was foundational to the educational policies that drove the Indian boarding school system from the late 1870s through the 1960s, "when activism, reassertions of tribal sovereignty, and federal policies supporting tribal self-determination began to impact educational institutions and programs."[291] Through the lens of participation and productive frustration – which I define below – I examine how Feddersen encourages her audience to interact with the grave history of Indian boarding schools. In analyzing these interactive mural installations, I determine how *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* creates and stores knowledge, and how it transmits this knowledge by allowing its viewers to physically uncover hard truths in the discourse of settler history in North America.

Created in 2017 for *Project Diana*[292] at the Alice Gallery in Seattle, Washington, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* (fig. 3.10-3.13) presents a survey of Indian boarding schools operating from 1850-2017 by delineating their locations on a map of the United States of America printed in black,

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[290] Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," in *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900,* Francis Paul Prucha, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 260-261. Emphasis added.
Pratt's speech was given at the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction (1892).

[291] Margaret L. Archuleta (Pueblo/Hispanic), Brenda J. Child (Ojibwa), and K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Mvskoke / Creek Nation, not enrolled), "Introduction," in *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences 1879-2000*, Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, eds. (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 2000) 19.

[292] According to the Alice Gallery's website, "the name Project Diana comes from a 1946 NASA mission that projected radio waves into space. NASA did not know what would happen....At the Alice we are interested in this same kind of projection... sending art out into the world without knowing how it will be received. Project Diana is a space for local artists to experiment and try things that they have never done or have been scared to do." The Alice Gallery "Project Diana," accessed June 13, 2017, https://www.thealicegallery.com/project-diana.

white, and red.[293] Black ink fills the spaces between the state boundaries which are delineated in white. This black ink both obscures the map's contents and connotes redacted government documents, where federal secrets have been marked through with heavy black ink. White circles represent each boarding school and a red line connects the white circles to black bars (figs. 3.11 & 3.12). The black bars contain the boarding schools' names, but the name can only be read when a viewer touches the thermochromic black ink, which then becomes transparent from the heat of the viewer's hand (fig. 3.13 & 3.17-3.18).[294] The map measures 16' by 9'; its large scale dominates the exhibition space wherever it is exhibited. Feddersen created another iteration of *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* for the 2017 exhibition *BorderLands*, the "inaugural exhibition hosted by the Seattle Office of Arts of Culture's ARTS program in the third-floor space of King Street Station."[295] This site-specific installation (fig. 3.14-3.18) expanded the message of the original *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* by mapping current reservation boundaries – represented in blue – on the *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* mural, and adding *Bison Stack* (fig. 316), a glowing orange acrylic stack of bison skulls that references the decimation of buffalo in the late nineteenth-century, to the installation.[296]

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[293] There was a similar system of residential schools for Indigenous peoples in Canada, however *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* focuses on the boarding schools located in the United States. For information on Canada's residential school system, see Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010) and J.R. Miller, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

[294] Feddersen also used thermochromic ink in her mural installation *Unveiling the Romantic West* (2016), which addresses the Lewis and Clark expedition and Euro-American artist Edgar Paxson's depiction of the expedition that is located in the Missoula (Montana) Courthouse. Feddersen offers her audience a reexamination of nineteenth century narratives of exploration and settlement by allowing viewers to reveal, through the heat of their hand, "information about native life during the period of Lewis and Clark not revealed in Paxson's images." For more information on *Unveiling the Romantic West,*see RYAN! Feddersen, official website, "Resistance," http://ryanfeddersen.com/resistance-exhibition/.

[295] Emily Pothast, "*BorderLands* Crosses Boundaries at King Street Station," *The Stranger*, August 3, 2017, https://www.thestranger.com/slog/2017/08/03/25327753/borderlands-crosses-boundaries-at-king-street-station.

[296] Concerning these three systems addressed by *Kill the Indian, Save the Man-BorderLands*, Feddersen states: "The piece depicts three systems of state-sponsored cultural genocide: *Indian Removal Policy,* a system that displaced communities from traditional lands onto ever shrinking reservations. With each push of westward expansion, there was a corresponding decimation of native populations. *The mass slaughter of the bison,* which was endorsed by the US Army, who's [*sic*] Generals routinely led state sponsored hunting excursions with the express purpose of annihilating the bison under the motto 'Kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone.' And *Indian Boarding Schools*, where prior to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, native children were rounded

Collectively, the two iterations of *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* confront viewers with the histories of Indian boarding Schools, Indian removal policy, and the mass slaughter of the bison, which were three systems of state-sponsored cultural genocide that the U.S. government used during its colonization of the Indigenous lands that now constitute the United States. Regarding *Kill the Indian, Save the Man-BorderLands*, Feddersen states:

> I hope this piece brings awareness of the fact that all of these stories tie together as parts of the same colonialist system of "development." I believe the effort to exterminate native cultures and lives, fails through our continuous resistance. This resistence[*sic*] includes refusing to forget history, learning the lessons of our culture, and not accepting lies and censorship meant to manipulate us.[297]

The *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* mural is the primary focus of my analysis due to the interactive, relational experience it fosters for its audience, an experience that refuses to let the audience forget history.

Indian boarding schools are part of the long history of Native American education in the United States[298] and, as a tool for colonization – and as a key component in the process of cultural genocide[299] – they played a role in the oppression and attempted assimilation of Native peoples. An outgrowth of mission schools established during the colonial era by various religious orders, Indian boarding schools became an official part of the U.S. federal government's solutions to the

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up and forcibly held by religious, military, and industrial organizations in boarding schools that systematically eradicated native culture, language, and religion."
RYAN! Feddersen, personal website, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man-BorderLands." Accessed March 3, 2018: http://ryanfeddersen.com/kill-indian-save-man-borderlands/.

[297] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018.

[298] For a discussion of this history, including a discussion of traditional Native forms of education, see Clifford E. Trafzer (Wyandot ancestry), Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc (Cuhilla/Apache), "Introduction: Origin and Development of the American Indian Boarding School System," in *Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences,* Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 1-33.

[299] Scholar L.H. Legters defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious groups" and names "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" as one of the five types of criminal acts that define genocide. Legters also discusses cultural genocide and its consequences, including "the disruption of kinship and familial relations basic to the native social structure…."
L.H. Legters, "The American Genocide," *Policy Studies Journal*, 16 (4; 1988) 769 and 771-772. Emphasis added.

"Indian problem" in the late nineteenth century. After being moved to the Department of the Interior in 1849, the Bureau of Indian Affairs "assumed the function of providing education for American Indians under its 'Civilization Division.'"[300] Native children were mandatorily enrolled into schools – including the on- and off-reservation boarding schools and federal Indian day schools – as "Native parental rights and the sovereign right of a people to educate its own children were abrogated."[301] Enrollment and attendance was "enforced through threats of cessation of rations and supplies and incarceration."[302]

Non-Native educators and policy makers designed Indian boarding schools "to physically, ideologically, and emotionally remove Indian children from their families, homes, and tribal affiliations. From the moment students arrived at the school, they could not be 'Indian' in any way – culturally, artistically, spiritually, or linguistically."[303] Scholar David Wallace Adams refers to the actions undertaken at Indian boarding schools as "cultural, psychological, and intellectual warfare" waged against the Native students:

> School administrators and teachers cut children's hair; changed their dress, their diets, and their names; introduced them to unfamiliar conceptions of space and time; and subjected them to militaristic regimentation and discipline. Educators suppressed tribal languages and cultural practices and sought to replace them with English, Christianity, athletic activities, and a ritual calendar intended to further patriotic citizenship. They instructed students in the industrial and domestic skills appropriate to European American gender roles and taught them manual labor.[304]

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[300] Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD (Lakota) and Lemyra M. DeBruyn, PhD, "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief," in *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1998) 63.
[301] K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (Lumbee), and Teresa L. McCarty, "Editors' Introduction to the Special Issue: Native American Boarding School Stories," *Journal of American Indian Education*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Spring 2018) 4.
[302] Brave Heart and DeBruyn, "The American Indian Holocaust," 63.
[303] Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima, "Introduction," *Away from Home,* 19.
[304] Julie Davis, "American Indian Boarding School Experiences: Recent Studies from Native Perspectives," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Desegregation (Winter 2001) 20. Davis discusses David Wallace Adams' book *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1995) and his argument regarding the warfare waged against Native students.

As noted by historian Julie Davis, the Indian boarding school system "intended to assimilate Native people into mainstream society and eradicate Native cultures."[305] Richard H. Pratt, the founder of Carlisle Indian School, believed in the possibility of the total assimilation of Native peoples into white society and provided, at Carlisle, the blueprint for "the federal Indian school system that would be organized across the United States" in which Native children were instructed in "the language, religion, behavior, and skills of mainstream white society."[306] In the early twentieth century, the focus advocated by Pratt shifted due to increasing racial and racist positions, and the goal for the boarding schools became forcing "Indian students into domestic sciences, trades and agriculture, fields that whites believed would make Indian students 'more useful.'"[307]

Scholar Brenda Child notes that "despite the fact that most federal Indian boarding schools closed in the 1930s, or had by then adopted policies that rejected assimilation and were more in tune with contemporary ideas about race and progressive education," the "Boarding school experience remains a burning historical memory for American Indian people in the United States."[308] As previously noted, the Indian boarding school system was a key component of the U.S. federal government's process of cultural genocide against the Indigenous peoples whose lands it sought to dispossess as the government sought to extinguish "their existence as distinct

[305] Davis, "American Indian Boarding School Experiences," 20. Davis notes that the boarding schools also "became integral components of American Indian identities and eventually fueled the drive for political and cultural self-determination in the late twentieth century." For further discussion on the legacy (both negative and positive) of Indian boarding schools, see: K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, and Teresa L. McCarty, eds., *Journal of American Indian Education*: Special Issue on Native American Boarding School Stories, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Spring 2018); Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, eds., *Boarding School Blues*; and Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). For a personal account of boarding school experiences, see Adam Fortunate Eagle (Ojibwa), *Pipestone: My Life in an Indian Boarding School* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010).
[306] Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose, "Introduction," in *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations*, Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose, eds. (Lincoln: Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press) 1.
[307] Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, "Introduction," *Boarding School Blues*, 16.
[308] Brenda Child, "The Boarding School as Metaphor," *Journal of American Indian Education*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Spring 2018) 38.

groups that threatened the nation-building project of the United States."[309] However, despite this central role in federal Indian policy, the history of the Indian boarding school system is often marginalized or ignored in the official historical narratives of the United States. As Feddersen noted in an interview, "[i]t is rarely taught in American schools that prior to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, native children were rounded up and forcibly held by religious, military, and industrial organizations in boarding schools that systematically eradicated native culture, language, and religion."[310] She further stated:

> The stories of so many people, plants and animals have been obscured by state and industrially sponsored programs in order to justify and promote genocide, colonial endeavors, the expansion of the military industrial complex, resource extraction, environmental degradation, and many other destructive efforts most people would not agree to if they understood the facts. *One way I believe in working against these programs is to continue to learn and teach these stories.* An informed population makes wiser, longer sighted decisions and is harder for conmen and demagogues to manipulate.[311]

Feddersen works against state and industrially sponsored programs by forcing her audience to confront traumatic histories, such as the Indian boarding schools, through the visual recording of these historical narratives that official histories have long marginalized.[312]

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[309] Fear-Segal and Rose, "Introduction," *Carlisle Indian Industrial School,* 2.

[310] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018. Enacted in 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was a "response to a crisis affecting American Indian and Alaska Native children, families, and tribes. Studies revealed that large numbers of Native children were being separated from their parents, extended families, and communities by state child welfare and private adoption agencies. In fact, research found that 25%–35% of all Native children were being removed; of these, 85% were placed outside of their families and communities—even when fit and willing relatives were available…ICWA sets federal requirements that apply to state child custody proceedings involving an Indian child who is a member of or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe." National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), "About ICWA," NICWA website. Accessed August 1, 2018, https://www.nicwa.org/about-icwa/.

[311] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018. Emphasis added.

[312] For more information on the history of Indian boarding schools, advocacy and healing efforts, a resource database, etc, visit The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition's website: https://boardingschoolhealing.org. The Coalition was formed in 2011 "to develop and implement a national strategy that increases public awareness and cultivates healing for the profound trauma experienced by individuals, families, communities, American Indian and Alaska Native Nations resulting from the U.S. adoption and implementation of the Boarding School Policy of 1869." https://boardingschoolhealing.org/about-us/history/.
Despite the genocide it inflicted on Native nations, peoples, communities, and children, the United States "has never formally addressed its role in the forced assimilation of generations of Native children at government and church run

In *Kill the Indian, Save the Man,* Feddersen presents the viewer with a visual, cartographic representation of the Indian boarding school history and invites them to uncover the history for themselves. In order to facilitate viewer engagement, I contend that Feddersen creates a critical distance within the installation that provokes a "productive frustration" for the viewer. "Productive frustration" is an effect Lebanese-Canadian artist Jayce Salloum seeks to foster through his artwork – "it makes viewers conscious of looking and aware of their rights and responsibility to interpret the work or co-construct its meaning, rather than passively consume it."[313] This productive frustration "challenges viewers to coordinate their own experiences and assumptions with the presented material in order to arrive at knowledge."[314]

I assert that the obscuring of the school names in *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* (fig. 3.11) is the element that provokes a productive frustration for the viewer because it censors the knowledge the mural embodies. Feddersen notes that when viewers approach the mural, they might wonder what the black bars represent, "What was so widespread, and yet intentionally obscured

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boarding schools. Although President Obama signed an Apology to Native Peoples of the United States on December 19, 2009 into law as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010, the law has received scant media coverage, and Obama signed the bill in private without ceremony or announcement." Mary Annette Pember, "When Will U.S. Apologize for Boarding School Genocide?," *Indian Country Today*, June 20, 2015, https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/when-will-u-s-apologize-for-boarding-school-genocide-Xs4lcrge5Eypq8mBz1HZBQ/ .

Relatively little has been done since President Obama signed the Apology. Many other countries throughout the world have formed Truth and Reconciliation Commissions to address past wrongdoings committed by their governments, including Canada, whose Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed to address specifically the lasting negative impacts of Canada's Indian residential school system; the United States has yet to do so.

[313] Jen Bundy, "history of the present/map of the world," in *Jayce Salloum: History of the Present,* Jen Bundy, ed. (Canada: Mendel Art Gallery, co-published with Kamloops Art Gallery and Confederation Centre Art Gallery, 2009) 16.

[314] Ibid., 17. Regarding his artwork and 'productive frustration,' Jayce Salloum states: "I always try to construct an active audience, not providing easy answers or passive information as pabulum, but often aiming to provoke, producing a 'productive frustration' in the viewer where the viewers are responsible for how they're perceiving, or at least raising questions about the baggage they've brought to the work and the responses they have within a very particular/problematized 'field' or set of inquiries." Jayce Salloum and Molly Hankwitz, "Occupied Territories: Mapping the Transgressions of Cultural Terrain," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Middle-Eastern Media Arts (Fall 2002), 87.

from you [the viewer]?"[315] This obscuration creates a critical distance between the artwork and the viewer, and encourages the viewer to engage bodily with the mural. In order to reveal the mural's internal dialogue, the viewer must physically touch the black bars, relying on their body heat to reveal the information hidden by the thermochromic ink (fig. 3.17 & 3.18). Feddersen chose her materials with care and purpose; she states:

> I chose thermochromic ink because it completes a metaphor; mimicking[*sic*] censorship and obfuscation of history, uncovered by the friction and persistence of the audience. The more the piece is touched the more the underlying image is visible, similar to the telling of obscured histories. My goal was to inspire the community to have fun acting out a metaphor, where they work together to discover obscured parts of the history. I believe this helps people better understand both history and the cooperative process of discovering various historical realities.[316]

By not providing easy answers or offering a passive consumption of knowledge, Feddersen provokes productive frustration in her viewers. This frustration activates viewers from passive observers to participants in the transmission of knowledge. She invites them to help undo the erasure through which the "history of state sponsored cultural genocide…has been largely expunged from our society through censorship and propaganda."[317] Furthermore, Feddersen brings the Indian boarding schools to the forefront of the viewer's historical memory by encouraging them to be responsible for their own discovery of history.

I contend that the repertoire – as a nonarchival system of transfer – is also a part of *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*; Feddersen created its repertoire by imbuing the map with her familial history and the historical knowledge of the Indian boarding schools. Each time a viewer interacts with the installations, they reactivate the embodied knowledge of the installations' repertoire and

[315] RYAN! Feddersen, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man by RYAN! Feddersen," The Alice Gallery, February 2, 2017, https://www.thealicegallery.com/project-diana/kill-the-indian-save-the-man-by-ryan-feddersen.
[316] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018.
[317] Ibid.

participate in the transmission of knowledge. Only through the repeated interactions of the viewers will the knowledge embodied in *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* become fully visible as the obfuscation of history – represented by the thermochromic ink – slowly fades away. The necessity of audience participation in order to complete the artwork fulfills the repertoire's requirement of presence; people participate in the production, reproduction, and transmission of knowledge through their interactions with the murals, which allows them to visually obtain knowledge. As previously noted, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* presents its viewers a familiar form with to interact with – and through which it embodies and transmits the history of Indian Boarding schools: a U.S. map.

At a basic level, maps are graphic representations "of features—for example, geographical, geological, or geopolitical—of an area of the Earth or of any other celestial body."[318] Maps are "description[s] of the world that [include] labels for the objects [they] include within [their] frame[s],"[319] thus helping their viewers to orient themselves within a space by demarcating specific locations and boundaries, be they natural or man-made. Maps are historical documents, but they are not neutral documents that simply contain figures and facts; maps have a long history of being tools of colonization. Scholar Elizabeth Archuleta explains that "[in] the past, colonial regimes named, organized, constructed, and controlled space and place through the imperialistic practice of mapmaking." Therefore, as summarized by scholar Natchee Blu Barnd, "[m]aps are complicated. They are political documents. They are simultaneously fluid and static. Both artistic and documentary."[320]

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[318] Charles F. Fueschel, "Map," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Updated March 5, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/science/map.
[319] Gwilym Lucas Eades, *Maps and Memes: Redrawing Culture, Place, and Identity in Indigenous Communities* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015) xix.
[320] Barnd, *Native Space,* 109.

In *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, Feddersen combines all of the cartographic elements described by Barnd to create a powerful statement on a program of genocide used to enact colonization in the United States – the Indian boarding school. She uses the U.S. map as an "entry point for cultural, historic[al], and political engagement"[321] between her artwork and the viewer. But rather than depicting a standard form of the U.S. map – one that delineates state boundaries, state names, capital cities, and other familiar informational location signifiers – Feddersen instead presents the viewer with a stark, black map. All familiar signifiers of place and location are erased, leaving the viewer to contemplate only the white circles, red lines, and black bars (fig. 3.10, 3.11, & 3.14) that delineate the locations and names of the Indian boarding schools.

This erasure – in addition to representing the censorship and obfuscation of history – subverts the customary purpose of maps; with its signifiers obscured, the map is no longer an aid or tool to help viewers orient themselves within the world. Feddersen acknowledges the important role subversion and interaction hold in her artworks:

> My subtly subversive goal in producing interactive works is to provide a similar experience to the audience where participants are able to *personally investigate the irrationalities and hypocrisies of contemporary American culture*. The reason I do this is simple, people and systems don't change because we ask them to, as we've seen a lot lately, it only makes us dig in our heals. It takes a *personal realization, for a person to grow and view something differently*. I create situations where people experience a concept, and act out a metaphor that reinforces the questions/statements the work raises.[322]

In *Kill the Indian, Save the Man,* Feddersen offers the viewer a chance to investigate a different side of U.S. history by mapping only the locations of the Indian boarding schools. She creates what could be a bewildering experience for viewers by obscuring the information in the map and asking

[321] Barnd, *Native Space*, 111.
[322] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018. Emphasis added.

them "What was so widespread, and yet intentionally obscured from you?"[323] In order to stymie their bewilderment, viewers must "trust that meaning will be made if they become involved in the storytelling process,"[324] and then interact with the map to uncover the knowledge it holds. I argue that the bewilderment the viewer may experience when first approaching *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* echoes the Indian boarding school students' bewilderment as they were physically, ideologically, and emotionally removed from their families and communities and forced to adapt to a cultural system that was not their own.

Although Feddersen blacked out the usual place names and location signifiers found on maps, state boundaries (fig. 3.11) remain as signifiers of U.S. authority and a demarcation of its official histories. I contend, however, that Feddersen challenges this authority by employing a form of counter-mapping in which she inserts the Indian boarding schools' locations into the official histories represented by the map. Scholar Gwilym Lucas Eades defines counter-mapping as "the production of maps on paper or screen that, through the strategic use of representations, conveys an alternative message to that given on official…(usually state-industrial) maps."[325] Feddersen conveys an alternative message by focusing on the Indian boarding schools, and thus revises the United States' official narrative to include Indigenous histories. She makes visible – through viewers' physical interaction with the map – the place names and location signifiers of the Indian boarding schools, places that are familiar to Native communities (but not to the broader U.S. population), and by doing so, prioritizes the "stories of communities over the stories of nations and industries."[326] Thus, the viewers themselves reveal the United States' often-obscured program of

[323] Feddersen, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man by RYAN! Feddersen," The Alice Gallery.
[324] Elizabeth Archuleta, "Gym Shoes, Maps, and Passports, Oh My! Creating Community or Creating Chaos at the NMAI?," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3/4, Special Issue: The National Museum of the American Indian (Summer - Autumn, 2005) 430.
[325] Eades, *Maps and Memes,* 106.
[326] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018.

genocide through education. Their decision to interact with the map makes them active participants in the transmission of knowledge by forcing them to confront this dark history and thereby aiding Feddersen in her revision of the United States' official narrative.

In addition to cartographically depicting the history of Indian boarding schools, I contend that both iterations of *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* are representative of historical unresolved grief. A concept I first introduced in chapter two in my analysis of Dana Claxton's performance *Buffalo Bone China*, historical unresolved grief concerns the lasting effects of the historical trauma Indigenous peoples endured during the colonization of North America, and their continuing suffering due to these effects. In their essay "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief," Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart and Lemyra M. DeBruyn discuss the Boarding School Era as one of the major factors for historical unresolved grief among Native families and communities in what is now the United States Brave Heart and DeBruyn state:

> Boarding schools have had devastating consequences for American Indian families and communities; abusive behaviors – physical, sexual, emotional – were experienced and learned by American Indian children raised in these settings. Spiritually and emotionally, the children were bereft of culturally integrated behaviors that led to positive self-esteem, a sense of belonging to family and community, and a solid American Indian identity. When these children became adults, they were ill-prepared for raising their own children in a traditional American Indian context.[327]

These experiences and the detrimental effects that the Indian boarding school system had on her *own* family were Feddersen's personal inspirations for *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*. In an interview, Feddersen stated:

> One of my main personal inspirations for this piece was the ways this system affected my own family's history. It caused harm not only to my ancestors who experienced the boarding school system in Canada and the US, but it made the further generations afraid to teach their children about our culture in order to protect them. We are less than one generation from the ICWA [Indian Child Welfare Act] being passed. The boarding schools

[327] Brave Heart and DeBruyn, "The American Indian Holocaust," 63-64.

> disrupted generations of cultural knowledge and that continues on. Myself, family and many others strive to reclaim what was lost.[328]

Feddersen's statement underscores the harmful, intergenerational effects the Indian boarding school system had on Native families and communities, and demonstrates how the "genocide of American Indians reverberates across generations."[329]

Through the relational, interactive experiences it fosters, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* asks its viewers to witness – and I would argue, to be culpable for – the devastating history of the Indian boarding school system. By making the viewer physically confront the atrocities and trauma – and their continuing effects – enacted on Native peoples by the U.S. government, Feddersen enters the realm of "artivistis," artist-activists who use their artwork to "intervene in political contexts, struggles, and debates."[330] In particular, she reminds us that "[w]hile most of us are not the victims or the survivors or the perpetrators of these crimes, we still participate in criminal politics. Our governments coordinate systems of repression, and our tax dollars pay for them."[331] As historian David Wallace Adams states, after all the catastrophic developments of colonization during the nineteenth century, "the white man had concluded the only way to save Indians was to destroy them, that the last great Indian war should be waged against children. They were coming for the children."[332]

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[328] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018.
[329] Brave Heart and DeBruyn, "The American Indian Holocaust," 66.
[330] Taylor, *Performance*, 147. Emphasis original.
[331] Taylor, *Performance,* 153.
[332] David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995) 337. Adams further states: "In the final analysis, the boarding school story constitutes yet another deplorable episode in the long and tragic history of Indian-white relations. For tribal elders who had witnessed the catastrophic developments of the nineteenth century – the bloody warfare, near-extinction of the bison, the scourge of disease and starvation, the shrinking of the tribal land base, the indignities of reservation life, the invasion of missionaries and white settlers – there seemed to be no end to the cruelties perpetrated by whites." 336-337.

Similar to the way Gregg Deal reminded the audience through his performance *Supreme Law of the Land* of their proximity to the violence enacted on the Water Protectors of the NoDAPL movement, Feddersen reminds the viewers of *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* of their proximity to the atrocities of the Indian boarding schools by mapping the schools' proliferation throughout the United States. She emphasizes that "In order to make real progress in our society, [she] believe[s] it is important for America *to face the facts about our collective history* so *it does not continue to destroy peoples, cultures, animals and the environment*."[333] She demonstrates how "we (all) live in proximity to political violence"[334] and encourages her audience to face the ugly facts of our collective history by requesting that they participate in discovering and revealing that history for themselves. Through *Kill the Indian, Save the Man,* Feddersen asks us to witness the grim history of the boarding schools and to acknowledge that "the effects of these policies are still playing out" as "they continue generationally, affecting individuals, families, and tribal communities."[335]

In telling the history of Indian boarding schools and "prioritizing the stories of communities over the stories of nations and industries," Feddersen's mural installation *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* intervenes in the settler-colonial history of the United States and "contributes to an understanding of North American history…[by] fostering critical thinking, engagement and introspection to point toward solutions."[336] I contend that by initiating and encouraging a dialogue between the audience and her artwork, Feddersen alters the gallery space from a space of passive contemplation to a space of active engagement and learning. This alteration underscores Feddersen's belief in the power of art culture:

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[333] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018. Feddersen further states: "A population that does not understand the lessons of history is much more vulnerable to manipulation (as we have seen so painfully illustrated on a national scale in our most recent presidential election), and much less likely to make wise and sustainable decisions about its treatment of the world around us."
[334] Taylor, *Performance,* 153.
[335] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018.
[336] Ibid.

> I believe in the power of culture and responsibly contributing to its advancement. *History is a part of our culture and we all contribute to it, whether we want to or not. We all make choices every day to forget or remember, learn or ignore, teach or mislead.* I hope to provide spaces in my artwork where people are motivated by fun, cooperation and curiosity to choose to learn about history, then in turn remember and teach others. *The intervention I am promoting is working together to learn as much about the subject matter as we can outside of state, religious or industrial sponsored programs so that we can cooperatively create a society that is as equitable and healthy as possible for people, plants and animals.*[337]

Many other contemporary Indigenous artists also use their artwork encourage their audiences to think hard about the choices they make to remember or forget, learn or ignore by confronting them with hard truths about North America's settler-colonial past and present. While Feddersen promotes these contemplations through interactive art, multi-media artist Cannupa Hanska Luger employs social collaboration in his artistic process to amplify the voices of Native families and communities that have been – and continue to be – affected by the devastating epidemic of murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls, and queer and trans people throughout North America.

Cannupa Hanska Luger, Every One: The Collaborative Writing of History through Community Participation

> Working in the art industry gives us all these tools. You have access to media, access to institutions and, through those, access to communities…We started asking ourselves what's the point of having this level of privilege *if you're not doing something to help us all*.[338]
>
> Being an artist, it is a way to weaponize privilege…And if I don't utilize every amount of privilege for a cause that's worthwhile, then what is the point? If I am not for you, then who am I for? Artists, we

[337] Email interview with the artist, RYAN! Feddersen, May 30, 2018. Emphasis added.
[338] Cannupa Hanska Luger quoted in "In two Denver exhibits, artist Cannupa Hanska Luger connects viewers to the ground beneath their feet," by Ray Mark Rinaldi, *Special to the Denver Post*, August 10, 2017, https://theknow.denverpost.com/2017/08/10/cannupa-hanska-luger-denver-exhibits-2017/154206/. Emphasis added.

> live on the periphery. But we are the mirrors. We are the reflective points that break through a barrier…That is the power of art.[339]
> – Cannupa Hanska Luger

Described as "at once intellectual and emotional, analytic and warm, and capable of great humor, even when discussing some of the atrocities that have been – and continue to be – endured by indigenous peoples," multi-disciplinary artist Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota, Austrian, and Norwegian) creates thought-provoking, visually-arresting artworks that can be described in the same manner. His artworks incorporate a wide-range of materials, including ceramics, video, sound, fiber, steel, and cut-paper, to "communicate stories about 21st century Indigeneity."[340] It is these stories that Luger draws his inspiration from:

> There's a story that needs to be told and that story is us now. We have amazing stories to tell right now about where Native people are right now and how we exist in the world. I think that's the wellspring from which I draw all of my inspiration.[341]

Whether monumental or small in scale, his artworks encourage diverse publics to engage with social, political, and cultural issues – ranging from land rights and capitalist exploitation, to the debunking of stereotypes – affecting 21st-century Indigenous communities throughout North America.

One of Luger's most recent artworks, the social collaboration and sculptural installation *Every One* (2018; fig. 3.19-3.27), addresses the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and queer and trans community members (MMIWQT) in North America. Although the data

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[339] Luger quoted in "The artist who made protesters' mirrored shields says the 'struggle porn' media miss point of Standing Rock" by Carolina Miranda, *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-cannupa-hanska-luger-20170112-story.html.
[340] Cannupa Hanska Luger, "Cannupa Hanska Luger Bio," *cannupahanska.com*, artist's website. Accessed November 12, 2018: http://www.cannupahanska.com/biography.
[341] Cannupa Hanska Luger, "Cannupa Hanska Luger - Nordamerika Native Museum," directed and produced by Dylan McLaughlin for Nordamerika Native Museum (Zurich, Switzerland), December 15, 2014, artist video, 2:50, https://vimeo.com/114626993.

used as the basis for *Every One* came from Canada, Luger's artwork transcends borders – much like Rebecca Belmore's performance *Vigil* and *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* that I addressed in chapter two – and brings attention to an epidemic affecting Indigenous nations and communities throughout North America.[342] Through the lens of participation, I examine how Luger used collaboration and community engagement in the creation of *Every One* and how this contributes to a collaborative construction of history. In analyzing this social collaboration and sculptural installation, I determine how *Every One* intervenes in the historical narratives of North America by calling for social and institutional change.

Every One (fig. 3.19) is a monumental, sculptural installation comprising 64 rows of 4,069 two-inch, handmade clay beads – ranging in color from white to dark gray – which create a pixelated image that "references and stands in solidarity with the photograph *Sister* (2016 [fig. 3.20]) by First Nations [Kaska Dena] photographer Kali Spitzer."[343] The installation is a re-

[342] Luger and Belmore are just two of many contemporary artists who are addressing the MMIW crisis. On March 1, 2019, Métis artist Jamie Black's installation *The REDress Project* opened at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. According to the NMAI, "the installation of empty red dresses centers on the issue of missing or murdered indigenous women. Black hopes to draw attention to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Native women and to evoke a presence through the marking of absence... *The REDress Project* positions the indigenous female body as a target of colonial violence while reclaiming space for an indigenous female presence. The dresses, collected through community donation, have been installed at several Canadian galleries, museums, and universities since 2011." This is the first time the artwork has been exhibited in the United States; it is on view until March 31, 2019. Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, "*The REDress Project*," https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/item/?id=973. For more about *The REDress Project*, see the official website: http://www.theredressproject.org.

See footnote number 115 in chapter two for a discussion of other artists and galleries who are working to raise awareness about the MMIW crisis. There are many, many organizations who doing this work as well and who are working to help families and communities who have been and continue to be affected.
Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women: https://www.csvanw.org/mmiw/
Native Women's Association of Canada: https://www.nwac.ca
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center: http://www.niwrc.org
Amnesty International – No More Stolen Sisters: https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/campaigns/no-more-stolen-sisters
Save Our Sisters, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women:
https://www.facebook.com/SAVEOURSISTERSMMIW/

[343] Cannupa Hanska Luger, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Queer and Trans People BEAD PROJECT (EVERY ONE)," *cannupahanska.com,* Artist's personal website. Accessed October 10, 2018: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.

humanization of the data surrounding the MMIW crisis, with each individual bead representing a missing or murdered Indigenous woman or girl. While the woman pictured in *Sister* wished to remain anonymous, Luger does note that she is the "sister of someone who is 'a part of those numbers' about missing or murdered Native people in Canada."[344] Therefore, as noted by Luger, within the image itself "there's an embedded history of the issue."[345] By referencing Spitzer's photograph and the history of the woman pictured, *Every One* literally gives a face to the staggering MMIW numbers, personalizing and humanizing the issue and the data for viewers. Luger also made a point to embed in the installation the "queer and trans narrative…to bring awareness to the fact that the Indigenous LGBTQ+ community members are not included in data collection around this issue, yet these communities are impacted at comparable alarming rates to that of women."[346]

In order to determine how many beads to create, Luger referenced research conducted by the Native Women's Association of Canada in 2016, which estimated 4000 missing women and girls in Canada alone.[347] Luger was unable to determine an estimate for the United States, because "unlike Canada, where Indigenous leaders and advocates have pressured the government to begin to confirm the data of missing and murdered Indigenous women, the U.S. continues to do little to address this issue."[348] Although as "many as 300 indigenous women go missing or are killed under

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Kali Spitzer is "Kaska Dena from Daylu (Lower Post, British Columbia) on her father's side and Jewish from Transylvania, Romania on her mother's side." Kali Spitzer, "About," https://kalispitzer.photoshelter.com/about .

[344] Megan Bennett, "Representing Life," *Albuquerque Journal* (NM), August 17, 2018, https://www.abqjournal.com/1209874/representing-life-ex-4000-beads-on-massive-artwork-call-attention-to-missing-murdered-women-among-native-groups.html.

[345] Luger quoted in "Artist brings attention to victimized indigenous women, LGBTQ people" by Kristi Eaton, *NBC News*, April 4, 2018, https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/artist-brings-attention-victimized-indigenous-women-lgbtq-people-n860866.

[346] Cannupa Hanska Luger, "Every One," *cannupahanska.com*, Artist's personal website. Accessed November 12, 2018: http://www.cannupahanska.com/every-one/.

[347] Luger, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Queer and Trans People BEAD PROJECT."

[348] Luger, "Every One."

suspicious circumstances every year in Canada and the U.S.," the exact number in the United States is not known because the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) does not officially track the numbers.[349] No other government agency tracks the number either; if a local police report is made, it is not guaranteed the case will make it to the FBI's crime database because "there's no requirement to file those reports nationally unless the person is a juvenile."[350]

Families, communities, activists, and scholars have been calling on the U.S. government to do more for decades, and some have begun their own efforts to track MMIWQT data. Annita Lucchesi (Southern Cheyenne descendent), a doctoral student in the Cultural, Social, & Political Thought program at the University of Lethbridge, began creating her own MMIWQT database; as of July 2018, she had documented over 2000 cases across the United States and Canada.[351] The database is now housed by the Sovereign Bodies Institute (SBI), a research organization devoted to "generating new knowledge and understandings of how Indigenous nations and communities are impacted by gender and sexual violence, and how they may continue to work towards healing and freedom from such violence;"[352] Lucchesi is SBI's executive director. According to the SBI website, the MMIWQT database:

> [L]ogs cases of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people, from 1900 to the present. There are many lists and sources of information online, but no central database that is routinely updated, spans beyond colonial borders, and thoroughly logs important aspects of the data,

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[349] Nate Hegyi, "Doctoral Student Compiles Database Of Indigenous Women Who've Gone Missing," *NPR*, July 21, 2018, https://www.npr.org/2018/07/21/627567789/doctoral-student-compiles-database-of-indigenous-women-who-ve-gone-missing.

[350] Ibid.

[351] Mani Sandhu, "UC Berkeley alumna creates database of missing, murdered indigenous women in US, Canada," *The Daily Californian*, July 30, 2018, http://www.dailycal.org/2018/07/30/uc-berkeley-alumna-creates-database-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-us-canada/.
According to Sandhu's article, Lucchesi started the database in 2015 during her masters studies at "Washington State University while conducting cartography research, after she discovered that there was no general consensus about how many indigenous women were killed or had disappeared in the United States and Canada…[As of July 2018], Annita Lucchesi has documented 2668 cases of missing or murdered indigenous women, dating from 1900 to the present. The majority of the information is fairly recent, with 90 percent of these cases occurring after 1980 and 75 percent occurring after 2000, according to Annita Lucchesi."

[352] Sovereign Bodies Institute, "About SBI." Accessed March 5, 2019: https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/about.

> and overall, there is a chronic lack of data on this violence. The Database works to address that need, by maintaining a comprehensive resource to support community members, advocates, activists, and researchers in their work towards justice for our stolen sisters.[353]

Family and community members are able to submit information about a missing person for addition to the database.[354] The data compiled by SBI is available to "tribal advocates, activists, policy makers, service providers, and community leaders."[355]

Recognizing that "creating awareness is the first step towards creating policy to address the problem," Luger seeks to raise "awareness about and honor missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, queer, and trans-gendered people" through *Every One*.[356] He hopes that *Every One*, by informing a naïve and ill-informed public, will inspire people to push for more engagement and attention on the MMIWQT crisis in the United States. To help contribute to this engagement and attention, Luger intends on "donating half of the proceeds [from the sale of *Every One* if an

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[353] Sovereign Bodies Institute, "About MMIW." Accessed March 5, 2019: https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/mmiw-database.

[354] To submit a case to the Sovereign Bodies Institute MMIW database, or request information on a case, go to: https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/mmiw-database. According to the website, "The kind of information the Database cares for is determined by ongoing consultation with Indigenous communities. The Database currently logs the following:

About Victims:
Name, Indigenous name and translation, tribal affiliation(s), birth date, age, if they were a mother, if they have other MMIWG2 cases in their family

About Perpetrators:
Race, gender, relationship to the victim

About the Violence:
Missing or murdered, incident date, violence perpetrated against murder victims after they are deceased, relevant issues (domestic violence, sexual assault, sex work/sex trafficking, foster care, police brutality, trans victim, death in custody, unsheltered, residential/boarding school)

About Police & Court Response:
Reward amount (if any), case classification, conviction status, which entities located deceased individuals

About Geography:
City, state/province, country, location type (tribal land, rural, urban)."

[355] Annita Luccehsi, "About," *annitalucchesi.com*. Accessed March 5, 2019, https://www.annitalucchesi.com/about-1

[356] *Native News Online* Staff, "Native Artist to Debut Crowdsourced Art Project Highlighting Murdered & Missing Indigenous People," *Native News Online*, May 3, 2018, https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/native-artist-to-debut-crowdsourced-art-project-highlighting-murdered-missing-indigenous-people/.

institution decides to purchase the installation] to organizations pushing for information-gathering similar to what's being done in Canada."[357]

The sculptural installation *Every One* is a result of Luger's "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Queer and Trans (MMIWQT) People BEAD PROJECT" (fig. 3.22-3.26). Although he first began making beads by himself, Luger opened the process to the public in January 2018 by launching an online instructional video. The video acted as "a call for collaboration with communities from across the U.S. and Canada to create and send [two-inch] clay beads which were then fired, stained in ink and strung together by Luger to create the monumental sculptural installation Every One."[358] Hundreds of people responded; "[i]ndividuals and participants from dozens of institutions subsequently either mailed [Luger] beads or made them in workshops"[359] organized by Luger, other artists, or institutions, such as the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico (fig. 3.22 and 3.23).

The socially collaborative bead creation for *Every One* was at the heart of Luger's artistic and creative conception for the installation. For Luger, this represents the idea "that art is a process and not an object."[360] He opened up the creative process specifically to add "the element of community engagement," noting that "the repetition of hand-making each bead…allows people to grasp the concept that 'this represents a life, this is already too many, this is enough.'"[361] By collaborating with him and being a part of the creative process, people were able to take a "real

[357] Bennett, "Representing Life."
[358] Luger, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Queer and Trans People BEAD PROJECT."
[359] Bennett, "Representing Life." Workshops were held by the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture (Santa Fe, NM), The Armory (Park Avenue Armory Conservancy) in New York, Tewa Women United (Española, NM), artist Anita Fields and the Philbrook Museum of Art (Tulsa, OK), among other institutions.
[360] Luger quoted in Bennett, "Representing Life."
[361] Ibid.

role in activism."[362] Luger emphasized this activism when speaking about the MMIWQT Bead Project:

> I think about activism in this point in history. There's so many people wanting to be active and participatory, but it's like the most passive activism at this point, which is liking and sharing on social media…That's good to get the word out, but it's also good to get people to embed that in their muscle memory. You actually did something rather than just like and shared to get that endorphin hit and a gold star.[363]

I argue that Luger's desire for inspiring and encouraging activism in his audience connects his art to participatory art. As described by Claire Bishop, one of participatory art's agendas concerns "the desire to create an *active subject*, one who *will be empowered* by the experience of physical or symbolic participation. The hope is that the newly-emancipated subjects of participation will find themselves able to determine their own social and political reality."[364] In empowering his audience to join in the demand for social and institutional change, Luger weaponizes his artistic privilege by "taking skills and putting them towards new ends, making serious issues tangible, *taking collective responsibility* for femicide, and *fostering communities where art is yet another avenue for those committed to social justice to take action*."[365]

The importance of community engagement extended beyond its contribution to the installation's creative production; when discussing the completion of the MMIWQT Bead Project and the construction of *Every One* (fig. 3.24-3.26), Luger explains:

> I had all the beads sent to IAIA [Institute of American Indian Arts] from across the U.S. and Canada to fire them, and I also stained them and strung the individual strands together on campus in preparation to complete the larger piece…While on campus I connected with Elizabeth Stahmer who organizes with the IAIA Red Shawl Solidarity Project and The Women's

[362] Eaton, "Artist brings attention to victimized indigenous women, LGBTQ people."
[363] Ibid.
[364] Claire Bishop, "Introduction: Viewers as Producers" in *Participation*, Claire Bishop, ed. (London: Whitechapel and Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006) 12.
[365] Alicia Inez Guzmán, "Data Gathering: Cannupa Hanska Luger's BEAD PROJECT," *Santa Fe Reporter*, February 27, 2018, https://www.sfreporter.com/arts/2018/02/28/data-gathering/. Emphasis added.

> society. The whole process of this social engagement was in *remembrance and prayer for our community members we have lost*, so in preparing the work to be loaded onto the truck for installation in Colorado, we decided to create a prayerful action where the community at IAIA and beyond were invited to support us to carry each strand from behind the ceramic studio where I constructed it, to the main circle of the IAIA campus, *setting up the completed piece together in an act of healing, solidarity, and ceremony*. This action maintained the intention of the work as *being all of ours*; healing and collaborative and embedded IAIA into the work and created connection with The Red Shawl Solidarity Project, who works in holding awareness around MMIW.[366]

By placing the focus on creating an artwork that was "all of ours," Luger used his artistic privilege to create a platform for the families and communities to speak, amplifying their messages and providing them an opportunity to tell their own (his)stories. He also offered the families and communities a therapeutic space – whether it was in their own home or at one of the numerous bead-making events – to experience potential "healing…to come together and just recognize the magnitude of this issue."[367] *Every One* is a collaborative, visual commemoration of the lives of the missing people, and by creating this sculptural installation, Luger and his collaborators acknowledge that these people and their lives were and are important. Therefore, I contend that *Every One* is more than an artwork; it is a collaborative construction of history, which inserts the stories of the missing women, girls, and queer and trans community members into the larger historical narratives of Canada and the United States. It is through viewer engagement that *Every One* transmits knowledge and one way the installation fosters viewer engagement is through monumentalization and the creation of critical distance.

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[366] Cannupa Hanska Luger quoted in "Cannupa Hanska Luger Commemorates Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls through Ceramic Beadwork" by Stacy Pratt, *First American Art Magazine*, May 10, 2018, http://firstamericanartmagazine.com/hanska-luger-lazy-stitch/. Emphasis added.

[367] Deleana OtherBull quoted in "Bead project aims to humanize tragic statistic," by Sami Edge, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, February 24, 2018, https://www.santafenewmexican.com/life/features/bead-project-aims-to-rehumanize-tragic-statistic/article_ac704fca-2b8c-5e4d-aaf1-71b267bb0b96.html.

Measuring 12' x 12' and weighing more than a ton, *Every One* (fig. 3.21 and 3.27) dominates and alters a gallery space through its size and presence. Sculptor Robert Morris's statement on a large sculpture's spatiality is readily applicable to *Every One:* "It is necessary literally to keep one's distance from large objects [the object in this instance being *Every One*] in order to take the whole of any one view into one's field of vision…."[368] The large scale of the sculptural installation monumentalizes Spitzer's photograph *Sister,* rendering it as a simplified, pixelated image (fig. 3.19). This monumentalization creates a critical distance between the installation and its viewer; however it is a critical distance that encourages physical participation and engagement from the viewer. One must stand a distance away and perceive the installation from different angles in order to see the woman's face, because a close-up view (fig. 3.28 and 3.29) reveals only the "pixels" – the clay beads – that make up the image.

The use of monumentalization and pixelation in *Every One* calls to mind British philosopher Alan Watts's contemplations on magnification and the different points of view you can perceive when you change your level of magnification:

> That is to say, you can look at something with a microscope and see it a certain way, you can look at it with a naked eye and see it in a certain way, you look at it with a telescope and you see it in another way. Now, which level of magnification is the correct one? Well, obviously, they're all correct, but *they're just different points of view*. You can, for example, look at a newspaper photograph under a magnifying glass and where, with the naked eye, you will see a human face, with a magnifying glass you will just see a profusion of dots rather meaninglessly scattered. But *as you stand away from that collection of dots, which all seem to be separate and apart from each other, they suddenly arrange themselves into a pattern. And you see that these individual dots add up to some kind of sense*.[369]

[368] R. Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," 231.
[369] Alan Watts, "Levels of Magnification," *Philosophy: East and West no. 26,* Lecture series of talks on the influence of Eastern philosophy on Western culture. Recorded: 1960. Broadcast: KPFA, 1960. Accessed online via: https://www.pacificaradioarchives.org/recording/bb052826?nns=Alan%2BWatts. Emphasis added.

Every One offers its viewers the opportunity to perceive its internal dialogue from multiple levels of magnification. Prior to the installation's creation, the vision for its final form was described in a way that addresses these magnification levels:

> Imagine, for a moment, a tapestry larger than your own body. It's composed of thousands of fist-sized beads stained in a spectrum of gray and all strung up together like a curtain. *When you step in close, the beads appear individual, even singular*; the marks of the maker, including fingerprints, dabs, and slight variations in size are evident at this range. *When you step further back, the particular merges into a whole* and a picture begins to form, each bead reading like a pixel. As your eyes adjust, you're met with a massive black and white portrait.[370]

When viewed as a whole, the woman's face is discernible, which makes a connection to Spitzer's photograph *Sister* and encourages the viewer to learn about the MMIWQT crisis at a macro-level, at the level of numbers and statistics. But when the viewer looks closer and inspects the individual beads, I argue a connection is made at a human-level. It is only on this close inspection that the viewer "sees" the idiosyncrasies between each bead. The beads are unique and bear signs of their makers (fig. 3.28-3.30) – fingerprints are visible on each bead's surface – reminding the viewer that an individual bead not only represents a missing or murdered person, but also represents the families and community members who lost a loved one. In creating this personalization – this re-humanization – of the MMIWQT data for the viewer, *Every One* creates awareness within the viewer and brings the crisis to the forefront of the viewer's historical knowledge and memory.

Thus, through their engagement with the installation, the viewers learn an uncomfortable, hard truth about North America's past and present. Claire Bishop argues that discomfort, as well as "frustration…absurdity, eccentricity, doubt," can be a crucial element "of a work's aesthetic impact and [is] essential to gaining new perspectives on our condition"[371] as citizens of this world.

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[370] Guzmán, "Data Gathering." Emphasis added.
[371] Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," *Artforum*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (February 2006) 181.

She further states that "[t]he best examples of socially collaborative art give rise to these – and many other – effects"[372] as they shock their viewers into being more sensitive and receptive to the world by creating moments of discomfort. *Every One* shocks and discomforts its viewers by confronting them with the knowledge of continuing atrocities occurring at an epidemic level in North America – atrocities that, as I mentioned in chapter two, are a part of the long history of oppression, racism, and violence against North America's Indigenous peoples. This shock and discomfort fosters an awareness in the viewer, an awareness that continues to manifest in the interplay between *Every One*'s archive and repertoire.

I argue that the archive and the repertoire work in tandem in *Every One* to raise awareness, and that the community participation in the installation's creation contributed to the formation of its repertoire of embodied knowledge. The handmade clay beads that make up *Every One* are the artwork's archive; thus the artwork is itself an archive. Embodied within the beads are the (his)stories of the individuals and communities who created the beads; the visible fingerprints and unique form of each bead stand as tangible evidence that each bead is imbued with the knowledge of its creator. Rhonda Marion-Schindler (Turtle Mountain Ojibwa) acknowledged this imbuement while helping to make beads at the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico in February 2018: "I am an indigenous woman, and I could easily have been a victim like these others, but God chose me not to be. With every bead, I've made I've prayed … It touched us as well."[373] More importantly, just like the nails embedded in the log from Belmore's performance *One thousand One hundred & eighty One* – addressed in chapter two – each bead is a physical representation of a life, a visual remembrance of the many lives lost in the MMIWQT crisis. In

[372] Ibid.
[373] Rhonda Marion-Schindler quoted in "Bead project aims to humanize tragic statistic" Edge, *Santa Fe New Mexican*.

regards to creating the beads for *Every One*, Luger stated, "As I'm rolling the beads in my hand, I'm realizing what they represent … The data is numbers, but the numbers represent lives. These are human lives."[374]

Each installment of the *Every One* "archive" – the most recent being *The Burke Prize 2018: The Future of Craft Part 2* exhibition at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City, on view from October 3, 2018 through March 17, 2019 – offers new (or perhaps returning) viewers the opportunity to engage with the installation. I argue that engaging with the installation fosters a realization in viewers – as they discern the installation's internal dialogue – that the beads represent human lives, thus fulfilling the re-humanization of the MMIWQT data that Luger sought when he conceived of *Every One*. This realization represents a transmission of knowledge and the reactivation of the embodied knowledge of *Every One'*s repertoire, processes that continue to occur with each new exhibition of the installation.

Every One joins the artworks by Belmore – as well as artworks by other artists – in contributing to the social and public awareness of the MMIWQT crisis by rehumanizing data and helping viewers conceptualize the human cost of the epidemic. As I argued in chapter two, the dissemination of knowledge endures through this social awareness, which writes the murdered and missing women, girls, and queer and trans community members into the history of North America. Together these artworks – *Every One, Vigil, One thousand One hundred & eighty One*, and the many other artworks not addressed here – also reveal the need to confront the darkness of settler-colonial history in the United States and Canada.[375] Luger, Belmore, and other artists are ensuring

[374] Luger quoted in "Artist brings attention to victimized indigenous women, LGBTQ people," Eaton.
[375] As noted in chapter two, for more discussion about this long history and its effect on the MMIW crisis, see: Dean, *Remembering Vancouver's Disappeared Women;* and Kim Anderson (Métis), Maria Campbell (Métis), and Christi Belcourt (Métis), eds, *Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2018).

that atrocities such as the MMIWQT crisis are not erased from the memory or history of Canada and the United States by visually writing the atrocities into North America's historical narratives.

By forcing their viewers to confront these atrocities, these artists ask them to acknowledge the role that settler colonialism has played in perpetuating these crises and they ask their audience: "what are you going to do about it?" They remind "us that settler colonialism is a project that should be acknowledged and resisted by everyone who wants to see a more socially just future for Indigenous women [and LGBTQ+ people] on this land."[376] *Every One* is part of this activist and artistic movement to raise awareness about the MMIWQT crisis, and it pushes its audience to move beyond passive activism and to be a part of the demand for change. In opening the creative process to collaboration, Luger amplified the voices of the families and communities affected by the crisis and together, through their collective effort, they say "this is enough."[377]

Conclusion

When speaking about her installation *Pressing Issues* (1997) – an installation of cross-cultural hybrid objects that viewers were encouraged to treat like musical instruments – Mi'kmaq

[376] Walker, "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," 144.

[377] Since the start of the 116th Congress of the United States in January 2019, actions have been taken to start addressing the MMIW crisis. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) reintroduced Savanna's Act on January 25, 2019. On March 14, 2019, the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States held a hearing entitled "Unmasking the Hidden Crisis of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW): Exploring Solutions to End the Cycle of Violence" against Native women. Rep. Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo, D-NM), one of the first Indigenous women to the House of Representatives in 2018 (along with Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk, D-KS), is on this committee and is taking an active role to push actions that address the MMIW crisis.
House Committee on Natural Resources, https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/unmasking-the-hidden-crisis-of-murdered-and-missing-indigenous-women-mmiw-exploring-solutions-to-end-the-cycle-of-violence.
116th Congress of the United States, S.227 - Savanna's Act, accessed April 1, 2019, https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/227.
In conjunction with the exhibition of Jamie Black's *The REDress Project,* The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian hosted a symposium on March 21, 2019 that addressed the MMIW crisis.

artist Teresa Marshall stated, "If it is not interactive, then it's just decorative."[378] By combining interactivity with aesthetic consideration to create visually arresting installations, Houle, Luger, and Feddersen – as well as other artists not examined here – seem to echo Marshall's assertion. They use this interactive and aesthetic combination to foster embodied relationships between their artworks and viewers, and encourage their audiences to engage with the narratives of repressed or marginalized (his)stories, both past and present, of North America's Indigenous peoples. As demonstrated through my analyses, considering installation art as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge – allows us to continue expanding our understanding of what constitutes "knowledge," an exploration begun in chapter two.

I argue that Diana Taylor's assertion that the production and reproduction of knowledge is a collective effort, "a series of back-and-forth conversations,"[379] is especially apparent in the relational qualities of installation art and the relationships that such art fosters with its audience. The embodied relationships that exist between installation art and its audience form the basis of these back-and-forth conversations. As meeting grounds "on which mixed cultural referents coverage,"[380] the installation art I examined here – *Paris/Ojibwa; Kill the Indian, Save the Man;* and *Every One* – makes the historical narratives of North America more complete by including the voices and perspectives of those who have been marginalized.

These back-and-forth conversations also connect with Nicolas Bourriaud's assertion that "[a]rtistic activity, for its part, strives to achieve modest connections, open up (one or two) obstructed passages, and connect levels of reality kept apart from one another."[381] Houle, Feddersen, and Luger – by utilizing interactivity – seek to create connections between their

[378] Teresa Marshall quoted in Berlo and Horton, "A Gathering Place," 207.
[379] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, xx.
[380] Berlo and Horton, "A Gathering Place," 196.
[381] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 8.

artworks and their audiences. By encouraging their audiences to interact with their artworks, these artists enable their audience to become active participants in the construction of history by allowing them to open, for themselves, the obstructed passages that surround North America's marginalized histories. As stated by Luger:

> Art is powerful in its simplicity. *It can convey ideas across class and culture*, due to its lack of reliance on language. *This makes it one of the most powerful tools of communication and cross-cultural understanding.* There is an inherent value of culture which is life-enhancing, entertaining, and defines our personal and national identities. Art is a deceptively simple way to access complex cultures that might otherwise be overlooked. *Art allows space to tell these complex stories and share information about the human experience, that historically, has been otherwise erased*.[382]

By telling complex stories that intervene in the settler-colonial narratives and official histories of North America, the artists generate knowledge and their artworks serve as landmarks where this knowledge exists. They challenge their audience to take an active role in the discernment of the artwork's internal dialogue, while simultaneously asking them to take an active role in society-at-large – whether it is by witnessing the dark history of colonization or by adding their voices to demands for change.

The collective production of knowledge and its back-and-forth conversations between artists and their audiences occur through many different mediums and artistic processes as chapter four will demonstrate through my examination of Indigenous photography, the reclamation of the photographic archive, and the creation of a self-determined historical record.

[382] Cannupa Hanska Luger, "Cannupa Hanska: The Artist's Role in a Community," *Race and Revolution Blog*, June 3, 2016, https://raceandrevolution.wordpress.com/tag/cannupa-hanska-luger/. Emphasis added.

Chapter 4 – Indigenous Photography: Envisioning History through Reclamation and Self-Determination

Since its invention in the mid-nineteenth century, photography has undeniably "played a central role in shaping [and re-presenting human] experience."[383] Photography is practiced by most everyone nowadays – thanks to many technological advances since its inception – and its practitioners range from cell phone owners and amateurs with digital cameras to professional photographers, journalists, and artists. Its flexibility and diversity as a medium has created a world saturated with an "abundance of images, which record, communicate, and act as triggers for remembering an array of [people, places, and] occasions in quotidian existence."[384] The role of photography in recording the many facets and nuances of quotidian existence has led to photographs serving as visual evidence for historical records, as well as standing as historical documents in-and-of themselves.

In the United States, the history of photography is intimately tied to colonization – particularly the colonization of the American West – as the U.S. government used photography as a means to map, explore, and define the western American landscape for Eastern audiences and to promote colonization and settlement of the West. The government also used photographs to promote an image of Euro-American superiority to justify the violence against Native nations, communities, peoples, and eventually to promote assimilation efforts.[385] After the colonization of the West, anthropologists and professional photographers began to document and photograph

[383] Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 144.
[384] Ibid., 130.
[385] Photographs of assimilation efforts that were utilized for national health campaigns can be found in the photography of Richard Throssel (Cree). See Peggy Albright, *Crow Indian Photographer: The Work of Richard Throssel* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997). For photography's use as evidence of the successful "acculturation" of Native children, see Hayes Peter Mauro, *The Art of Americanization at the Carlisle Indian School* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011).

Native American peoples in earnest in order to preserve their culture, as it was believed Native Americans were fated to disappear with the onset of progress in the West. These early images – both those produced by the government and those associated with salvage ethnography – perpetuated stereotypes and myths, including the "vanishing race," "noble savage," and a monolithic Native American culture. As noted by Tuscarora scholar and artist Jolene Rickard, "[t]he combination of these layered events created a powerful imaginary image in the mind of most Americans about the Indian,"[386] and it is an imaginary image that doggedly persists to this day.

Despite the important work of early Native photographers – such as B. A. Haldane (Tsimshian, 1874-1941), Jennie Ross Cobb (Aniyunwiya, 1881-1959), and Horace Poolaw (Kiowa, 1906-1984) – the history of Native American photography has, as noted by art historian Lara M. Evans, often unfortunately "been a history *of photographing* Native Americans, rather than a history of photography *by* Native Americans."[387] Recently, however, there has been a shift; Veronica Passalacqua notes that "[p]hotography by Native American artists emerged in exhibitions in the late 1980s and 1990s, creating discourse about its place within the canon of Native American art."[388]

At the core of contemporary Native-produced media is the desire to create self-defined and self-determined representations by photographing, telling stories, and documenting "live expression according to [the interpretation and vision of the Native] artist, director, community, or collaborators…."[389] This chapter explores photographic projects that embody this desire as they exemplify (his)stories and photographs produced through the interpretations and visions of Native

[386] Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), "The Occupation of Space as 'Photograph'," in *Native Nations: Journeys in American Photography*, Jane Alison, ed. (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1998) 57.
[387] Lara M. Evans (Cherokee), "Setting the Photographs Aside: Native North American Photography since 1990," in *Native Art Now!*, 239.
[388] Veronica Passalacqua, "Introduction to Photography, Film, and Performance," in *Native Art Now!*, 224.
[389] Passalacqua, "Introduction to Photography, Film, and Performance," 227.

artists and Native communities. In his digital series *Dear America* (2002), Ho-Chunk photographer Tom Jones portrays an account of the Native American experience and Indigenous contributions to the history of the United States that is largely marginalized within the narrative of American History, particularly in American History education. Both Diné artist Will Wilson and Swinomish-Tulalip artist Matika Wilbur embarked on documentary portrait projects in 2012 with a similar goal of creating photographic records of contemporary Native American peoples, which emphasize representations *of* Native Americans, *by* Native Americans, *for* Native Americans. To produce the photographs for his project *Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange* (*CIPX*), Wilson uses the wet-plate collodion process, a process from mid-to-late nineteenth century. Wilbur, on the other hand, uses both digital photography and film to produce hand-painted silver gelatin prints for her photographic undertaking, *Project 562*. Although varied in terms of their medium use and production, the three projects by Jones, Wilson, and Wilbur all use the genres of documentary photography or portraiture.

In her essay "Setting the Photographs Aside: Native North American Photography since 1990," Evans states that "Any assertion that Native photographers who are creating work that is documentary or that could be labeled portraiture are creating works that are strictly conventional or entirely a reaction to previous photographic practices is too simplistic."[390] Although Jones's, Wilson's, and Wilbur's creative work with documentary photographs and portraiture does interrogate the complicated history of early photographic practices, I contend that their creative work moves beyond mere interrogation. This chapter explores how the photographic projects of Jones, Wilson, and Wilbur are part of the collective production and reproduction of knowledge. Because of the pervasiveness of photography in contemporary society, people interact with images

[390] Evans, "Setting the Photographs Aside," 253.

daily. This places them in an almost constant conversation with the embodied knowledge of photographs, giving artists an ideal opportunity to present viewers "the option of *envisioning* rather abstract sociopolitical goals like justice, repatriation, and acknowledgement of past injustices."[391]

This chapter makes use of multiple theoretical and methodological frameworks, as "photography is too diverse a terrain to have a single overarching theoretical model."[392] I explore Jones' *Dear America* series as a project of reclamation, re-appropriation, and resignification, examining closely how he challenges viewers' understandings of history and patriotism. By contrast, I examine Wilson's and Wilbur's photographic projects as creations of a new, contemporary *self-defined* historical record, one that offers current and future generations inspiration and hope through the depiction of positive narratives. I also explore how Wilson's and Wilbur's collaborative projects re/signify and reclaim the photographic process as a one of self-determination. Although I examine the three photographic projects from different angles, the common thread throughout my analysis is my exploration of how photographs create, store, and transmit historical knowledge, and how these individual projects express Indigenous visual sovereignty.

Through this examination, I determine how these projects insert Indigenous perspectives and voices into the historical narratives of North America. Thus, I once again extend Diana Taylor's methodology of reading performance as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge – beyond the medium of performance and apply it to photography. My analyses continue to explore the ways in which art – in which the *visual* – can reorient the traditional ways in which history in the Americas is studied. Although the importance of images –

[391] Evans, "Setting the Photographs Aside," 259. Emphasis.
[392] Hilde Van Gelder and Helen Westgeest, *Photography Theory in Historical Perspective: Case Studies from Contemporary Art* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwel, 2011) 1.

especially photographs – to historical study has been a topic of debate within the discipline of History for quite some time, photography has yet to be afforded the same level of importance as writing – as evidenced by my literature review in chapter one.[393] Historian Peter Burke noted that:

> When they do use images, historians tend to treat them as mere illustrations, reproducing them in their books without comment. In cases in which the images are discussed in the text, this evidence is often used to illustrate conclusions that the author has already reached by other means, rather than to give new answers or to ask new questions.[394]

By continuing to decenter the role of writing in History and by considering photography as an episteme – rather than mere historical evidence – I once again ask what histories are revealed. Whose stories become visible when the visual is considered as important as the written word?

In the introduction for *Visual Currencies: Reflections on Native Photography,* scholar Henrietta Lidchi and Seminole-Muscogee-Diné artist Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie asserted that:

> In their creation and use, photographs contain the possibilities for *disrupting normative meanings*: of moving borders and redefining the pathways and terms on which particular photographs are understood and disseminated. This bestows on them a unique capacity to *mediate, intervene and culturally shift register*…we accept the broad premise that the power of photographs derives from their ability to circulate and become part of multiple sets of shifting social relationships.[395]

I contend that it is through their possibilities for disrupting normative meanings that photographs intervene in the historical narratives of North America, whether it is by re/signifying previously established narratives or by inserting Indigenous perspectives and voices into the history of our

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[393] For discussions on the role of photography within the discipline of History, see Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2001); Jennifer Tucker, ed., *History and Theory*, Vol. 48, No. 4, Theme Issue 48: Photography and Historical Interpretation (Dec. 2009); and Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*.
[394] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 10, Kindle.
[395] Henrietta Lidchi with Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, "Introduction" in *Visual Currencies: Reflection on Native Photography*, Henrietta Lidchi and Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, eds. (Edinburgh: NMS Enterprises Ltd-Publishing, 2009) xiii. Emphasis added.

time, as it is currently being written. Such interventions become expressions of visual sovereignty as they assert Indigenous authority over the construction of history.

Photography, Theory, and Visual Sovereignty

In their anthology *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images,* scholars Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart assert that "[p]hotographs are both images *and* physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience."[396] Photographs have "volume, opacity, tactility and a physical presence in the world"[397] and are, as noted by Edwards and Hart, "thus enmeshed with subjective, embodied and sensuous interactions."[398] Because of this dual existence, as both a two-dimensional image and a three-dimensional object, photographs have a unique capability to occupy multiple roles simultaneously, including that of a historical document.

I contend that their multiple roles as an image, an object, an artifact, a historical document, and much more, enable photographs to create, store, and transmit knowledge through multiple layers of signification. As such a multifaceted artistic medium, photography, similar to installation art, lends itself to analysis through many theoretical frameworks, and this chapter makes use of several different frameworks to analyze the series *Dear America*, and the projects *CIPX,* and *Project 562*, along with selected related photographs. I argue that the archive and the repertoire are present in photographs due to their unique status as both an image and an object – whether a tangible or digital object – although, as I noted with installation art, they manifest themselves in different ways than they do in a performance. In this chapter, I explore how the archive and the

[396] Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, "Introduction," *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) 1. Emphasis original.
[397] Geoffrey Batchen, *Photography's Objects* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Art Museum, 1997) 2.
[398] Edwards and Hart, "Introduction," 1.

repertoire manifest in the photographs by Jones, Wilbur, and Wilson, and what role they play in the creation and transmission of knowledge.

Additionally, I use once again semiotics to investigate the signification and re/signification processes occurring within the photographs produced by Jones, Wilson, and Wilbur in order to determine what role the processes have in creating and disseminating knowledge. According to John Tagg:

> What makes the link [between the pre-photographic referent and the sign] is a discriminatory technical, cultural, and historical process in which particular optical and chemical devices are set to work to organize experience and desire and produce a new reality – the paper image which, through yet further processes, may become meaningful in all sorts of ways.[399]

I argue that the intersection of the technical, cultural, and historical decisions within photographic production allows the process of re/signification in particular to occur. Re/signification complicates the relationship between established signifiers associated with early images of Native American peoples (such as the "vanishing race," and "beads, feathers, and leathers") and the signified (such as Native American identity). In complicating this semiotic relationship, I also contend that the process of re/signification taking place within the photographs of Jones, Wilbur and Wilson becomes a form of visual, representational sovereignty.

Tuscarora scholar and artist Jolene Rickard introduced the concept of visual sovereignty in her 1995 article "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand."[400] In explicating how sovereignty is a border

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[399] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988) 3. As explained by Daniel Chandler, the referent is what the sign 'stands for.' "In Peirce's triadic model of the sign this is called the *object*. In Saussure's dyadic model of the sign, a referent in the world is not explicitly featured - only the *signified* - a concept which may or may not refer to an object in the world. This is sometimes referred to as 'bracketting the referent'. Note that referents can include ideas, events and material objects." In my analysis, the signifier fulfills the role of the referent, while the signified represents the sign. Daniel Chandler, "Glossary of Key Terms," *Semiotics for Beginners*, last modified 07/04/2017. Accessed September 15, 2017: http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem-gloss.html#R.

[400] Rickard's article was featured in the exhibition catalogue *Strong Hearts: Native American Visions and Voices*, Aperture (New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1995) 51-54.

that "shifts indigenous experience from a victimized stance to a strategic one," Rickard addresses how "sovereignty is taking shape in visual thought as indigenous artists negotiate cultural space."[401] She states that "photographs made by indigenous makers are the documentation of [Indigenous] sovereignty, both politically and spiritually," and I contend that the photographs of Wilbur and Wilson in particular fulfill this role of documentation.[402] I also assert that the photographs of Jones's *Dear America* series are documentation of his *personal* assertion of sovereignty over historical visual records.

Other scholars of Indigenous art have expanded upon Rickard's concept of visual sovereignty and frequently applied it as a framework in their analyses. Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie explains that visual sovereignty does not equate "individual creative expression without responsibility," but rather the exact opposite. For Tsinhanhjinnie, it equates the "point of being acutely aware of one's responsibility to one's community, because to be sovereign one must have a nation, community, friends, and family who are practicing participants, constantly engaged in thoughts of sovereignty."[403] This responsibility to community is particularly evident in Wilbur's *Project 562* through her social interactions with the Native nations she visits. Wilson is also aware of his responsibility to community, as he is "interested in how art and creativity can be a vehicle for social change—through the way people are represented, and the way underrepresented communities can be given a voice."[404] A responsibility to community also drives Jones, who feels "a responsibility to portray the Native American experience and the contributions to the history of

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[401] Jolene Rickard, "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand," *Strong Hearts: Native American Visions and Voices*, Aperture (New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1995) 51.
[402] Rickard, "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand," *Strong Hearts,* 54.
[403] Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, "Visual Sovereignty: A Continuous Aboriginal/Indigenous Landscape" in *Diversity and Dialogue: The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art 2007*, James H. Nottage, ed. (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, 2008) 15.
[404] Will Wilson quoted in "Will Wilson's Improved Self-Images" by Laura M. Andre, *New Mexico Magazine*, August 2013. Accessed online via: http://www.nmmagazine.com/article/?aid=84552#.VUKlU85cOgw

the United States of Native peoples, who have been largely without a voice in the documentation of this history."[405]

In her 2013 ethnography *Sovereign Screens: Aboriginal Media on the Canadian West Coast*, anthropologist Kristin Dowell extends the concept of visual sovereignty to the media arts. Dowell defines visual sovereignty as "the articulation of Aboriginal peoples' distinctive cultural traditions, political status, and collective identities through aesthetic and cinematic means."[406] Through her examination of Aboriginal media in Vancouver, B.C, Dowell asserts that "artists…express Aboriginal sovereignty and self-determination through the production of their art and media," which creates a catalyst for the production of art to became an act of self-determination and a physical expression of sovereignty.[407] I contend that Wilson and Wilbur express Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination through their collaborative photographic processes, while Jones expresses Indigenous sovereignty through his project of reclamation.

Employing visual sovereignty as an overarching analytical framework, I now turn my attention to analyzing Jones' digital series *Dear America*, Wilson's project *CIPX*, and Wilbur's on-going *Project 562.*

Tom Jones, Dear America: History Complicated and Reclaimed through Postcards

> I feel a responsibility to portray the Native American experience, and the contributions to the history of the United States of Native peoples, who have been largely without a voice in the documentation of this history.[408]
>
> My artwork is all about teaching and exposing our history.[409]
> – Tom Jones

[405] Tom Jones, "Artist Statement," in *Migrations: New Directions in Native American Art,* Marjorie Devon, ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006) 76.
[406] Kristin L. Dowell, *Sovereign Screens: Aboriginal Media on the Canadian West Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013) loc. 184, Kindle.
[407] Dowell, *Sovereign Screens*, loc. 208
[408] Jones, "Artist Statement," 76.
[409] Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.

For Ho-Chunk artist and educator Tom Jones, photography has always been a part of his life; he explains:

> It came to me through legacy. My father, upon returning from World War II, attended Yale on the GI Bill to learn photography. He went on to be a photographer and work in the photo-finishing business his whole life…so cameras were always in the house.[410]

Despite this early exposure to photography, Jones did not pursue photography until his graduate studies at Columbia College in Chicago, IL, where he received an MFA in Photography and a MA in Museum Studies. Grounded in a Ho-Chunk worldview, his artwork examines a wide-range of topics, including identity, geographic place, the representation of American Indian material culture in popular/commodity culture, as well as "the romanticized representation of Native peoples in photography through the re-examination of historic pictures taken by white photographers."[411] Through his work, as artist and scholar America Meredith notes, "Jones challenges our assumptions. While exposing stereotypes and fantasies for what they are [as well as revealing history], [he] simultaneously offers the public a window into the reality of being Ho-Chunk and Native today."[412]

In addition to straight photography and scanography[413], Jones also re-appropriates vintage photographs and postcards, which he digitally or physically manipulates to create new photographic objects. He used this technique to produce his 2002 digital series *Dear America* (fig. 4.2-4.8, 4.10-4.18), for which "he selected images of Indians from vintage postcards and photographs, which he digitally manipulated and juxtaposed with handwritten text about little-

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[410] Tom Jones quoted in "Native Perspectives" by Mollie Jamison, *Cowboys and Indians Magazine*, March 14, 2017, https://www.cowboysindians.com/2017/03/native-perspectives/.
[411] Tom Jones, personal website, "Info," accessed April 12, 2018, http://tomjoneshochunk.com.
[412] America Meredith (Cherokee), "Tom Jones: Ho-Chunk Photographer," *First American Art Magazine* (Spring 2013), 24. Accessed online: http://firstamericanartmagazine.com/no-0/.
[413] Scanography is the use of a flatbed scanner to create digital art images, such as Jones's series *I am Indian First and an Artist Second*. Meredith, "Tom Jones: Ho-Chunk Photographer," 26.

known historical events…."[414] To each of the individual sixteen images that comprise *Dear America*, Jones also added a line from the song *America*, which serves as the image's title. Through the lens of re-appropriation and photographic sovereignty, I examine *Dear America* as a project of reclamation. In analyzing this project, I determine how it complicates the official historical narratives of the United States by commenting on the past in ways that are relevant today.

Begun in 2001 and completed in 2002, *Dear America* is a politically-charged series that developed from Jones's need "to address historical narratives…because our [Native American] history has been whitewashed or nearly erased in the public school system."[415] In the 1980s, Jones began collecting early-twentieth-century photographic postcards from antique stores, postcard shows, and later on eBay, as a means to acquire photographs cheaply. Jones notes that "[t]he postcards later became a resource for me to use in my work some fifteen years later" and one postcard (fig. 4.1) in particular was the catalyst for *Dear America*:

> When I came across this photographic postcard of a beautiful woman with these hateful words inserted below the image "The White Man's Burden" I saw how this everyday object that was sent through the mail could be used as a form of racist propaganda. I decided I could counteract this in a positive way to tell our own history through my artwork.[416]

Jones uses *Dear America* to counteract this hateful narrative by revealing little-known historical events or facts of Indigenous experiences that are often missing from mainstream historical narratives of what is now the United States. Individual *Dear America* photographs contend with a wide-range of subjects that include the stealing of Indigenous lands, the influence of Indigenous cultures on the U.S. government, and Indigenous resilience, among others. Jones digitally manipulated some of the images, photoshopping figures or statements onto existing postcard

[414] Jo Ortel, "Multiple Migrations: (E)merging Imagery," in *Migrations: New Directions in Native American Art*, 42.
[415] Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.
[416] Ibid.

imagery, and physically added "beadwork, paint, quillwork, colored pencil, glitter, pen and ink" to some of the images as well.[417] Bookending the series are mirrored images of a white man – which Jones photoshopped in – posed as if running, in front of an ocean with crashing waves (fig. 4.2 and 4.18). According to Jones, the two images reference the land grabs throughout the United States and the ocean imagery plays on the line "From sea to shining sea" from the song *America the Beautiful.*[418] As previously noted, the thread that stitches – sometimes literally through the addition of bead or quillwork – the series together is the song *America* (aka *My Country 'tis of Thee*); lines from two of the four standard verses serve as the titles for the individual photographs:

> My country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty
> Of thee I sing.
> Land where my fathers died.
> Land of the Pilgrim's pride,
> From every mountain side
> Let freedom ring.
> Our father's God to Thee
> Author of liberty,
> To Thee we sing.
> Long may our land be bright

[417] Concerning the photographs in *Dear America*, Jones stated: "In "My country tis of thee," I wanted to honor these Ho-Chunk women and their resilience to stand their ground. The title was already on this card and I digitally placed the Ho-Chunk women into the picture. In Sweet Land of Liberty, I again used an old photograph of Ho-Chunk dancers at a pow wow with a white hunter Photoshopped on top. In history it has been stated that it was only Sioux that where hung at Mankato, but from the stories that were passed down to me there where also Ho-Chunk men who were hung there. "Of thee I sing," this one is a straightforward image with singers, but to represent the irony of the song. In the piece, "Land where my father's died," I used a photograph of Ho-Chunks, the text on this piece tells it all. In "Land of the Pilgrim's Pride," I chose an image of white people dressing up as Indians to show the irony of white people playing Indian when they nearly exterminated them. I have a large collection of photographs of white people dressing up as Indians, which I have shown at numerous exhibitions. Some of these where [*sic*] also showed along side my series Encountering cultures…In "Let freedom ring," I used the image of two white cowboys to represent the taking of land as the Indians looked on. I did colored pencil drawings of Indians from various tribes at the bottom...In Author of Liberty," I wanted to show that the United Stated form of government was based on the Iroquois Confederacy. The photograph I used is a skeleton of leaves to represent the basis of the United States government. So often Lincoln is touted as giving people Liberty, but to us he is a killer and perpetuated the death of many Native Americans. To Thee we sing, is meant to be humorous, but the advent of bingo brought financial stability to many tribes. Long may our land be bright is straightforward. With Freedom's Holy Light is meant to be both humorous and serious. Tobacco is very sacred to many tribes. In Protect us by thy might," I wanted to honor the warriors. I chose this particular image because of the Survivors of Custer flag in the background. In Great God Our King I wanted to represent the land. I used Chief Seattle's letter to President Pierce, which speaks of how the idea of selling land is foreign to us." Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.

[418] Ibid.

With freedom's holy light
Protect us by Thy might
Great God our King![419]

Jones stated that he chose *America* because, as a patriotic song, he "felt it could ironically go both ways, to represent whites and Native Americans."[420] In juxtaposing the song with the early postcard images, he offers his viewers a commentary on the United States' settler-colonial past – and I argue its present as well. I also contend that the images in *Dear America* – by depicting and alluding to scenes of colonization – remind the viewers of the intimate relationship between photography and colonization in the United States.

As previously noted, the U.S. government used photography to map, explore, and define the western American landscape for Eastern audiences. This process established photography as a mechanism of colonialism as the government promoted colonization and settlement of the West through photographs. The U.S. government first employed photography in the American West as a means to document exploratory, geological, and railroad surveys. During the subsequent period of Manifest Destiny and Westward expansion, photographs of treaty negotiations between Native American tribal leaders and the United States government helped promote an image of Euro-American superiority to support the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny.[421]

As colonization progressed and conflicts between Native nations and the U.S. government intensified, the U.S. government utilized photographs of the "Indian Wars" to dehumanize Indigenous peoples and justify violence against them. After the alleged end of the Indian Wars brought about by the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, the U.S. government forced Indigenous

[419] *America* lyrics included on "Tom Jones: Archive: Dear America, Statement," accessed December 15, 2018, http://tomjoneshochunk.com.
[420] Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.
[421] See Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002) for information on the use of photography by the US government and how photography helped to create the myth of the American West.

peoples into a period of assimilation. Photography became a tool to promote assimilation, providing documentation of the "healthful" benefits of Euro-American culture, and the "successful" acculturation of Indigenous children through boarding schools – an effort addressed in chapter three in the case study on RYAN! Feddersen's installation *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* – as well as other assimilation efforts.[422]

In addition, photography was also intimately connected with the emergence of anthropology in the United States. As noted by Melissa Banta and Curtis M. Hinsley, the mid-nineteenth century saw the simultaneous invention of photography and emergence of modern anthropology.[423] The colonization of the land that is now the United States, particularly the colonization of the American West, caused rapid and profound changes for Native nations and this expansive age "produced the camera as a means of visually preserving the very traditions it had a hand in altering."[424] In their edited volume *Visualizing Anthropology,* Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz note the camera became "a critical ethnographic tool" as anthropologists "sought to record, map and classify natives people," and it gained a prominent role in salvage projects for the recording and collecting of "visible manifestations of culture (clothing, ritual, and material objects)."[425]

Professional photographers also embarked on ethnographic photography projects, with Edward S. Curtis's *The North American Indian* arguably being the most well-known of these

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[422] For information on photographs by Crow photographer Richard Throssel of assimilation efforts that were utilized for national health campaigns, see Albright, *Crow Indian Photographer* for information on the use of Richard Throssel's photographs for assimilation promotion. See Mauro, *The Art of Americanization at the Carlisle Indian School* for information on photography as a tool for documenting the "acculturation" of Native American children at the Carlisle Indian School, the first off-reservation Indian Boarding school opened in the United States in 1879.
[423] Melissa Banta and Curtis M. Hinsely, *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, distributed by Harvard University Press, 1986) 39.
[424] Banta and Hinsely, *From Site to Sight,* 39.
[425] Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz, *Visualizing Anthropology: Experimenting with Image-Based Ethnography*. (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2005) 4.

efforts.[426] Together, these early photographic practices of anthropologists, professional photographers, and the government defined Native American cultures and perpetuated stereotypes and myths – such as the "vanishing race" – which continue to influence mainstream representations of Native American peoples to this day. It is this history and these stereotypes that many contemporary Native American artists – including Jones – confront and deconstruct in their artwork. And it is this history that shaped the imagery in the postcards collected, re-appropriated, and reclaimed by Jones in *Dear America*.

Jones's collection and re-appropriation of early photographic postcards connects the *Dear America* series to the archival impulse, a concept I addressed in chapter three in my analysis of Robert Houle's installation *Paris/Ojibwa*. Similar to Houle, Jones is drawn to "historical information that is lost or suppressed"[427] and he makes this information "physically present once more"[428] by revealing it through his digital and physical manipulation of the found postcards. This elaboration on the "devices of the found image, [and] object" makes *Dear America* – much like *Paris/Ojibwa* – a "project of reclamation, revitalization, and recovery."[429] Additionally, by revealing facts – both historical and present-day – about colonization in the U.S., *Dear America* brings Indigenous experiences to the forefront of the viewer's historical memory. This revelatory act intervenes in the historical narratives of the U.S. by highlighting the voices and perspectives of Indigenous peoples, people "who have been largely without a voice in the documentation of

[426] Other professional photographers documenting Native American tribes at the turn of the century include John K. Hillers, the official photographer of the Bureau of Ethnology; Joseph Kossuth Dixon, funded by the Wanamaker family; and Zalmon Gilbert, who was active in Mandan, Dakota Territory. This is a select list of the numerous photographers working at the time. See Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*; and Joseph Kossuth Dixon and Rodman Wanamaker, *The Vanishing Race: The Last Great Indian Council* (Garden City; New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913), accessed online via: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/27616.
[427] Hal Foster, *Bad New Days: Art, Criticism, Emergency* (London: Verso Books, 2015) 68.
[428] Ibid.
[429] Matthew Ryan Smith, "The Archive in Contemporary Indigenous Art," *First American Art Magazine* (Fall 2016) 26.

this history."[430]

Concerning the use of images as evidence for historical events, historian Peter Burke stated that "[f]or more complex narratives we may turn to a series of images illustrating different episodes in a war or a reign."[431] He further stated that "…images often reveal significant details which verbal reports omit. They give viewers distant in space or time some sense of the experience…in different periods."[432] I contend that these statements are also applicable to images illustrating the historical narrative of a nation, such as the numerous "episodes" in the on-going settler-colonial project of the United States. *Dear America* is one such series of images, as the individual photographs that comprise *Dear America* address some of the complex historical narratives of Indigenous experiences in settler-colonial America. I address two of the images, *From Every Mountain Side* and *Our Father's God to Thee* below.

From Every Mountain Side (fig. 4.8), the seventh photograph in *Dear America*, comments on the U.S. government's acquisition of Indigenous lands – often accomplished through forced removal, the stealing of land, or the breaking of treaties – and subsequent selling of those lands to Euro-American settlers.[433] To create the image, Jones's appropriated a 1910 poster (fig. 4.9) from the Department of the Interior and photoshopped an image of a Blackfeet Indian council at Glacier National Park on top. Regarding *From Every Mountain Side*, Jones noted:

> Indian land for sale was appropriated from a poster by the US government. I used a photograph of an Indian pointing to show that some treaties where

[430] Jones, "Artist Statement," *Migrations,* 76.
[431] Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 151.
[432] Ibid.
[433] For further information on land rights struggles, see Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Colonization* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2002). For further information on policies of removal in the United States, see: Tim Alan Garrison, *The Legal Ideology of Removal: The Southern Judiciary and the Sovereignty of Native American Nations* (Athens, London: University of Georgia Press, 2010), and Jason Edward Black, *American Indians and the Rhetoric of Removal and Allotment* (. For further information on treaties, see Colin G. Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft : Treaties and Treaty Making in American Indian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2013), and Donald Lee Fixico, ed., *Treaties with American Indians: An Encyclopedia of Rights, Conflicts, and Sovereignty* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2008).

> agreed to by individuals of certain tribes with the United States government, but they did not have the right to represent the tribe.[434]

In addition to alluding to treaty agreements made by individuals without a right to represent their tribe, the image of the Blackfeet council also alludes to the "Indian land for sale" – something the original poster only did through words – due to the mountains visible in the image's background. This image replaced the portrait of an Indigenous man (fig. 4.9) that the 1910 poster featured. By replacing the original portrait of a singular Indigenous man with an image of multiple people, *From Every Mountain Side* reminds viewers that many, many people were affected by the U.S. government's actions.

Although created in 2001-2002, I argue that *From Every Mountain Side* holds particular relevance for contemporary society because of the current U.S. administration's attempts to shrink protected lands, many of which contain sacred sites of multiple Native nations. It also calls to mind controversies surrounding oil pipeline construction – such as the Dakota Access Pipeline controversy I discussed in chapter two – and the potential threat that pipelines represent for many Native communities. However, instead of promoting the land as "irrigated" or "irrigable" for "grazing" and "agricultural dry farming" as in 1910, the current administration is promoting the opening of the land for extractive industries.[435] The most recent controversy surrounds Chaco Culture Historical National Park, more commonly known as Chaco Canyon, which was a major

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[434] Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.

[435] For information on the controversies surrounding Bear Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, see: Julie Turkewitz, "Trump Slashes Size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Monuments," *The New York Times*, December 4, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/us/trump-bears-ears.html; Hannah Grover, "A year after Trump reduced its size a fight over Bears Ears continues," *Farmington Daily Times*, updated December 5, 2018, https://www.daily-times.com/story/news/local/2018/12/04/bears-ears-national-monument-trump-fight-continues/2196632002/; and Deb Haaland and Joênia Wapichana, "Protecting indigenous lands protects the environment. Trump and Bolsonaro threaten both," *The Washington Post*, March 18, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/18/protecting-indigenous-lands-protects-environment-trump-bolsonaro-threaten-both/.
These are just some of the many Indigenous sacred sites and lands currently being threatened right now (along with many that were threatened or destroyed before now).

center of Ancestral Puebloan cultures between 850 CE and 1250 CE. Chairman E. Paul Torres of the All Pueblo Council explains:

> For our people, the Greater Chaco landscape is considered a living cultural site. Our spiritual leaders continue to make pilgrimages to this pristine landscape where we refer to these sites as 'the footprints of our ancestors'. Despite its sacred importance, Chaco is constantly threatened by a growing network of roads, oil pads, and derricks.[436]

U.S. Representative Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo, D-NM), one of the members of Congress leading efforts to protect Chaco, further underscores Chaco's importance:

> It's important that we protect Chaco Canyon, both because it is a sacred place that should be valued the same way we value other sacred places, but also because public lands must be protected. This place is the ancestral homeland of my people and is a living landscape. It's a place where New Mexico families and people from all over the world come to make memories.[437]

As noted by Torres, despite its sacred importance, Chaco faces many threats due to attempts to open the land for mining and oil and gas extraction. Most recently, "the Federal Bureau of Land Management had deferred a planned lease sale of around 1,500 acres within 10 miles of the park in February after strong public opposition."[438] This was the third attempt by the current administration to offer the lands surrounding Chaco for oil and gas leasing.[439]

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[436] E. Paul Torres quoted in "Congress explores legislation to protect Chaco Canyon from oil and gas development," by Jourdan Bennett-Begaye, *Indian Country Today,* April 9, 2019, https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/news/congress-explores-legislation-to-protect-chaco-canyon-from-oil-and-gas-development-VmsFJOoEM0KVenkqYEMP0Q/.

[437] Deb Haaland quoted in "'Shock and dismay' for Notre Dame (so should it be for Chaco Canyon)," by Jourdan Bennett-Begaye, *Indian Country Today*, April 16, 2019, https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/news/shock-and-dismay-for-notre-dame-so-should-it-be-for-chaco-canyon-bkAP-9SHo0CcRGQWBu9TYg/.

[438] Valerie Volcovici, "U.S. lawmakers introduce bill to protect Native American site from drilling," *Reuters*, April 9, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-drilling/u-s-lawmakers-introduce-bill-to-protect-native-american-site-from-drilling-idUSKCN1RL2S0.

[439] Ibid. In response to the administration's attempts, the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act has been introduced by U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo); the bill proposes to withdraw the federal lands within an approximately 10-mile protected radius around Chaco from further mineral development. The bill was first introduced in May 2018 by Senator Udall during the session of the 115th Congress of the United States of America, and it has now been reintroduced for the session of the 116th Congress. For more information about the attempts to protect Chaco, see: Felicia Fonseca, "Tribes urge US to ban drilling around sacred New Mexico site," *The Associated Press*, March 21, 2019; Paul F.

Thus, when considered in the context of current times – in the context of NOW – I argue that *From Every Mountain Side* and its proclamation of "Indian land for sale" brings to the forefront the U.S. government's continuing questionable treatment of Native nations, their sovereignty, their rights, their lands, and their peoples. The image confronts its viewers with a haunting echo of land grabs committed by Euro-American settlers since the arrival of Europeans to the North American continent, and by the U.S. government since the founding of the U.S. In doing so, *From Every Mountain Side* transmits to the viewer knowledge about earlier colonial practices as well as current ones, thereby demonstrating that settler-colonialism is an on-going project and asking the viewer to acknowledge this fact. Other images in *Dear America* also confront viewers with knowledge and questions about colonization processes, including *Our Father's God to Thee*.

Our Father's God to Thee (fig. 4.11), the ninth photograph in the series, addresses the history of the Indian Boarding school system in the U.S. – a system I first addressed in chapter three. The photograph, scanned from a postcard, shows a distant view of Native children standing and sitting in front of Bethany Indian Mission School, one of the many schools once located in Wisconsin where many Ho-Chunk and other Native children – including Jones's grandfather and mother[440] – were sent. Standing on a balcony above the children are the non-Native teachers and administrators. What at first seems like a standard, school-group photograph takes on a new meaning when one considers the paragraph of text Jones added to the right margin:

Reed, "Chaco Canyon deserves greater protection," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 13, 2019, https://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/my_view/chaco-canyon-deserves-greater-protection/article_43e11662-583b-5327-b374-1502d8f90051.html; and Carol A. Clark, "New Mexico Delegation Udall, Heinrich, Luján, Haaland Introduce Legislation To Protect Chaco Canyon Area," *Los Alamos Daily Post,* April 13, 2019, https://ladailypost.com/content/new-mexico-delegation-udall-heinrich-luján-haaland-introduce-legislation-protect-chaco.

[440] In an email interview, Jones's stated: "Our Father's God to Thee represent [*sic*] the boarding schools and their want to Christianize the Indian children. This particular image is of a boarding school that both my mother and grandfather went to." Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.

> My mother, along with other Native American children, were taken from their homes and their people and sent to boarding school by the U.S. government. The government's objective in assimilating Native American children into white culture was to "civilize," "educate," and convert them to Christianity. My mother has told me stories of her experience, about being punished for speaking her original language, and the memory of her sister running into the woods to hide near the creek when the social worker came around.

As scholar Steven D. Hoelscher explained, the sobering words "give the photograph its punctum – the image bruises, stings, and is poignant."[441] The words also shift the implied hierarchy of the photograph; at first glance, the positioning of the teachers on the balcony subtly signifies their authority over the students and the hierarchy of the teacher-student relationship. However, Jones's added text disrupts the viewer's understanding of this relationship; the "hierarchy" of the photo is no longer merely teachers and their students. When taken into context with the information Jones provides, the positioning of the non-Native teachers above the Native students becomes a visual embodiment of the racial prejudices and beliefs in white superiority that drove Indian education policies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Like all of the images in the series, *Our Father's God to Thee* also, as further noted by Hoelscher, "works to subvert our expectations of postcards like this, which typically contain brief, quotidian messages relating to the weather, travel conditions, and date of expected return."[442] However, a date of expected return was not always guaranteed for the children forced to attend Indian boarding schools; at Carlisle Indian School alone an estimated 200-500 students died, most

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[441] Steven D. Hoelscher, *Picturing Indians: Photographic Encounters and Tourist Fantasies in H.H. Bennett's Wisconsin Dells* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008) 153. The "punctum" is a concept introduced by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*. Of the "punctum" Barthes says: "…*punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole–and also a cast of the dice. A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (also bruises me, is poignant to me)." Ronald Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) 27.
Thus, the punctum is a piercing, personally touching detail in a photograph which establishes a direct relationship with the physical photograph or the person (or object) pictured within it.

[442] Ibid.

due to infectious diseases.[443] Much like Feddersen, Jones forces his audience to confront the traumatic history of the Indian boarding school system; the caption informs the viewers that the children pictured in the photograph were likely taken from their homes and forced to attend the school. In sharing his mother's experiences – however brief the anecdote – Jones underscores the devastating effects the boarding schools had on the children who attended, as well as the intergenerational effects of the schools.

Our Father's God to Thee, however, also speaks of survivance,[444] as it is an image made by the son of a Bethany Indian Mission School survivor. As Hoelscher notes, "[i]n a contemporary version of surviance, Native photographers reclaim ownership over how their cultures are depicted by creating visual images that are firmly rooted in indigenous realities."[445] Jones's work focuses on telling the stories of his community, and on portraying "the Native American experience, and the contributions to the history of the United States of Native peoples."[446] Therefore, I argue that

[443] Preston McBride, a doctoral student in the Department of History at UCLA, has been working on recalculating the number of student deaths at Carlisle. According to a 2013 *Native Sun News* article, previous "estimates had surmised that the total number of deaths at the school was somewhere near 230 students, McBride however has recalculated the number to be somewhere closer to 500 students who had died while under the direct supervision of the school or who had recently been sent home from Carlisle." Brandon Ecoffey, "Death rate cover-up at Carlisle Indian School," *Native Sun News*, September 5, 2013, accessed via: https://www.indianz.com/News/2013/09/05/native-sun-news-death-rate-cov.asp. For further information regarding deaths at Carlisle, see: Natalia Flores, "Life And Death In The Carlisle Indian Industrial School," *StMU History Media*, March 8, 2018, https://www.stmuhistorymedia.org/life-and-death-in-the-carlisle-indian-industrial-school/; and Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Rose, Susan D., eds., "Part 3: Carlisle Indian School Cemetery," *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories*, and *Reclamations* (Lincoln: UNP – Nebraska, 2016). For further information about the devastating impact of Indian boarding schools, including deaths, see: Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004).

[444] Survivance is a concept first defined by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor. Vizenor describes it thusly: "Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent. Survivance is greater than the right of a survivable name. Survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry. Survivance is the heritable right of succession or reversion of an estate and, in the course of international declaration of human rights, is a narrative estate of native survivance."
Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice," in *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, Gerald Vizenor, ed. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008) 1.

[445] Hoelscher, *Picturing Indians,* 147.

[446] Jones, "Artist Statement," *Migrations,* 76.

his photographs, including *Our Father's God to Thee* and the rest of the images in *Dear America,* stand as testaments of survivance.

In its dual role as both an image and an object, I argue that a photograph is its own archive; many historical archives – meaning "a repository or ordered system of documents and records, both verbal and visual"[447] – contain photographs as part of their records. I also contend that as tangible (or even digital) objects, photographs also carry the embodied knowledge of their repertoire. The creative process and the interaction of the photographer and his medium – whether it is by producing new photographs or manipulating existing photographs in order to create a new object – creates the repertoire. As early twentieth-century photographic postcards, the images used by Jones in *Dear America* already had a repertoire, one that was formed during the creation of the original photographs.

However, I argue that by reclaiming and re/signifying the photographs, Jones created a new repertoire for each of the images in *Dear America,* a repertoire defined by his Ho-Chunk worldview and one that highlights Indigenous experiences. I contend that each exhibition or online viewing of *Dear America* reactivates this new repertoire, which enables the new knowledge Jones imbued in the photographs to be transmitted to new or returning viewers. This fulfills Jones's goal for the series, which is to teach and expose Indigenous histories: "My artwork is all about teaching and exposing our history."[448] The elaboration on and manipulation of found postcards invites the viewer to do more than stop and look; it invites them "to enter into the work and think about it too, engage empathetically with its maker, and then stick around to stay looking."[449] By entering

[447] Merewether, "Introduction: Art and the Archive," 10.
[448] Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.
[449] Stacy J. Platt, "In the Present Day and in the Present Tense: Tom Jones's Remnants," *Exposure*, March 31, 2018, https://medium.com/exposure-magazine/in-the-present-day-and-in-the-present-tense-looking-at-tom-joness-remnants-2bd46c286f93 .

into the work and discerning its internal dialogue, the facts – both historical and present-day – about colonization in the U.S. are revealed to the viewer. Thus, in viewing the photographic series and entering into the work to discern its internal dialogue, the audience participates in the reproduction of this knowledge and becomes a part of its transmission.

Art historian Lara M. Evans asserts that "[c]laiming the photographs of previous generations and incorporating them into critical artworks exercises sovereignty over visual records"[450] and we see such an exercise being done by Jones in *Dear America*. In fact, he describes *Dear America* as a form of photographic sovereignty: "When I began the *Dear America* series I saw the act of re-appropriating these images as a means of taking back our own images, a form of photographic sovereignty."[451] I contend that *Dear America* is also a project of re/signification. Regarding the series, art historian Jo Ortel noted that "[i]n the swirl of heightened nationalism following 9/11, 'Dear America' takes on added meaning" and asks its viewer "What does it mean – to different groups at different moments in time – to be proud and patriotic?"[452] Given the current rise of nationalism prior to and following the 2016 presidential election[453], I argue that this question remains relevant today. In particular, Jones's use of the song *America* calls to mind these questions due to the song's prominent role in representing and promoting patriotism in the U.S. over time. As scholars Robert James Branham and Stephen J. Harnett explained, "'America' has been one of

[450] Evans, "Setting the Photographs Aside," 241.
[451] Email interview with the artist, Tom Jones, March 20, 2019.
[452] Ortel, "Multiple Migrations: (E)merging Imagery," 42.
[453] For further information, opinions, and discussions on rising nationalism in the United States and throughout the world, see: Gideon Rachman, "Donald Trump leads a global revival of nationalism," *Financial Times*, June 25, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/59a37a38-7857-11e8-8e67-1e1a0846c475; Florian Bieber, "Is Nationalism on the Rise? Assessing Global Trends," *Ethnopolitics,* Vol. 17, No. 5 (2018) 519-540; and Bart Bonikowski and Paul DiMaggio, "Varieties of American Popular Nationalism," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 81, No. 5 (October 2016) 949-980.

the most popular songs of choice…whenever Americans have felt the impulse to sing their politics, to voice their frustrations, to share their hopes, *to render democracy musical*."[454]

In their focused study on the musical, cultural, and political roles of *America*, Branham and Harnett suggest that the patriotism the song teaches us "is not only about supporting your nation's policies, but also about *questioning them when you think they need questioning*…."[455] I argue that not only does Jones re/signify *America* through his recontextualization of the lyrics in *Dear America*, but that he also uses the song in the manner suggested by Branham and Harnett. By including the lyrics on images that expose little-known historical facts about Indigenous experiences, Jones questions the policies used by the federal government to colonize Indigenous lands of what is now the United States. As Hoelscher asserts, *Dear America* "lays bares the paradox at the heart of the American civilization: liberty and freedom – arguably the country's most cherished values – came at the expense of the continent's original inhabitants."[456] Therefore, Jones uses *America,* not only in a way to represent the patriotism of Indigenous peoples, but also as a means to push back against settler-colonialism and its limiting definition of patriotism.

He asks the viewer "What does it mean…to be proud and patriotic?" This question denotes the very complicated nature of patriotism and raises even more questions, including this question asked by Branham and Harnett: "Does loving America mean supporting the environment-destroying practices of those U.S. corporations that fill our cars with gasoline and our stoves with natural gas?"[457] And I would add the question: does being patriotic and loving America mean we endorse the continuation of colonialism and the oppression of Indigenous peoples? In reminding

[454] Robert James Branham and Stephen J. Harnett, *Sweet Freedom's Song: "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and Democracy in America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 4. Emphasis original.
[455] Ibid., 13.
[456] Hoelscher, *Picturing Indians,* 151.
[457] Branham and Harnett, *Sweet Freedom's Song,* 12.

us "that settler colonialism is a project that should be acknowledged and resisted by everyone who wants to see a more socially just future" [458] for Indigenous peoples on this land, *Dear America* asks us, as its viewers, what actions we will take.

Jones's re-appropriation, reclamation and re/signification of early photographic postcards is echoed in Dine artist Will Wilson's re-appropriation of the mid-nineteenth century wet-collodion photographic process. While Jones's project used the early photographs to challenge the viewer's understanding of U.S. history and patriotism, Wilson uses the early wet-collodion process to claim photography as a mechanism of self-determination as he invites Indigenous peoples and communities to help him create a new historical record.

Will Wilson, Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange: Creating History by Supplanting the Settler Gaze

> "I'm interested in how art and creativity can be a vehicle for social change—through the way people are represented, and the way underrepresented communities can be given a voice."[459]

> "[Photography] has a nice valence with oral tradition and cultures and thinking about how representations from oral traditions are a particularly powerful and poignant thing. *History is carried through representation, through story, or through your culture.* So representation is a very important thing."[460] – Will Wilson

For Diné artist Will Wilson, the incorporation of "captivating technology software" offers the opportunity to transform Indigenous art practice by intersecting Indigenous knowledge systems and practices with advancing technological equipment. And doing so, "expands the possibilities

[458] Walker, "Resistance as Resilience in the Work of Rebecca Belmore," 144.
[459] Will Wilson quoted in "Will Wilson's Improved Self-Images," by Laura M. André, *New Mexico Magazine*, August 2013, https://www.newmexico.org/nmmagazine/articles/post/will-wilsons-improved-self-images-84552/.
[460] Will Wilson quoted in "Will Wilson (Diné): Fellowship Artist," by Jennifer Vigil (Diné/Latina), in *Diversity and Dialogue: The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art 2007,* James H. Nottage, ed. (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, 2008) 106. Emphasis added.

of what contemporary art photography can be."[461] Born in San Francisco, Wilson spent his formative years living in the Navajo Nation, and eventually studied photography at the University of New Mexico and Oberlin College. Describing his method and approach as "trans-customary," Wilson uses storytelling as an integral component of his artwork, in which he examines issues including genocide, resistance, environmental activism, identity, and sovereignty.

Wilson's work also confronts and challenges "colonial constructs and romantic images of Native people while acknowledging denied histories and uncomfortable realities."[462] One such work is *Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange,* an on-going, collaborative project through which Wilson is creating a record of contemporary Indigenous peoples and communities. Through the lens of relational aesthetics, I examine *CIPX* as a creation of self-determined historical record and I particularly explore how it contributes to a collaborative construction of history. In analyzing *CIPX,* I determine how Wilson and his collaborators re/signify and reclaim the photographic process, and how this reclamation intervenes in the historical narratives of North America.

Wilson launched his photographic project *Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange* (*CIPX*) in August 2012. *CIPX* is a specific and calculated response to Euro-American photographer Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952**)** and his magnum opus *The North American Indian*, in which Wilson intends to "resume the documentary mission of Curtis from the standpoint of a 21st century indigenous, trans-customary, cultural practitioner."[463] Various iterations of *CIPX* have taken place throughout the country, with museums, including the Denver Art Museum and Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, and galleries, including the Davis Gallery at Hobart and William Smith

[461] Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, "Will Wilson," April 16, 2018, https://www.nativeartsandcultures.org/will-wilson-2.
[462] Ibid., 106.
[463] Will Wilson, "About Me: The Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange (CIPX)," *Will Wilson* official website. Accessed February 5, 2017: https://willwilson.photoshelter.com/about.

Colleges, acting as hosts for the project. The collaborators of *CIPX* are volunteers, members of the public who agree to participate in Wilson's documentary photography project.[464] By creating a documentary photographic series, Wilson aims to "supplant Curtis's Settler gaze and the remarkable body of ethnographic material he compiled with a contemporary vision of Native North America."[465]

Much as Wilson is documenting and presenting a narrative of contemporary Native American peoples, Curtis, and others, such as anthropologist Frank Boas, also tried to preserve an "authentic" narrative of Native American lives, one that they honestly believed would disappear through the onset of colonization and assimilation. Curtis began his project *The North American Indian* in 1906 and it consumed the next three decades of his life as he traveled throughout the American West to photograph individuals and scenes within Native nations. During this time, he produced 40,000 images; 2,250 of those images were published in *The North American Indian* and almost 1,000 of those were individual portraits. Alongside those images were ethnographic texts written by Curtis, which comprised – what he described as – a "comprehensive and permanent record of all the important tribes of the United States and Alaska that still retain to a considerable degree their primitive customs and traditions."[466]

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[464] When Wilson originally conceived of *CIPX*, he focused on representing Native American collaborators, but he has since expanded the project to include anyone who wishes to participate. This collaboration between a Native photographer and a non-Native sitter reverses the ethnographic gaze, and complicates the power dynamics that were inherent between the anthropologist/photographer and their Native American subjects in early anthropological and ethnographic photography. Although it is beyond the scope of this case study, the cultural exchange and shift in power between Wilson and his non-Native collaborators deserves further attention and analysis.

[465] Wilson, "About Me," *Will Wilson* official website.

[466] Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1907) xiii. Accessed online via: http://curtis.library.northwestern.edu/curtis/toc.cgi.
For further information and discussion on Curtis and *The North American Indian*, see: Shamoon Zamir, *The Gift of the Face: Portraiture and Time in Edward S. Curtis's The North American Indian* (Chapel Hill North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Mick Gidley, "The Making of Edward S. Curtis's The North American Indian," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* , Vol. 67, No. 2 (Winter 2006) 314- 329; and Shannon Egan, "'Yet in a Primitive Condition': Edward S. Curtis's North American Indian," American Art , Vol. 20, No. 3 (Fall 2006) 58-83.

While these early anthropological and ethnographic photographs, including Curtis's photographs, did admittedly preserve important cultural information, they also contributed to the myth of the "vanishing race." In addition, Curtis's and other professional photographers' use of the same clothes and other props in multiple images in their attempts to depict an "authentic Indian" erased cultural distinctions between individual nations.[467] This erasure of cultural distinctions led to "beads, feathers, and leathers" becoming the signifiers of all Native American peoples; thus, the widespread dissemination of Plains warrior imagery led to public perceptions of a monolithic Native American culture. As noted by curator heather ahtone, "The Curtis photographs enact erasure, voiding the actual presence of the Native community, who then become historicized and visualized as a certain 'type' found authentically only in those images."[468]

Additionally, as scholar Michael Katakis noted, "what tied photographers, journalists, museums, and scholars of that time [the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries] together was power and the ability to deny Native Americans their own voice."[469] Together, the photography practices of anthropologists and professional photographers, no matter how well meaning, defined Native American cultures and perpetuated stereotypes and myths – including "the vanishing race" and the "noble savage" – fostering a legacy of misrepresentation which continues to influence mainstream representations of Native American peoples to this day. Wilson's *CIPX* seeks to counteract that legacy by "contemporizing the image of Native Americans,"[470] an effort that I contend is part of the creation of a *new* historical record.

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[467] For a discussion on the manipulation of images by Curtis, see Christopher M. Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: Photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).
[468] heather ahtone (Chickasaw/Choctaw), "PHOTO/SYNTHESIS=An Exercise in Artistic Sovereignty," in *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS,* heather ahtone, ed. (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2017) 70.
[469] Michael Katakis, "The Illusion of the Image" in *Excavating Voices: Listening to Photographs of Native Americans*, Michael Katakis, ed. (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1998) 3.
[470] M. Thomas, "Westmoreland Museum celebrates Native American through photographs of Edward Curtis and Will Wilson," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 27, 2019 https://www.post-gazette.com/ae/art-

To produce the images for *CIPX,* Wilson uses a "140-year old Gasc & Charconnet lens, an Eastman View No. 2 camera, and the wet-plate collodion process,"[471] one of the printing processes employed by photographers in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The process is demanding and requires Wilson to wear gloves, a respirator, and goggles as he coats aluminum plates with flammable, light-sensitive chemicals; the plates need to be "coated, sensitized, exposed, and developed in a matter of minutes."[472] Regarding the wet-plate process, Wilson says, "...there's certain things about the process that are a little bit out of your control, and sometimes it's magical, and sometimes it's frustrating. It's just cool to have a hands-on, handmade, do-it-yourself kind of photography that's much slower in a digital age. I also get to share that process."[473] His collaborators are invited to watch as Wilson immediately develops and fixes a plate after exposure, creating a tintype photograph that – through a gesture of reciprocity – he gives to the collaborator in exchange "for permission to use a scan of the photograph in his work."[474] This reciprocity plays an important role in the creative process of *CIPX*; when discussing the deeper context surrounding the project, Wilson stated:

> One of the taglines for the project is 'What if Indians invented photography?' Would there be a different kind of set of protocols associated with it? Would it be a little more about reciprocity? And as a Native person, I think it's something that builds on this history of representation that hasn't always been the most beneficial or positive. So now as a practitioner, I have the opportunity to change that, and also reflect on it and share some of those ideas with people.[475]

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architecture/2019/03/27/Westmoreland-Museums-celebrates-Native-Americans-through-photographs-of-Edward-Curtis-and-Will-Wilson/stories/201903310004.

[471] Alexander Brier Marr. "Will Wilson: Toward a Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange." *Afterimage,* Vol. 41, Issue 4 (Jan/Feb 2014) 26. Accessed via *EBSCO Collection*.

[472] André, "Will Wilson's Improved Self-Images," 45.

[473] Thomas, "Westmoreland Museum celebrates."

[474] Sophie Engel. "No Reserve: Interactive photography exhibit aims for perfect shot." *Santa Fe Reporter*, July 16 2013, https://www.sfreporter.com/arts/arts/2013/07/16/no-reserve/.

[475] Wilson quoted in "Native artist combines old, new for contemporary perspective," by Jocelyn Murphy, *Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, November 16, 2018, https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2018/nov/16/native-artist-combines-old-new-for-cont/.

The digital scans Wilson creates of the tintypes act as records of "an exchange between the photographer and the people he meets through residencies and workshops."[476]

Wilson encourages his collaborators "to bring items of significance to their portrait sessions in order to help illustrate our [Wilson's and the collaborator's] dialogue."[477] He states:

> Ultimately, I want to ensure that the subjects of my photographs are participating in the re-inscription of their customs and values in a way that will lead to a more equal distribution of power and influence in the cultural conversation.[478]

Wilson's emphasis on his collaborators' role in the "re-inscription of their customs and values" diverges from the categorization of cultures and the subsequent "typing" of Native Americans that occurred in early anthropology and ethnographic photography. In the general introduction to *The North American Indian,* Curtis specifically stated that his aim was to "picture all features of the Indian life and environment – *types* of the young and the old, with their habitations, industries, ceremonies, games, and everyday customs."[479] Through their active participation and collaboration, Wilson's Indigenous collaborators assert their agency over self-determination by reclaiming the photographic process and representing their Indigenous identity.

Although the objects that people may choose to have photographed with them varies widely, two *CIPX* collaborators, John Gritts (Cherokee) and Joe D. Horse Capture (A'aninin), chose to be photographed with images of their ancestors who lived during the nineteenth century. The juxtaposition of portraits of Gritts and Horse Capture (fig. 4.19 and 4.20) with images of their ancestors produces a compelling visual narrative of survivance. In addition, the intersection of the

[476] Marr, "Will Wilson: Toward a Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange."
[477] Ibid.
[478] Wilson "About Me: CIPX"
[479] Curtis, *The North American Indian*, xiii. Emphasis added.

technical, historical, and cultural processes that led to the creation of these portraits causes re/signification to occur within the physical photographs.

In the 2013 portrait *John Gritts, Citizen of the Cherokee Nation, US Dept. of Education, Indian Education expert, with an image of his great, great grandmother, Dockie Livers, survivor of the Trail of Tears* (fig. 4.19), the viewer sees Gritts seated, holding the charcoal image of his great-great grandmother Dockie Livers. Wilson composed the portrait to show Gritts from the waist up, directly facing the camera and returning the gaze of both the photographer and the viewer. The charcoal drawing of Dockie Livers is reminiscent of early photography of Native American peoples, which were often head-and-shoulders portraits that usually acted as representations of a "type" (tribe) rather than of an individual. Curtis, Dixon, and many others utilized "type" portraiture in order to document Native American cultures; however, despite their intentions of preserving unique tribes, "type" portraiture helped to establish public perceptions of a mythologized monolithic Native American culture.

Wilson's 2012 portrait of Joe D. Horse Capture (fig. 4.20) mirrors the composition of Gritts' portrait; Horse Capture is depicted from the waist-up, directly facing the camera. In his right hand, he holds an iPad displaying an image of the photograph of his great-great grandfather that was taken by Curtis (fig. 4.21). Horse Capture said the rifle held by his ancestor "was to signify that he was a warrior, and that today he [Horse Capture] holds up the iPad to show that he is a warrior too, but of information."[480] Horse Capture fulfills his role as warrior of information through his career as a curator, in which he has worked to raise the profile of Native American

[480] Becky Harlan. "Going Platinum: Reframing the Native American Experience." *National Geographic*, October 24, 2014, http://proof.nationalgeographic.com/2014/10/24/going-platinum-reframing-the-native-american-experience/.

art.[481] The presence of the iPad in the photograph also signifies the possibility technology offers for the preservation of Native American cultures.

In choosing to be photographed with images of their ancestors, Gritts and Horse Capture reclaim their ancestors from history. The charcoal drawing of Dockie Livers signifies her experience in the Trail Tears, an effort that sought to remove Native American peoples from American history by physically removing them off the land claimed by the United States government. The Curtis portrait of Horse Capture's great-great grandfather directly links the image to the myth of the "vanishing race" that Curtis's oeuvre help to propagate. However, the portraits of Gritts and Horse Capture are tangible evidence that Native American peoples survived the atrocities of colonization and did not vanish. The continuance and survivance represented by the physical persons of Gritts and Horse Capture dispels the myth of the "vanishing race" and subverts their ancestors' role as signifiers.

Other collaborators choose to express their identity in other ways. K'ómoks First Nations artist Andy Everson (fig. 4.22 & 4.24) collaborated on two different portraits with Wilson for the 2018 Seattle Art Museum exhibition *Double Exposure: Edward S. Curtis, Marianne Nicolson, Tracy Rector, Will Wilson*. Everson chose to express his identity through his clothing in one portrait, and by holding a photograph of his grandmother for the second portrait. She (fig. 4.23) was one of the many Indigenous peoples Curtis documented during his career; according to Everson, Curtis photographed her in 1914 when she played the role of the "princess" Naida in Curtis's featured film *In the Land of the Head Hunters*.[482] In choosing to be photographed with a

[481] Marianne Combs, "MIA curator Joe Horse Captures moves to Smithsonian," *State of the Arts Blog*, Minnesota Public Radio, March 25, 2013, http://blogs.mprnews.org/state-of-the-arts/2013/03/mia-curator/.
[482] Andy Everson, March 7, 2018 Facebook post, *Andy Everson, Northwest Coast Artist*, https://www.facebook.com/Andy.Everson.NWC.Artist/photos/a.331059146915972/1742822362406303/?type=3&theater. According to Everson, his grandmother was one of three women who played the role of the "princess" Naida. The book version of *Land of the Headhunters* includes a portrait of Everson's grandmother as Naida on page 36; it is the same portrait Everson holds in his tintype. PDF version of Curtis, *In the Land of the Headhunters* (Yonkers-

portrait of his grandmother, Everson – similar to Gritts and Horse Capture – reclaims her from history, dispels the stereotype of the "vanishing race," and subverts her role as a signifier of this stereotype. Instead, she and her grandson become signifiers of Indigenous survivance.

For his other tintype portrait produced by Wilson (fig. 4.24), entitled *K'ómoks Imperial Stormtrooper (Andy Everson) Citizen of the K'ómoks First Nation,* Everson chose to wear his regalia along with a hat and a *Star Wars* Stormtrooper helmet painted with formline. The hat in particular features the Kwakwaka'wakw crest: sisiyutł – the double-headed serpent. Regarding the hat and Storm trooper helmet, which have featured in several of his giclée prints, Everson states:

> While most of my Indigenous ancestors come from Vancouver Island, my granny's great-grandmother—Anisa̱laga̱—comes from the Tlingit people of modern-day Alaska…Many of my Tlingit forefathers were warriors…In modern times, our warriors have put down their daggers and bows. In their place we take up weapons of a different sort. We adapt. We replace our slatted armour with a suit and tie. We run pitched battles in court rooms or stand outside in protest. We pursue an education. We walk on the narrow path between tradition and modernity; between past and future. The hat on this helmet displays the Kwakwaka'wakw crest of the sisiyutł…This symbol of the warrior reminds us of the dichotomies in life—good and evil, right and wrong—and puts a human face in the middle to teach us that we must choose where we stand.[483]

Through his work and his portrait, Everson claims this imperial warrior – one of pop culture's iconic "villains"[484] – as an Indigenous warrior by branding the stormtrooper with formline. He changes the stormtrooper from "someone that blindly follows the instructions from his higher-ups

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on-Hudson, New York : World Book Company, 1915) available at: http://www.archive.org/details/inlandofheadhunt00curtrich.

[483] Andy Everson, personal website "Northern Warrior." Accessed January 25, 2019, http://www.andyeverson.com/2014/northern_warrior.html.

[484] Everson understands the irony of choosing a figure who symbolizes imperialistic authority: " 'I get it .... I've picked this symbol of imperialistic authority, and Indigenous Peoples are still oppressed in many ways.' But he said he drew inspiration from history, adding that when First Nations traded with the Europeans for clothes, they often found ways to put their own crest figures on them or add button designs." Tamara Baluja, "Star Wars characters get Indigenized by Comox First Nation artist," *CBC News*, December 22, 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/star-wars-indigenized-andy-everson-1.4463320.

to somebody that's able to take action for himself and for his own people."[485] Everson's K'ómoks Imperial Stormtrooper persona – created originally as print – is an act of resistance against colonialism:

> I created this image as my own little act of resistance. I believe that it's important to illustrate that even in the face of intergenerational trauma and adversity, we have persevered. Our people have endured it all and continually show that our cultures are meaningful and relevant in this day and age…we change, we adapt and we resist and we're not afraid to have a little fun in the process.[486]

Everson's statement – and his portraits – embodies the message at the heart of *CIPX*: "Native Americans are still here, we're resurgent, we're doing kind of exciting, creative, important things."[487]

In 2017, an extension of *CIPX* in the form of an exhibition opened at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art (FJJMA) at the University of Oklahoma: *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*.[488] The exhibition was a collaboration between Wilson, heather ahtone, the former James T. Bialac Associate Curator of Native American and Non-Western Art at the FJJMA,[489] and seven of the Native nations in Oklahoma: the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Comanche Nation, Osage Nation, Otoe-Missouria Tribe, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma and Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. Wilson and ahtone asked these nations in particular to participate because they were the seven

[485] Andy Everson, quoted in "Andy Everson's Stormtrooper Acts As Modern First Nations Warrior," *The Huffington Post B.C.*, July 24, 2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/07/24/andy-everson-stormtrooper-first-nations_n_5618449.html.
[486] Andy Everson, personal website, "Resistance." Accessed January 25, 2019, http://www.andyeverson.com/2014/resistance.html.
[487] Will Wilson quoted in "Native American photo exhibit coming to Crystal Bridges," by Scott Smith, *Times Record,* August 31, 2018, https://www.swtimes.com/entertainmentlife/20180831/native-american-photo-exhibit-coming-to-crystal-bridges.
[488] The exhibition included 53 photographs by Wilson and 33 images by Curtis.
[489] heather ahtone is now the Senior Curator at The American Indian Cultural Center and Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

nations Curtis featured in his *Indians of Oklahoma* portfolio, volume 19 of *The North American Indian*.

For *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS,* Wilson photographed descendants of Curtis's sitters when possible; for example, Wilson's photograph of Mifaunwy Faw Faw, Edna Faw Faw, and Katie Butler (fig. 4.25) responded to Curtis's photo of Standing-on-the-Earth (fig. 4.26; her English name was Lizzie Dailey Harper), Mifaunwy, Enda, and Katie's grandmother. Art historian Janet C. Berlo notes in her essay "Will Wilson's Cultural Alchemy: CIPX in Oklahoma Territory," that Lizzie Dailey Harper's "three granddaughters…remember [her] well; they were grown women, and she was 103, the summer she died."[490] Sometimes the tribes were unable to identify the person in Curtis's photographs, and when they were unable to do so, they chose another person or persons as the representative(s) of the tribe. Thus, paramount to exhibition was the collaboration with the tribes, who were fully included in the decision-making processes.

Regarding the exhibition, ahtone stated:

> [Will] Wilson and I are both interested in the relationship between identity and representation, especially as it is visually materialized for Native people through art. Recognizing that photography is an important tool for representation and expressing agency, we committed to a methodology for *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* that positioned the tribes as agents in the creation of the images…Through co-authorship in the production of the photography by the tribal communities and Wilson, tribes were asked to consider how *they* wanted *their* communities to be represented through the image. In sharing authorship, an act of incredible generosity on the part of the artist, Wilson fostered reciprocity and respect, affirming that collaboration serves a powerful role in working with Native peoples.[491]

By including the tribal communities as co-authors for the exhibition, rather than as consultants, Wilson and ahtone invited the tribes to exercise full visual sovereignty over the photographic

[490] Janet Catherine Berlo, "Will Wilson's Cultural Alchemy: CIPX in Oklahoma Territory," in *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS,* 46.
[491] ahtone "PHOTO/SYNTHESIS," 73. See ahtone's essay for a detail discussion on the collaboration between Wilson, ahtone, the FJJMA, and the seven tribes during the curatorial planning and photographic processes.

process. In doing so, the tribes created self-determined records of their communities, deciding who would participate and inviting certain participants to "wear ceremonial clothing or warbonnets, to signify cultural specificity."[492] ahtone noted that by "working with the tribes as agents of their own representation, [Wilson] welcomed them to exercise an important voice in how their community was represented through the images, heeding a voice often lost in individual portraiture."[493]

For example, the single image in volume 19 of *The North American Indian* from the Pawnee Nation was *Modern Dance Costume* (fig. 4.27) and the tribe was unable to determine the identity of the dancer. Because of this, the tribe decided to use the concept of a "community descendent," someone who would be "a representative on behalf of the community and not the Curtis subject,"[494] to determine who would represent the tribe in *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*. ahtone describes the Pawnee Nation's decision process:

> [Herb] Adson [Director of Cultural Resources and project liaison for the Pawnee Nation] and the Pawnee Nation's Cultural Committee deduced that the dancer may have expressed a cultural priority in 1926, but priorities had shifted by 2016…[Adson] described the broad community concern for protecting and retaining Pawnee language use. Two young men has recently returned from the University of Oklahoma's Anthropology department with graduate degrees in Linguistics, intent on returning to the tribe to work with the community's language program. Adson felt that these young men, Taylor Moore and Zachary Rice [fig. 4.28], honestly represented the tribal community's priorities in 2016.[495]

I contend that *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS,* through the tribes' authority over the construction of the images – like the Pawnee Nation in their decision to signify current tribal priorities through the

[492] Ibid., 99.
[493] Ibid. In addition to the images selected by the tribes, ahtone and Wilson selected "twenty other images to broaden up the community's representation. The simple act of growing the exhibition allowed [Wilson and ahtone] to work beyond the limitations imposed by the original number of images
[494] ahtone, "PHOTO/SYNTHESIS," 95.
[495] Ibid., 100.

image of Moore and Rice – represents a communal writing of history. Some of the individual photographs in *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* carried this communal writing of history even further.

Certain photographs were what Wilson calls "Talking Tintypes," images he enhanced with the augmented reality app Layar, a technology he began experimenting with prior to *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*.[496] When scanned with the Layar app, the Talking Tintypes "come to life," allowing the people featured in the photograph to share their individual (his)stories or an artistry – such as dancing or playing the violin – with the viewer. In a talking tintype produced for *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*, Casey Camp-Horinek (fig. 4.29), a leader within the Ponca nation, offers a prayer that acknowledges "we are all related – humans, two-legged and four-legged beings, sky beings and underwater beings, ancestors, stones, and plants…."[497] Thus embodied in the Talking Tintypes are voices that have too-long been absent from the discourse on Native representation, as well as marginalized in the historical narratives of the United States.[498]

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[496] The augmented reality aspect of the Talking Tintypes unfortunately seems to be inaccessible at this time; the parent company for Layar, Blippar, declared bankruptcy at the end of 2018. Whenever I scanned a Talking Tintype in order to "bring it to life," I received an error message, and the Layar website features this message: "We request not to sign up and further make payments for Layar services. Paul Appleton and Paul Cooper were appointed Joint Administrators of Blippar.com Ltd on 17 December 2018. They are managing the affairs, business and property of the Company. The Joint Administrators act as agents of the Company and act without personal liability. Paul Appleton and Paul Cooper are licensed to act as Insolvency Practitioners in the UK by the ICAEW."
For further information on Blippar's bankruptcy proceedings and the problems Layar faces, see: James Vincent, "Hyped AR startup Blippar crashes into financial reality," *The Verge*, December 18, 2018, https://www.theverge.com/2018/12/18/18146069/blippar-augmented-reality-startup-administration-uk; and Matthew Field, "Founders of start-up that sold out to Blippar prepare bid for collapsed tech 'unicorn'," *The Telegraph*, January 2, 2019, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2019/01/02/founders-start-up-sold-blippar-prepare-bid-collapsed-tech-unicorn/.

[497] Summary of Casey Camp-Horinek's prayer provided by Berlo, "Will Wilson's Cultural Alchemy," *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*, 41.

[498] Regarding the Talking Tintypes, ahtone stated: "I believe that what [Wilson] does in creating those images is he gives authorship, which is a very generous act for an artist to do for the people who are being represented by those images…The energy from those people is a sense of positive ownership and engagement directly with the viewer. In that sense, the role is shifting the energy between what's resolved in the image and the people sitting in the chair through an alchemy that's executed through that lens and through the human engagement that happens through the process of creation of that image." heather ahtone quoted in "Fred Jones Museum, Oklahoma tribes collaborate on PHOTO/SYNTHESIS," by Brian Daffron, *Oklahoma Gazette*, March 23, 2017, https://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/fred-jones-museum-oklahoma-tribes-collaborate-on-photo-synthesis/Content?oid=2980016.

In using augmented reality, Wilson demonstrates the central role relation aesthetics play in determining the technical, historical, and cultural decisions he makes concerning his photographic process, which is a process that focuses on the collaborative "performative ritual of the studio portrait."[499] He explicitly states that:

> [*CIPX*] is about putting the ritual and power of relational aesthetics *back* into the practice of traditional photographic portraiture…it's about acknowledging the power and currency of the photographic representation from the vantage point of a practitioner who is aware of the history of photography and how that history's power has been viewed from an indigenous standpoint.[500]

By acknowledging his role as a "practitioner who is aware of the history of photography," Wilson replaces Curtis in the performative ritual of studio portraiture. His technical appropriation of the wet-collodion process and a 140-year old camera further blurs the boundaries between historical and contemporary photographic practices. In addition, his standpoint as "a 21st century indigenous, trans-customary, cultural practitioner" erases the boundaries between the "us" and "them" binary established in the early ethnographies between the Euro-American anthropologists and their Native American subjects. This erasure of binaries promotes a process of cultural exchange and emphasizes "the sphere of human interactions."

Wilson's use of augmented reality also reflects the sphere of human interactions as it is a part of his relational practice in which he "aims to entice passive viewers of artworks to use their mobile phones for further engagement with an object and its meaning."[501] As discussed in chapter three regarding installation art and viewer engagement, a relational experience between a viewer and an artwork can shift a viewer's positionality from a passive viewer to an active one. By

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[499] Wilson "About Me: CIPX," http://willwilson.photoshelter.com/#!/about.
[500] Will Wilson quoted in "No Reserve" by Engel. Relational aesthetics concerns relational art, "an art that takes as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an autonomous and *private* symbolic space." See Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 14.
[501] Berlo, "Will Wilson's Cultural Alchemy," *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*, 57.

requiring viewers to use their phones to interact with the Talking Tintypes, Wilson causes this positionality shift, activates his audience, and invites them to be a participant in the transmission of knowledge. In using such technology in his art – a process he has continued using in some tintypes produced since *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* – Wilson also provides a platform for people to speak for themselves, to tell their own (his)stories, in their own words.

By using his artistic privilege to amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples and communities, "Wilson's work offers an antidote to Curtis's stoically posed portraits by showing the vibrancy of the contemporary Native experience."[502] I argue that *CIPX* and *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* are more than just antidotes to Curtis's work; they are also a visual – and sometimes oral – record of the experiences of present-day Indigenous peoples and communities. In producing this visual record through a self-determined, collaborative photographic process, both projects "generate new forms of authority and autonomy."[503] And in so doing, I contend that *CIPX* and *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* are a *new* historical record, a collaborative construction of history that inserts the stories of its participants – both individuals and tribal communities – into the larger historical narratives of the United States. As stated by ahtone:

> The portrait selections [for *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*] made by the tribes represent *more* than the individuals who sat, they represent the *complex issues* that tribal nations reckon with *on a daily basis*: identity, history, tribal priorities, and imagining what the future will look like…The collaborations that were incorporated into this project made it more than just a photography exhibition, for it speaks to these issues of representation and allows the public access to the intimate concerns that have been given voice through this exhibition. Paramount is the conversation that has been started through the photographs.[504]

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[502] Seattle Art Museum, "Press Release: Major Seattle Art Museum Exhibition Explores Legacy of Photographers Edward S. Curtis from 21st-Century Perspectives," March 19, 2018, https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/Documents/Double%20Exposure_press%20release.pdf.
[503] Wilson "About Me: CIPX," http://willwilson.photoshelter.com/#!/about.
[504] ahtone, "PHOTO/SYNTHESIS," 113-114.

I argue that this statement is also applicable to the photographs created for *CIPX* outside of the context of *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS*; together, all of the photographs created under the umbrella of *CIPX* address the complex issues that tribal nations and their members contend with on a daily basis. This information, this knowledge, becomes embedded in the photographs during their creation and is then transmitted to the viewer through the interplay of *CIPX*'s archive and repertoire.[505]

The archive for *CIPX* consists of multiple objects and includes the original tintypes, the digital scans, and the digital prints. The exchange and dialogue between Wilson and his collaborators during the photographic process create the repertoire for the portraits they produce together. Although the tintypes will likely remain in the individual's or tribal community's – in the case of the *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* portraits – personal archives, the existence of the digital scans and digital prints allow the repertoire's reactivation to occur whenever a viewer examines the photographs online or sees them in an exhibition. I argue that repeated viewings of the photographs allows for the continued transmission of the photographs' embodied knowledge. The repeated reactivation of the repertoire contributes to a "a re-imagined vision of who we are as Native people"[506] and works to "counter longstanding stereotypes and distortions."[507]

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[505] In a promotional video for the *Double Exposure* exhibition at the Seattle Art Museum, Wilson spoke about the archive and the repertoire in regards to Curtis's work and his own: "Thinking about archives that have been developed around this [Curtis's] collection of information…There's a tension I think between the archive and the repertoire, at least in a lot of Native cultures. Most Indigenous cultures are orally based…so oral traditions are the way that…history, knowledge, ways of knowing are passed down. And archives, in and of themselves, amass authority. And so I'm trying to kind of explore the archive by giving away the original [tintype]. BY including now multi-media so that the archive kind of speaks back to you from its own…position." Will Wilson, "Will Wilson's Talking Tintypes at Seattle Art Museum," Seattle Art Museum, promotional video, August 6, 2018, 3:19, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEvnDaX0kX0.

[506] Will Wilson quoted in "Reclaiming an old medium to tell new stories of Native Americans," by Maurice Berger, *National Geographic*, October 8, 2018, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2018/10/photography-tintype-native-american-artists/.

[507] Berger, "Reclaiming an old medium."

In her essay "Setting the Photographs Aside: Native North American Photography since 1990," Lara M. Evans notes that "When Native photographers work in a documentary or portraiture mode, they operate first within the generally established pictorial history of the genre." She continues on to assert that "…they are [also] responding to the specific problems between these modes and Native communities."[508] I argue that not only is Wilson responding to the specific problems between photography and Native communities, but that he is also helping to change the photographic process. Through the collective efforts of Wilson and his collaborators – both individuals and communities – in presenting an updated, self-defined view of Indigenous peoples, I argue that the photographic process is re/signified from a mechanism of colonization to a mechanism of self-determination. I discuss this re/signification of the photographic process further in my examination of Matika Wilbur's *Project 562.*

Wilson's technical, cultural, and historical decisions also work to fulfill his desire to indigenize the photographic exchange through collaboration with his sitters, generating "new forms of authority and autonomy."[509] He asserts that "decolonizing photography for the use of American Indians has to occur through the articulation of a Native Representational subjectivity."[510] This subjectivity is apparent in the *CIPX* and *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* photographs, which convey representation *of*, *by* and *for* Native American peoples. The collaborators also express this through the narratives they share about their individual (his)stories and the (his)stories of their Native communities. An articulation of Native representational subjectivity is also apparent in the photographs of *Project 562,* an on-going photographic project by Swinomish-Tulalip artist Matika Wilbur.

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[508] Evans, "Setting the Photograph Aside," 253.
[509] Wilson "About Me: CIPX"
[510] Will Wilson, "Artist's Statement," Museum of Contemporary Native Arts. Accessed on February 15, 2018. http://www.iaia.edu/museum/vision-project/artists/vision-project-artist-will-wilson/.

Matika Wilbur, Project 562: Creating History by Changing the Way We See Native America

> It is said that history is dead and that nature can't really speak. Viewers of this collection are challenged on those premises…For predominant society, Indians occupy a silent and isolated, covered over, virtually extinct existence, part of the grievous though inevitable eradication of 'manifest destiny' and which most abandon to history. But Native America is utterly enduring, alive, and thriving as part of the core concept and reality of America.[511]

> If all we are is stories, if our constitution, our laws, our policies, our curricula, and all that governs us begins with narrative, then *it is time for us to start writing*. So for the last five years, I've been traveling around Indian Country in an effort to create a *new* curricula, a collection of images and stories from the sprawling variety of contemporary Native America.[512] – Matika Wilbur

After completing the prestigious Brooks Institute of Photography, visual storyteller Matika Wilbur (Swinomish-Tulalip) began her career as a fashion and commercial photographer in Los Angeles. During this time however, Wilbur realized "she wanted a different path as a photographer: to create portrait art that deeply communicated people's lives and experiences." [513] After this realization, Wilbur devoted her artistic career to "photography as a creator and messenger." She also began teaching Native youth within her community, but found that the "representation of First Peoples in traditional curricula and the media as 'leathered and feathered', dying races undermined her students' sense of identity and potential."[514] In order to rectify this negative narrative, Wilbur embarked on *Project 562*, an on-going artistic project in which she "photograph[s] and collect[s] stories of Native Americans from each federally-recognized Indian

[511] Matika Wilbur quoted in "Media Release: Dazzling Visual Experience of Contemporary Native America," Tacoma Art Museum, April 16, 2014, https://www.tacomaartmuseum.org/about-us/news-room/press/2014-releases/inaugural-exhibition-matika-wilburs-project-562/.
[512] Matika Wilbur, "I Hate That I Had To Write This," *Project 562 Blog,* accessed March 1, 2019, http://www.project562.com/blog/i-hate-that-i-had-to-write-this/. Emphasis added.
[513] Matika Wilbur personal website, "About," accessed May 13, 2017, http://www.matikawilbur.com/about/.
[514] Ibid.

tribe in the United States" with the goal of creating "comprehensive visual curricula and publications representing contemporary Native America."[515]

Through the lens of collaboration and community engagement**,** I examine *Project 562* as a creation of a new, contemporary historical record and how it contributes to a collaborative construction of history. Similar to my exploration of Wilson's *CIPX* project, this case study explores how Wilbur's collaborative project re/signifies and reclaims the photographic process as a process of self-determination, by looking closely at the intersection of the technical, cultural, and historical decisions within her photographic production. In analyzing this self-determined and collaborative photographic process*,* I determine how *Project 562* intervenes in the historical narratives of North America by changing the way we see Native America.

Wilbur began *Project 562* – named for the 562 federally recognized Native nations in the United States at the start of her project; there are now 573[516] – in November 2012, and its goal is to "create a publication and an exhibition representing Native people"[517] from all of the federally

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[515] Ibid.

[516] This number does not include the hundreds of federally unrecognized Native nations throughout the U.S. Number of federally recognized nations sources from: National Congress of American Indians, "Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction," accessed September 22, 2018, http://www.ncai.org/about-tribes.
For further information on the issue of federal recognition, see: Alva C. Mather, "Old Promises: The Judiciary and the Future of Native American Federal Acknowledgment Litigation," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review,* Vol. 151, No. 5 (May, 2003) 1827-1860; Amy E. Den Ouden and Jean M. O'Brien, *Recognition, Sovereignty Struggles, and Indigenous Rights in the United States - A Sourcebook* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); and Lorinda Riley, "When a Tribal Entity Becomes a Nation: The Role of Politics in the Shifting Federal Recognition Regulations," *American Indian Law Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2014-2015) 451-505.

Wilbur described the importance of the number 562: "562 represents the number of "federally recognized" tribes that I would like to visit, however, my intention is not to be exclusive… the number 562, is a "jumping off point", if you will. I do not plan on limiting myself exclusively to federally recognized tribes; for a variety of reasons — adverse federal court decisions, the plenary power of Congress, being landless — it is tougher for these un-recognized tribes which do not have the legal history of the "treaty tribes", and I am not a stranger to that struggle. However, most people don't know that there are 562 federally recognized tribes (which has changed to 566 in the last few years), and it has been my observation that the general stereo-type is that we haven't survived. And so, giving power to a number was important to me- even though finding an accurate number is difficult, given the ever changing political climate. It's so complex…." Wilbur quoted in "Matika Wilbur – Project 562," an interview with Lora Wiley, *Citizen Brooklyn*, May 2014, http://www.citizenbrooklyn.com/topics/pov/matika-wilbur-project-562/.

[517] Matika Wilbur, "About Project 562," *Project 562 Blog*, accessed May 20, 2017, http://www.project562.com/blog/about-project-562/.

recognized tribes in the United States. By June 2018, she had "acquired portraits and narratives from over 400 tribal communities" featuring Native peoples of all ages, in both urban and rural settings, and that number has grown since that time due to Wilbur's continued travels.[518] Traveling mainly by car or her RV (aka "The Big Girl"), Wilbur visits numerous Native sovereign territories and urban hubs throughout the United States in order to find her photographic collaborators. Wilbur follows proper cultural and tribal protocols – including calling ahead and writing letters to tribal leaders weeks in advance in order to ask permission[519] – in order to identify portrait collaborators. She also takes time to build a rapport with the collaborators and their community by participating in community life and events.[520]

The social processes surrounding Wilbur's photographic production are a significant part of *Project 562* and, I argue, are part of what helps to make the project a collaborative construction of history. Wilbur originally funded *Project 562* through Kickstarter, a global crowdfunding platform based on subscription patronage of the arts; on Kickstarter, artists are able to independently create projects and establish a funding campaign to which backers can contribute.[521] Although the Kickstarter campaigns for *Project 562* have ended, backers can still make donations through a Paypal link provided on the *Project 562* website. Although Wilbur has also received

[518] Chris Kaufman, "Project Wanderment: 'An inspiring artistic adventure,'" *Appeal-Democrat*, May 13, 2018, accessed via: https://search.proquest.com/docview/2038233683?accountid=12964.
[519] Jen Graves, "Shooting and Capturing: Matika Wilbur's Fight Against a Hundred Years of Native American Photography," *The Stranger*, December 4, 2013, https://www.thestranger.com/seattle/shooting-and-capturing/Content?oid=18382775.
[520] Tyrone Beason, "With a camera, Matika Wilbur aims to bring Indian history to the here and now," *The Seattle Times*, August 16, 2014, https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/with-a-camera-matika-wilbur-aims-to-bring-indian-history-to-the-here-and-now/.
[521] "Seven Things to Know about Kickstarter," *Kickstarter* official website. Accessed March 18, 2017: https://www.kickstarter.com/hello.
Project 562's phase one campaign on Kickstarter raised $35,428 and the phase 2 campaign raised $213,461. Even after its end, Wilbur continued to provide updates for her supporters on the Kickstarter campaign's website. Phase one campaign: https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/matika/562-a-photo-project-documenting-native-america; phase two campaign: https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/matika/project-562-changing-the-way-we-see-native-america.

grant-funding, I contend that the presence of the Paypal donation option on the *Project 562* website demonstrates the continuing importance of community involvement and engagement to the project. As noted by journalist Kristen Williams, "'Project 562' is about the people in the photographs, entire tribes and their histories; it is about the very people supporting Wilbur on her travels and funding the project, because it is something that so many want to see realized."[522] Wilbur also connects to a larger audience through social media. She documents her experiences as she travels on a blog – accessible on the *Project 562* website – an Instagram account [@project_562], and Facebook account to which she posts photographs and videos.[523] These social media presences incorporate her audiences into her artistic journey and photographic process, further connecting *Project 562* to a wider, global community.

Through *Project 562,* Wilbur aims to humanize the "vanishing race" by creatively addressing and remedying "historical inaccuracies, stereotypical representation, and the absence of Native American images and voices in mass media and national consciousness."[524] Despite criticism for not documenting the struggles of Native communities,[525] Wilbur focuses on creating

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[522] Kristen Williams, "Reimagining Native America," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 38, No. 2 (June 2014). Accessed May 22, 2017, https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/reimagining-native-america-matika-wilburs-project-562.

[523] The *Project 562* Blog can be accessed at: http://www.project562.com/blog/, the Instagram at: https://www.instagram.com/project_562/?hl=en, and the Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/Project562/.

[524] Matika Wilbur, "Project 562: Changing The Way We See Native America (Phase2): Why Project 562," *Kickstarter*, accessed May 25, 2018, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/matika/project-562-changing-the-way-we-see-native-america.

[525] Enrique Limón, "The Faces of my People: Photographer Matika Wilbur redefines contemporary Native life," *Santa Fe Reporter*, August 19, 2014, https://www.sfreporter.com/news/coverstories/2014/08/20/the-faces-of-my-people/. In regards to the criticisms, Wilbur stated: "I received quite a bit of criticism for not taking a more journalistic approach and photographing some of the struggle of Indian Country, but in my approach I aim to create hope and inspiration. I think that we have enough images that talk about the poverty, the struggle, the suicide, and I don't know if that actually helps our kids. One time I showed my students at the high school Aaron Huey's TED Talk, and you should have seen how deflated they were afterwards. I saw it with my own eyes. I watched them deflate. Then I showed them some of Phil Borges' work—these positive images of indigenous people from around the world—and they were so excited, they were so intrigued. So when I decided to take on this project, I decided that my images should also create hope and inspiration…the 1491s, state senators, congressmen, attorneys, doctors and people who are doing positive things so they can look at those images, hear their stories and think to themselves, 'I can do that too.'"

a positive narrative of survivance in the face of the colonial atrocities. Regarding the project, Wilbur stated, "Our representation is always one of leather, feathers and people of the past. What needs to be there in its place is images that create hope and inspiration and give us something to look forward to."[526] The intended goal and purpose for the photographs is to "unveil the true essence of contemporary Native issues, the beauty of Native culture, the magnitude of tradition, and expose her vitality."[527] Through this unveiling, Wilbur hopes to "shift the collective consciousness of what it means to be Native in the U.S." and she states, "I'd like to see a modern world that doesn't erase its indigenous intelligence….One that embraces the rich complexity of indigenous culture and traditions."[528] The photographs she produces depict the rich complexity of Indigenous cultures and traditions, making them the tangible evidence of the true essence of contemporary Native communities and cultures.

Project 562's goal of representing all of the (federally-recognized) Native nations in the United States often draws comparisons to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century documentary and ethnographic efforts of Edward S. Curtis and his magnum opus *The North American Indian.* As noted in my discussion of Wilson's *CIPX* project, Curtis and many others tried to preserve an "authentic" narrative of Native American life, one that they honestly believed would disappear through the onset of colonization and assimilation. While these early anthropological and ethnographic photographs did admittedly preserve important cultural information, they also contributed to the myth of the "vanishing race" and disseminated an image of a "monolithic Native American culture." Wilbur asks her audience to remember that while

[526] Wilbur quoted in "The Faces of my People," Limón.
[527] Wilbur, "About Project 562," http://www.project562.com/blog/about-project-562/.
[528] Wilbur quoted in "Photographer reveals complexities of Native American history, contemporary lives" by Anne Brice, *Berkley News*, April 13, 2018, https://news.berkeley.edu/2018/04/13/matika-wilbur-native-american-photographer-event-april-17/.

"Curtis' work has played an important role in the reclamation of Native American culture…this is only necessary because our [Indigenous] culture[s] w[ere] purposely attacked and in some cases eradicated."[529]

While Wilbur documents and presents narratives of contemporary Native American life, a project that seems similar to earlier documentary efforts, she actively resists comparisons between *Project 562* and Curtis's *The North American Indian*. When asked how much *The North American Indian* informed *Project 562*, Wilbur stated:

> It doesn't. When we discuss the fact that we're misrepresented in media, we have to discuss Edward Curtis' work because his work is the prevailing image of Native American identity. A lot of people have said that my work is a response to his or a lot of times I'm compared to him. I would prefer to not be compared to Curtis…because he did his work over 100 years ago, and he was this non-Indian man who in a lot of ways romanticized and mistold our story. In my approach, I aim to tell the story from an inside voice…I do audio recordings and let [the collaborators] talk for themselves. As you walk through the exhibit, you can hear their voices from *them*.[530]

By resisting and refusing the association between *Project 562* and *The North American Indian,* Wilbur performs a form of individual artistic sovereignty.[531] With *Project 562,* she confronts the legacy of misrepresentation that Curtis' photographs fostered, as well as the antiquated lens through which many still perceive Native American peoples and cultures. Through the inclusivity of her project, Wilbur critiques this antiquated lens and deconstructs the stereotypes it propagates. Unlike Curtis who did not photograph eastern tribes as he believed they were "inauthentic" due to their extended contact with Euro-American culture, she photographs all federally recognized tribes. She asserts her artistic sovereignty by refusing an association with Curtis, and through this

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[529] Wilbur, "Edward S. Curtis.. Again?" *Project 562* blog, accessed June 10, 2018, http://www.project562.com/blog/edward-s-curtis-again/.
[530] Wilbur quoted in "The Faces of my People," Limón, *Santa Fe Reporter*. Emphasis original.
[531] For further discussion on refusal as an expression of sovereignty, see Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014).

assertion, Wilbur re/signifies the photographic process as one of self-determination. I contend that the process of re/signification is also present within individual photographs from *Project 562,* where it complicates the semiotic relationship between established signifiers and signifieds commonly associated with stereotypical images of Indigenous peoples. Wilbur's portraits of Stephen and Matthew Yellowtail (fig. 4.30-4.32), and Dr. Jessica Metcalfe (fig. 4.33 & 4.34) offer the opportunity to examine both Wilbur's collaborative photographic process and the re/signification taking place within that process and the photographs more closely.

In August 2013, Wilbur attended Crow Fair, an annual event held on the Little Bighorn River near Billings, Montana, where she met Stephen and Matthew Yellowtail, brothers of her friend and fashion designer Bethany Yellowtail.[532] Wilbur spent several days on the Yellowtail's family ranch recovering from a sickness and photographed Bethany Yellowtail and her brothers at this time. About five months later, in January 2014, Wilbur crossed paths with Dr. Metcalfe as she was photographing members of Arizona's 21 tribal communities and Dr. Metcalfe was presenting on Native fashion at the Heard Museum in Phoenix.[533] Although they were not in Dr. Metcalfe's traditional indigenous lands in North Dakota, Wilbur asked Dr. Metcalfe to collaborate in *Project 562* and photographed her on the O'odham traditional lands where they met.[534]

When photographing, Wilbur's only request is that her collaborators choose a backdrop within their indigenous homelands (except during chance meetings as her one with Dr. Metcalfe); however, the location of that backdrop is solely the collaborator's decision. Wilbur sets the lighting and adjusts basic positioning, but emphasizes the collaborators' choice in representing their own

[532] Wilbur, "Project 562 had an Indian Summer," *Project 562 Blog,* accessed May 22, 2018. http://www.project562.com/blog/project-562-had-an-indian-summer/.
[533] Jessica Metcalfe, "Project 562: Changing The Way We See Native America," *Beyond Buckskin Blog*, January 30, 2014. http://www.beyondbuckskin.com/2014/01/project-562-changing-way-we-see-native.html.
[534] Metcalfe, "Project 562."

experience of identity by wearing clothing "most significant to their identity," and sometimes "hold[ing] accessories or demonstrate[ing] a movement that reflects important aspects of who they are."[535] By participating in *Project 562*, Wilbur's collaborators perform an act of self-determination by reclaiming the photographic process and representing their Indigenous identity.

For their portraits, the Yellowtail brothers (fig. 4.30-4.32) chose their family's ranch as their portrait backdrop; both brothers elected "to wear chaps and cowboy hat, not buckskins, beads, feathers, warbonnet,"[536] clothing more closely associated with the American cowboy. In the mythologized American West, the cowboy was a rugged Euro-American and hero of the "lawless" late-nineteenth-century Western frontier.[537] This mythology overshadowed the diverse history of Spanish vaqueros and Native American cowboys who also lived and worked in the West, and instead firmly established the West as the "sovereign" lands of the Euro-American cowboy. However, the Yellowtail brothers' choice to emphasize their identity as ranchers – through the signifiers of chaps and a cowboy hat – subverts the signifiers of "cowboys and Indians;" the cowboy is now an Indian and the Indian is now a cowboy.

Rather than depicting the "beads, feathers, and leathers" signifier, the portraits present the viewer with an image of contemporary Indigenous survivance and cultural adaptation of the cowboy life. The cowboy of the American West is no longer a rugged, Euro-American, but rather a proud Indigenous cowboy. As journalist Jen Graves asserted, "Stephen Yellowtail is a proud rancher, the son of a proud rancher, and has a future beyond ranching if he wants it. He exemplifies not only Native survival but continuing adaptation."[538] Thus, the cowboy as embodied in Stephen

[535] Williams, "Reimagining Native America."
[536] Graves, "Shooting and Capturing."
[537] For more on the "cowboy hero," see William R. Savage, *The Cowboy Hero: His Image in American History & Culture* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1979) and Jeremy Agnew, *Creation of the Cowboy Hero: Fiction, Film and Fact* (Jefferson, NC: Macfarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014).
[538] Graves, "Shooting and Capturing."

and Matthew Yellowtail now signifies to viewers the continuing presence of Indigenous peoples, rather than the mythological American West.

In her portraits, Dr. Metcalfe (fig. 4.33 & 4.34) expressed her individual identity by wearing clothing by Native American fashion designers Bethany Yellowtail and Jamie Okuma.[539] She chose to wear these items to reflect the work she does with Beyond Buckskin – a fashion blog and online boutique she owns and operates, which offers Native made fashion, jewelry, and accessories. Beyond Buckskin's mission statement states:

> Beyond Buckskin empowers Native American artists and designers, advancing the quality of Native American fashion through education while providing an in depth podium for societal participation. Inspired by relevant historical and contemporary Native American clothing design and art, Beyond Buckskin promotes cultural appreciation, social relationships, authenticity and creativity.[540]

Dr. Metcalfe uses Beyond Buckskin not only as a platform to promote Native made fashion, jewelry, and accessories, but also to confront cultural appropriation of Native American cultures in media and throughout the fashion world. This effort extends the effort for the assertion of Indigenous visual sovereignty into the fashion world and compliments Wilbur's goal for *Project 562:* "to unveil the true essence of contemporary Native issues, the beauty of Native culture, the magnitude of tradition, and expose her vitality."[541]

Wilbur begins each photographic session using a digital camera in order to help her collaborators adjust to the general presence of a photographer and camera, and once a connection is made, she switches to a Mamiya RZ67 film camera. Film allows Wilbur to print black-and-white silver gelatin prints, which she hand paints; in the photographs of Stephen and Matthew

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[539] Metcalfe, "Project 562."
[540] Jessica Metcalfe, "About," *Beyond Buckskin* official website. Accessed on June 12, 2017. http://www.beyondbuckskin.com/p/about_16.html
[541] Wilbur, "About Project 562," http://www.project562.com/blog/about-project-562/.

Yellowtail (fig. 4.30-4.32), Wilbur highlighted their chaps, their skin, and Stephen's horse's saddle in a rich brown, creating a subtle color shift within the black-and-white photograph. Wilbur completes the technical and cultural decisions of her photographic process through a historical decision: the recording of interviews with her collaborators. As she states, "Project 562 is not just about photographing tribal citizens, but also interviewing and documenting their stories, lives, and the challenges and triumphs of their communities—and sharing those voices along with the photos."[542]

When the photographs are exhibited, audio and video interviews Wilbur recorded during her sessions with her collaborators, accompany the portraits. Wilbur also shares collaborators' stories whenever she posts a new photograph on the *Project 562* Instagram, Facebook, or official website, enabling viewers to read personalized statements and stories. The statement from Rosebud Quintana (Northern Ute and Dine), who collaborated with Wilbur in 2016 (fig. 4.35), underscores the importance of sharing stories from Indigenous perspectives:

> In school, the chapters on Native American histories are mostly lies, or are just about the wars. *It's only one perspective.* But when you're at home you have your parents and grandparents who tell you the stories that were passed down. Then you have the whole picture and can choose your side.[543]

So, rather than presenting ethnographic generalizations like late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photography did, *Project 562* presents many perspectives through its depictions of "personalities, personages, and individuals."[544] The collaborators speak frankly "about

[542] Wilbur, "The Big O," *Project 562 Blog*, accessed July 10, 2018, http://www.project562.com/blog/the-big-o/.
[543] Rosebud Quintana, quoted on *Project 562* Instagram, November, 25, 2016 https://www.instagram.com/p/BNPiifaje8n/.
[544] Claire Raymond, "Counterdiscourse, Seeing Anew: Rebecca Belmore and Matika Wilbur," *Women Photographers and Feminist Aesthetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017) 198.

experiencing racism, their connection to the land, spirituality and personal identity,"[545] and admittedly, some of the stories are difficult to hear, as Wilbur herself has noted:

> Everywhere that I'd go, there were stories that I wasn't ready to hear; stories about water controversy, being pushed into the rocks, the desecration of sacred sites, uranium projects and oil projects and land energy projects that tribal governments have to fight hard to maintain their sovereignty.[546]

Many of the collaborators also share stories about their personal struggles, as well as positive narratives. Hannah Tomeo (Colville, Yakima, Nez Perce, Sioux and Samoan Nations), a student at Portland State University who Wilbur photographed at the 2017 Northwest Indian Youth Conference (fig. 4.36), shared a story about her passion for running and the racism she faced in high school as an Indigenous athlete:

> Running has been my absolute passion and my stability. When I transferred schools, I felt as if no one wanted me to succeed. My teacher told me it was in my genetics to be an alcoholic, my basketball coach would drug test only me on the team, and my track coach told me I would just be another stupid Indian runner with no chance in the real running world. I let those words motivate and push me until I earned the fastest times in the school, but she still wouldn't let me race…my dad gave me these words "You can either be a quitter, or come back a success story. Your choice." That summer I trained harder than ever and came back strong. I made it to State. I made first team and placed in the Nike meet in Boise and Footlocker in California. I was Mead High School's #1 runner. My story isn't over. I will keep working hard to reach my goals. I will go to college so I can continue my success story that will inspire my fellow Native youth. I want to let them know that although the odds might not be in our favor, we come from a strong people. We are strong and will rise![547]

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[545] Beason, "With a camera."
[546] Wilbur quoted in "The Faces of my People," Limón, *Santa Fe Reporter*.
[547] Hannah Tomeo, quoted on Project 562 Instagram, April 12, 2017, https://www.instagram.com/p/BSzhnTpFZhd/. Tomeo described a specific track meet in detail as well: "Once, I remember my whole family coming to watch me run, it was a big deal to me. I was scheduled to run the 800 meters, 1600 meters and the 4x4 meter races. But one after another my coach pulled me off the start line and put someone in my place without explanation. Finally, for the last race I thought, she has to let me do this one. But again, as I was standing on the start line ready to grab the baton for my leg of the 4x4, she pulled me out and put another girl in. I looked up at my family who had waited the whole meet in the cold just to watch me race. As I took my spikes off, embarrassed, my coach stood over me, scolding me in front of my team, my family and the spectators. I had had enough. I stood up, handed her my jersey and walked away. My spirit had officially been broken. I never thought I would run again."

In providing viewers with stories or recordings from the collaborators, such as the one from Tomeo, Wilbur ensures that the authoritative voice lies with *them*, not with her, the photographer.[548] These narratives create more nuanced understandings of contemporary Native American lives and assert the agency of the speakers in their self-representation. Wilbur acknowledges the importance of narratives:

> I've come to the conclusion that "the narrative" shapes our consciousness. Our consciousness determines how we will treat each other. The current narrative concerning Native America reinforces colonial perspectives that erase indigenous realities. That means that racism is born from the narrative which begins in early childhood development.[549]

Project 562 works to replace the negative narratives surrounding Native America with positive ones in order to inspire "refreshed insights and realizations."[550]

By asserting visual sovereignty over representation, Wilbur and her collaborators re/signify the photographic process from one of colonization to one of self-determination, and simultaneously tell "a story of survival and advancement."[551] *Project 562* is a visual, textual, and sometimes oral record of the lives of present-day Indigenous peoples – young and old, blue-collar and professional – produced through a self-determined, collaborative photographic process. It is about the "*people* in the photographs, entire tribes and *their* histories."[552] Therefore, I contend that *Project 562* is a *new* historical record, a collaborative construction of history that inserts the stories of its participants into the larger historical narratives of the United States. As stated by Caleb Dunlap (Anishinaabe, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe), who Wilbur photographed

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[548] Wilbur does acknowledge that she holds some form of authority in the creative process because she controls "the means of production for her [collaborators]…she is present in the final image: she's not pretending at documentary photography, and hand-coloring the print is part of that. 'When you add color to a project, it's very clear that this is what I *want* you to see,' she says." Quoted in Graves, "Shooting and Capturing."
[549] Wilbur, "Our Students Deserve A Better Narrative," *Project 562 Blog*, accessed November 18, 2018, http://www.project562.com/blog/our-students-deserve-a-better-narrative/.
[550] Ibid.
[551] Beason, "With a camera."
[552] Williams, "Reimagining Native America." Emphasis added.

along with his twin Jared (fig. 4.37) in 2013, "[Wilbur's] work is about changing how people perceive us by demonstrating how we perceive ourselves."[553] Much like Cannupa Hanska Luger in his creation of *Every One* and Wilson in *CIPX*, Wilbur uses her artistic privilege to create a platform for individuals and communities to speak and assert their right to self-representation. In doing so, she uses *Project 562* to amplify the voices of her collaborators as they tell their own (his)stories.

The collaborators' (his)stories – recorded either orally or in writing – along with their corresponding photographs, make up the archive for *Project 562*. As previously mentioned, photographs are their own archive and as tangible objects – whether physical or digital – they carry the embodied knowledge of their repertoire. In *Project 562,* the interaction between Wilbur and her collaborators – the actual photographic process as well as the recording of interviews, their participation in community life and events, among other things – create the repertoire for the photograph they produce together. The exhibition or viewing online of the photographs – particularly when accompanied by the statements from the collaborators – reactivates their repertoire and transmits to the viewer the knowledge of the collaborator's personal (his)story.

The viewer also gains an understanding of the issues that are important to individual Native peoples, as well as Native communities, such as environmental concerns, language loss and revitalization, and the importance of family, community, and the land, and much more. Take for example the (his)story shared by Stephen Small Salmon (Salish Kootenai; fig. 4.38); he works at the N'kwusm Salish Emersion school in Ponderey, in North Eastern Montana whose goal is to "bring the language back to Salish Kootenai people."[554] Salmon began working at the emersion

[553] Caleb Dunlap quoted in "Shooting and Capturing," Graves.
[554] Matika Wilbur, "4 Days of Imagery," *Project 562 Blog*, accessed August 10, 2018, http://www.project562.com/blog/4-days-of-imagery/.

school because during his lifetime, he saw the Salish language fluency drop from 100% fluency to 10%:

> I did the language all my life. I went to boarding school, but my mom, dad and grandparents all talked Indian to me when I came home. So I was honored for that. I have a drummers group. I dance to honor the elders that came before me. I enjoy working with kids, especially the little ones. They're really happy all the time. I never did think that we would lose our language. Today, I can truly say we almost did. And so today, we do our best to save it.[555]

And the history shared by L. Frank (Tongva and Ajachmen; fig. 4.39) regarding the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS) Pow Wow, which has been held annually since 2012 in San Francisco, CA:

> Our people are becoming whole again. That's what this pow wow does, I've watched people change. It's only been around for 6 years. [Wilbur photographed and interviewed in 2017] One year, he'll wear something a little feminine, next year maybe a top and those earrings, and then it's a full-on skirt and everything. He's alive and whole. They're finding their wholeness and I've seen it there at one pow wow and I know its [*sic*] happening all over the place. To the two-spirit youth we need your skills, your love, your laughter. We need you. If you don't think the world needs you. We do. We need you. Your people need you. They can't be whole if they leave out a big part of the wholeness. You're more than o.k. You're necessary.[556]

These (his)stories and the many more conveyed in *Project 562*, as previously noted, represent the rich complexity and diversity of Indigenous peoples, cultures and traditions. Regarding her role as a visual storyteller, Wilbur states: "I'm here to carry the message from the silenced, to show you some of Native Americas [*sic*] beauty and to encourage our collective consciousness to reimagine the way we see each other…."[557]

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[555] Stephen Small Salmon quoted in "4 Days of Imagery," *Project 562 Blog*.
[556] L. Frank quoted in "Embracing The Spirit of Inclusion: San Francisco's Two Spirit Pow Wow," *Project 562 Blog*, accessed August 10, 2018, http://www.project562.com/blog/embracing-the-spirit-of-inclusion-san-franciscos-two-spirit-pow-wow/.
[557] Wilbur quoted in "Reimagining Native America," Williams.

The way that Wilbur envisions presenting this message after the completion of *Project 562* is by "building a traveling longhouse that represents her Northwest Coastal Indian roots and can be set up in cities all over the world…reminding visitors that the communities represented in her images aren't just a part of history – they're still making it."[558] In describing her vision for this longhouse, "The Exhibit," Wilbur states:

> When people walk through The Exhibit, they will see the canoe culture, the horse culture, the Swinomish, the Cheyenne, the Lummi, the regalia, the young, the old, the women with master's degrees from Stanford, the twins, the tattoos, the business suits...Then, *then, finally, in that moment*, there will be no denying that there is no such thing as *an* Indian.[559]

Instead, there will be "infinity Indians, doing every last thing but vanishing,"[560] fulfilling Wilbur's goal of "exposing the astonishing variety of the Indian presence" through which "we will build cultural bridges, abandon stereotypes, and renew and inspire our national legacy."[561]

Regarding *Project 562,* art historian Sandra Jackson-Dumont states:

> What Matika's doing – it's such a simple thing. This is social justice. It's image justice. It's people having the right to participate in their own image construction. There's a whole group of photographers out there right now who are going back to people and giving them agency, saying 'work with me, and we can create an image that reflects you.'[562]

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[558] Beason, "With a camera."
[559] Wilbur quoted in "Shooting and Capturing," Graves.
[560] Graves, "Shooting and Capturing."
[561] Wilbur quoted in "An Artist Takes Action: Project 562," Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Teacher Resource, accessed January 25, 2019, https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pnw-fish-wars/project-562.cshtml.
[562] Sandra Jackson-Dumont quoted in "Shooting and Capturing," Graves. Other artists who can be considered a part of this group include Kali Spitzer (Kaska Dena/Jewish) and her project *An Exploration of Resilience*; Tom Jones (Ho-Chunk) and his series *Strong Unrelenting Spirits* and *The Ho-Chunk People*; and Nadya Kwandibens (Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) from the Animakee Wa Zhing #37 First Nation) and her on-going series *Concrete Indians*, *Red Works Outtakes*, and *emergence*. These are just a few of many Native photographers who are a part of the group described by Jackson-Dumont.
Kali Spitzer, https://kalispitzer.photoshelter.com/index.
Tom Jones, http://tomjoneshochunk.com.
Nadya Kwandibens, https://www.redworks.ca.

I contend that this statement is also applicable to Wilson and his *CIPX* project. Both *Project 562* and *CIPX* represent collaborative constructions of history that articulate Native representational subjectivity by conveying representations *of* Indigenous peoples *by* Indigenous peoples *for* Indigenous peoples. Jolene Rickard asserts that "as part of an ongoing strategy for survival, the work of indigenous artists needs to be understood through the clarifying lens of sovereignty and self-determination, not just in terms of assimilation, colonization, and identity politics."[563] Wilbur, Wilson and their collaborators are participants in this ongoing strategy for survival.

Through their collaborations, the photographic process is re/signified from a mechanism of colonization to a mechanism of self-determination, and the photographs created are the physical, tangible evidence of this re/signification. Because of this re/signification, the collaborative photographic process – used by both Wilbur and Wilson – becomes a physical expression of sovereignty through self-representation and self-determination. These expressions of sovereignty intervene in the historical narratives of the United States and insert voices that have long been marginalized. As scholar Brigetta Miller (Stockbridge-Munsee Nation) notes, the message that Wilbur presents – and I contend the message presented by Wilson's *CIPX* – is:

> [T]hat we are resilient and we are strong and that *we're reclaiming our own narrative*. She's really aiming to share that part of our story, as opposed to one that popular American culture often believes is dead or invisible. As indigenous people, *we are interrupting the settler narrative of the past, embracing our present and ensuring the future for our children.* We are moving, we are shaking, we are scholars, we are artists — the sky is the limit for us.[564]

[563] Rickard, "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand," *Strong Hearts,* 51.
[564] Brigetta Miller quoted in "Project 562 creator's convocation, art installation looks to reshape the narrative of Native communities," by Ed Berthiaume, *Lawrence University Blog*, April 2, 2019, https://blogs.lawrence.edu/news/2019/04/project-562-creators-convocation-art-installation-looks-to-reshape-the-narrative-of-native-communities.html?fbclid=IwAR3adX5FTaAxZ-hhBYpoe0zwBaK3UMlLPfZtdIwAgpTLxD0UgjYxVHV7krM. Emphasis added.

Conclusion

In her essay, "Setting the Photographs Aside: Native North American Photography since 1990," Lara M. Evans asserts that "[i]f…artists were scientists, we could say their artworks are experiments that require *us* [the viewers] to ask questions each time we encounter them and to come to conclusions anew each time. The photographers…are intellectual heavy-hitters."[565] The artists discussed in this chapter, Jones, Wilson, and Wilbur, are such scientists and their photographs invite us to ask questions about our understandings of representations of Indigenous peoples that permeate American visual culture. Wilson expresses a desire to provoke such questioning through his work:

> For Indians, I want to produce experiences that bring us close to home, while unsettling us with the evidences of colonization. I want my work to strengthen Indians with examples of resistance, and the possibilities of controlling one's own representation. For non-Indians I want to call into question the uncritical consumption of images of American Indians both positive and negative. *This is to be done by presenting experience that articulates a history of life constantly remembered, strengthened and continued in the face of colonization*.[566]

I argue that Wilson's desire to provoke questions that critique colonial perceptions applies to the work of Jones and Wilbur as well. Collectively, *Dear America, CIPX*, and *Project 562* argue for "greater engagement, recognition and discernment in the analysis of photographs, working on the premise that in the twenty-first century, the skills of visual literacy are, for all of us, key."[567] Through these photographic projects, Jones, Wilson, and Wilbur ask us, the viewers, to acknowledge that "[i]magery matters. Representation matters."[568]

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[565] Evans, "Setting the Photograph Aside," 259.
[566] Will Wilson quoted in "Photographer & Installation Artist Will Wilson – Monday 7/19!" Santa Fe Art Institute, July 19, 2010, https://sfai.org/photographer-installatoin-artist-will-wilson-monday-719/. Emphasis added.
[567] Lidchi with Tsinhnahjinnie, "Introduction," *Visual Currencies,* xxvi.
[568] Matika Wilbur quoted in "With a camera," Beason.

Jones's, Wilson's, and Wilbur's photographic projects also demonstrate the importance of back-and-forth conversations in the production and reproduction of knowledge. In Jones's *Dear America* series, the production of knowledge starts as a conversation between Jones and his materials – the reclaimed photographic postcards. After Jones's re-appropriation and manipulation of the images, the conversation extends to include Jones's audience as he invites them to reconsider their understanding of U.S. history and patriotism. For Wilson and Wilbur, back-and-forth conversations are a central component of their collaborative photographic processes. As these conversations expand beyond the photographer-and-collaborators to include viewers, knowledge is transmitted and the historical narratives of the U.S. – and North America at large – become more complete as the voices and perspectives of those who have been marginalized are included in the conversations.

Evans further asserts that "New realities form through [the artists'] photographic practices," and I would add that *new histories* form through their photographic practices as well, as this chapter has demonstrated. History cannot be documented without a record, whether it is an oral, visual, or written record. And when we consider the visual to be as important as the written word, (his)stories are "woven and stitched together to create [a] whole."[569] We achieve a better understanding of that whole when Indigenous (his)stories are made integral to our understanding and when Indigenous voices are no longer silenced.

[569] Vigil, "Will Wilson," 104.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Images and stories of Indians infuse American history and contemporary life. They are reminders of larger truths, an emphatic refusal to forget.[570] – NMAI *Americans* (fig. 5.1)

In January 2018, the exhibition *Americans* opened at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).[571] In summarizing the exhibition, Cécile R. Ganteaume – co-curator of *Americans* along with lead curator Paul Chaat Smith – said:

> Most succinctly, Americans is an exhibition that sheds light on the nature of the American people's and American Indians' relationship. It insists that non-Native Americans and American Indians share an entangled history, and that, in many ways, *this* history is *the* history of the United States.[572]

Americans grew out of a shift Kevin Gover, NMAI's director, proposed for the museum; rather than focusing solely on the stories of cultures, NMAI would also tell histories from a national perspective.[573] These exhibitions, such as *Americans* and *Nation-to-Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*, focus on educating the museum visitors about American history and Native-U.S. relations. For *Americans*, Chaat Smith noted that the ubiquitous nature of American Indian imagery in American visual culture served as a starting point as it indicates an important history.[574]

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[570] Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, "Americans," accessed February 25, 2018, https://americanindian.si.edu/americans/# .
[571] For reviews and critiques of the *Americans* exhibition, see Peter Schjeldahl, "America as Indian Country," *The New Yorker*, January 22, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/29/america-as-indian-country; Maile Arvin, "Colonizing Histories and Rebranding Pocahontas," *Truth Out*, September 24, 2018, https://truthout.org/articles/colonizing-histories-and-rebranding-pocahontas/; and Kriston Capps, "A Look at All The Ways Native American Culture Has Been Exploited In Pop Culture," *Washington City Paper*, January 25, 2018, https://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/arts/museums-galleries/blog/20990174/americans-at-the-national-museum-of-the-american-indian-reviewed.
[572] Cécile R. Ganteaume, "The entangled history of non-Native Americans and American Indians has shaped and defined who we are as a people," *Smithsonian Voices Blog: National Museum of the American Indian*, January 12, 2018, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2018/01/12/history-americans-and-american-indians/.
[573] In-person interview with Cécile R. Ganteaume and Paul Chaat Smith, February 23, 2018.
[574] Ibid.

The centerpiece of the exhibition – which is also the main gallery where visitors enter (fig. 5.2-5.4) – features a vast array of American visual culture that features imagery of American Indians. Entitled "Indians Everywhere," this centerpiece represents the "hook" *Americans* uses to connect with its visitors as it depicts "America's ongoing obsession with Indians and Indian stereotypes."[575] The visual content draws the visitor in, inviting them to look closer, learn more, and to ask questions about the proliferation of American Indian imagery in American visual culture. After drawing the visitor in, visuals also then help to illustrate the three major events *Americans* addresses: the life of Pocahontas, the Battle of the Greasy Grass (aka the Battle of Little Bighorn), and the Trail of Tears. The exhibition challenges the visitor's previous understandings and notions of these three events by providing visual and textual content that creates a more nuanced historical context. Ganteaume explains that:

> In each of the three historic events the exhibition presents—the life of Pocahontas, the Trail of Tears, and the Battle of Little Bighorn—we look at the event's larger historical significance, its intricacies and complexities. In doing so, we see how Americans were caught up in that event, intellectually and emotionally; how it entered and has lingered in American national consciousness; and how, over time, it has impacted American popular culture.[576]

The visuals content used in *Americans* illustrates how pervasively these events and Native-U.S. relations linger in the American national consciousness, and I would argue in the American historical narrative. Although textual information is provided, it is done so in order to supplement the visual, rather than the visual supplementing the textual. In choosing to focus on the *visual* rather than the textual to connect with visitors, I contend that *Americans* demonstrates the importance of the visual to the writing of history. NMAI's *Americans* visually walks "visitor

[575] Ryan P. Smith, "Probing the Paradoxes of Native Americans in Pop Culture," *Smithsonian Magazine,* January 22, 2018, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/probing-paradoxes-native-americans-pop-culture-180967906/.
[576] Ganteaume, "The entangled history."

through a shared history that is the history of the country."[577] It offers its visitors the opportunity to visually obtain knowledge by reframing events lodged within the national consciousness from Indigenous perspectives, and it encourages people to "explore the deeply entangled history that lies behind these images."[578]

Museum and galleries are often considered to be institutions of Euro-American/Western intellectual and cultural power.[579] Similar to the field of photography, museums are intimately tied to colonization, as many of the "great" encyclopedic museums within the United States – such as the Smithsonian and the American Museum of Natural History in New York – and throughout Europe – such as the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, France – have collections that were founded on or built through the salvage ethnography of anthropologists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[580] However, as scholar Amy Lonetree notes, "[m]useums have changed significantly from the days when they were considered 'ivory towers of exclusivity.'"[581] Today, Native people are often "actively involved in determining exhibition content" and it is now "commonplace and expected that museum professionals will seek the input of contemporary communities when developing exhibitions focusing on American Indian content."[582] Lonetree further notes that "the

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[577] Cécile R. Ganteaume quoted in Carolina A. Miranda, "It's not just Chief Wahoo: Why American Indian images became potent, cartoonish advertising symbols," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 2018, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-americans-nmai-indians-in-pop-culture-20180122-htmlstory.html.

[578] Ibid.

[579] This assessment does not include tribally-run art museums or galleries. For more information and discussions on tribal museums, see Loriene Roy (Anishinaabe), Anjali Bhasin, and Sarah K. Arriaga, eds., *Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museums: Preserving Our Language, Memory, and Lifeways* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2011); Mary Lawlor, *Public Native America: Tribal Self-Representations in Casinos, Museums, and Powwows* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006); and Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk), *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

[580] For further discussion on museums, their histories, context, politics, etc., see Bettina Messias Carbonell, ed., *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); Andrew McClellan, ed., *Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millenium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003); and Lianne Mctavish, *Defining the Modern Museum - A Case Study of the Challenges of Exchange* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

[581] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 1.

[582] Ibid.

efforts today by tribal communities to be involved in developing exhibitions point to the recognition that controlling the representation of their cultures is linked to the larger movements of self-determination and cultural sovereignty."[583]

As demonstrated through my analyses in this dissertation, artworks by contemporary Native American artists are also linked to the larger movements of self-determination and cultural sovereignty. I argue that Dana Claxton, Rebecca Belmore, Gregg Deal, Robert Houle, RYAN! Feddersen, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Tom Jones, Will Wilson, and Matika Wilbur all (re)claim museum and gallery spaces through their artworks. They (re)claim museums and galleries by telling Indigenous (his)stories and amplifying the voices of Indigenous peoples and communities in spaces once claimed exclusively by Western cultural and intellectual sovereignty. Thus, through their artwork, the artists – and many more not examined here – re/signify museums and galleries as spaces of Indigenous cultural, visual, and intellectual sovereignty. Through this re/signification, the artists, and the communities who speak through their art, assert Indigenous cultural authority over the creation and representation of their own histories by presenting Indigenous perspectives and narratives "for all those who will listen." [584]

My analyses also demonstrate the important role that art plays in the construction of history. As asserted by scholar Nancy Marie Mithlo, "The arts, as visual reminders, are the languages that continue to inform us;" embodied and carried in their repertoire, the historical knowledge the artworks hold continues to transmit to new and returning viewers. When considered individually and collectively, these artworks "ask questions about what we know, why we know what we know, and how we acquire our knowledge, as well as how our knowledge relates to our

[583] Ibid.
[584] Claxton, "Re:Wind," 40.

understandings"[585] of history, memory, and culture in North America. When considered as important – or even more important – than the written word, the artworks personalize the construction of history through the individual and communal narratives and perspectives they are able to convey.

The methodological, theoretical, and conceptual approach I applied in my case studies argues for the consideration of artists as *history* makers and their artistic practice as the visual "writing" of history. This approach offers the possibility of additional avenues of research and I argue that it could expand beyond performance, installation, and photography, and be applied to all artistic mediums, thus amplifying even more Indigenous voices and adding more Indigenous perspectives to North America's historical narratives. The approach could also be expanded to art from cultures around the world, helping to create deeper historical narratives globally and to amplify the voices of marginalized groups throughout the world.

Ultimately, what I am arguing for by exploring this methodological and theoretical way of reading art as history, is a decentering of the "historic role of writing"[586] introduce by colonization. I also argue for an expanded understanding and consideration of art, as a whole, as an episteme – a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge. Although art may be considered or examined as an episteme within the art and art historical worlds, I contend that it deserves to be considered as such outside of these worlds. Historian Ludmilla Jordanova asserts: "As in the present, so in the past, the *sense of sight shapes experience*. The material world is a *visual* world, which impacts upon human beings through their eyes, and is intimately bound up with touch."[587] If the sense of sight shapes experience, then the *visual,* whether it is performance art, installation

[585] Bundy, "history of the present/map of the world," 8.
[586] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.
[587] Jordanova, *The Look of the Past*, 1. Emphasis added.

art, photography, or another visual medium, needs to be considered as a *primary* source of historical knowledge, rather than a mere illustration for texts constructed within a colonial framework. As scholar Sherry Farrell Racette states, "Objects…embody their maker's *knowledge* and the times of their creation."[588] Therefore, considering art as a primary source allows for the construction of deeper historical narratives and amplifies the perspectives of those whose voices have been marginalized for too long.

As Cannupa Hanska Luger said: "There's a story that needs to be told and that story is [Native people] now. We have amazing stories to tell right now about where Native people are right now and how we exist in the world." [589] And it is time for the rest of us to listen to those stories.

[588] Sherry Farrell Racette (Métis), "Encoded Knowledge: Memory and Objects in Contemporary Native American Art," in *Manifestations: New Native Art Criticism,* Nancy Marie Mithlo, ed. (Santa Fe: Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, 2011) 41. Emphasis added.
[589] Cannupa Hanska Luger, "Cannupa Hanska Luger - Nordamerika Native Museum," directed and produced by Dylan McLaughlin for Nordamerika Native Museum (Zurich, Switzerland), December 15, 2014, artist video, 2:50, https://vimeo.com/114626993.

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Appendix

Figures

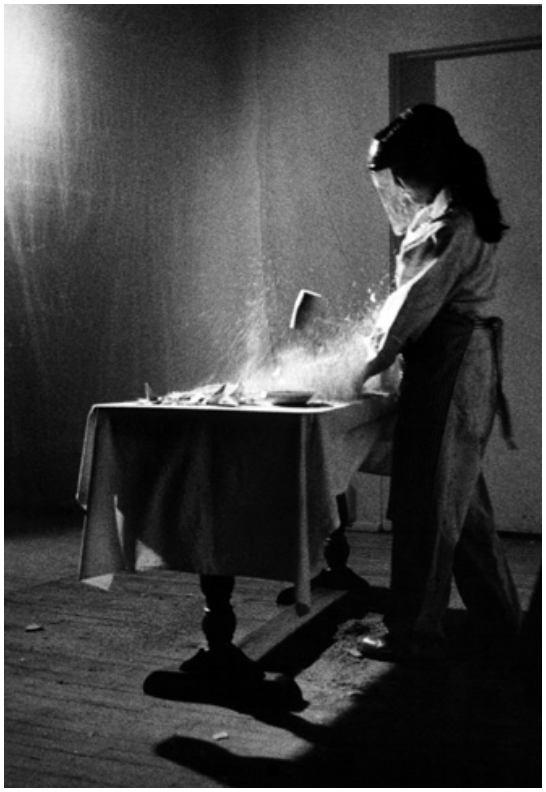

Fig. 2.1: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China*, 1997. TRIBE AKA, Saskatoon, performance still.



Fig. 2.2: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China*, 1997. TRIBE AKA, Saskatoon, performance still.



Fig. 2.3: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China*, 1997. TRIBE AKA, Saskatoon, performance still.



Fig. 2.4: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China,*1997. MacKenzie Art Gallery, video still and installation view, 2000.

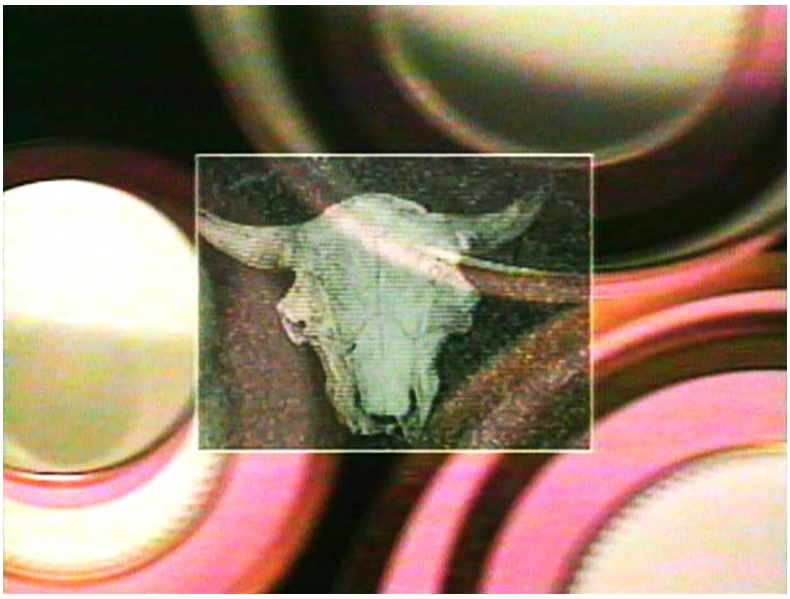

Fig. 2.5: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China,* 1997. Video still.



Fig. 2.6: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China*, 1997. TRIBE AKA, Saskatoon, installation view.

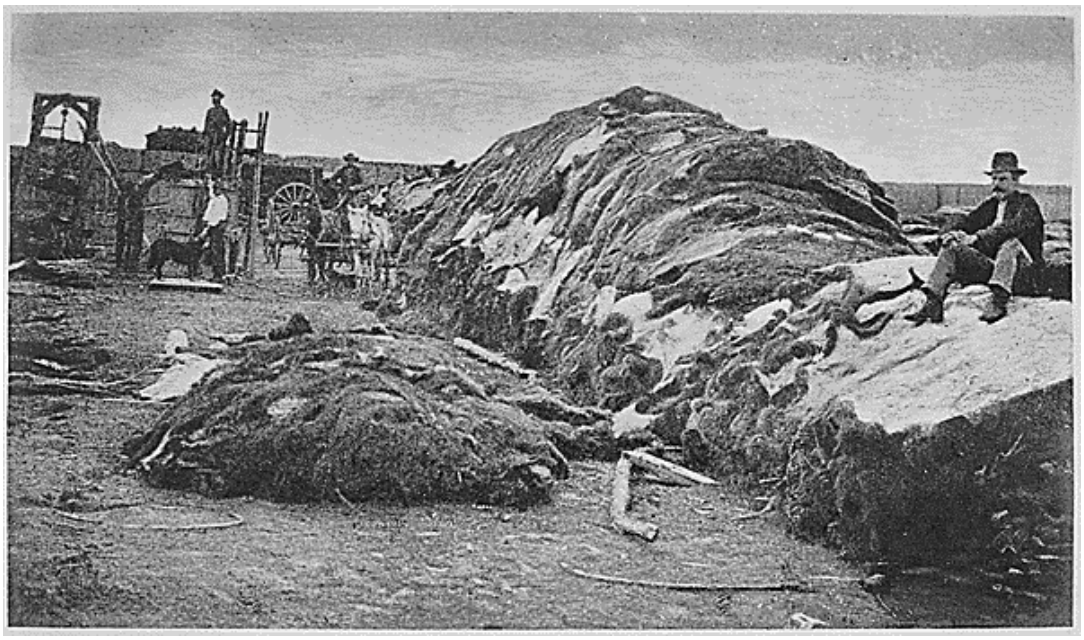

Fig. 2.7: "Rath & Wright's buffalo hide yard in 1878, showing 40,000 buffalo hides, Dodge City, Kansas." Photo: Department of the Interior. National Park Service, National Archives Catalog.

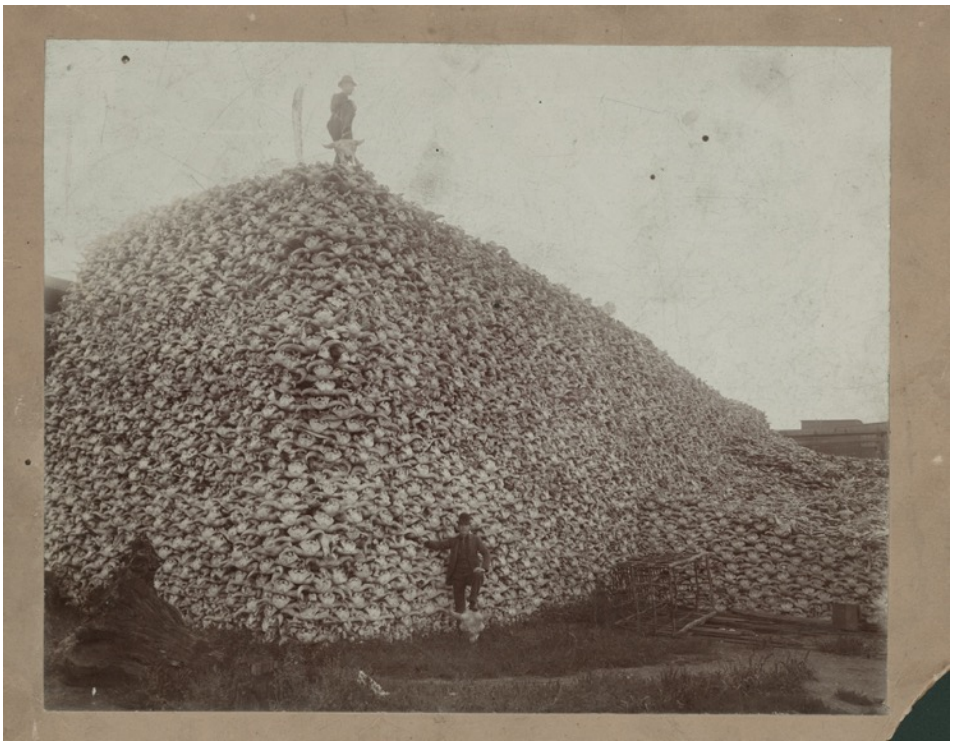

Fig. 2.8: Men standing with pile of buffalo skulls, Michigan Carbon Works. Full description: “Man stands on top of enormous pile of buffalo skulls; another man stands in front of pile with his foot resting on a buffalo skull; rustic cage is at foot of pile. Handwritten on back: ‘C.D. 1892 Glueworks, office foot of 1st St., works at Rougeville, Mich.’”
Photo: Detroit Public Library, Burton Historical Collection, Resource ID: DPA4901.



Fig. 2.9: O.B. Buell, "Buffalo bones ready for loading on Canadian Pacific Railway boxcar, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan," c. 1887-1889. Photo: Glenbow Museum, The Archives Photographs Catalogue, File No. NA-4967-10.



Fig. 2.10: Dana Claxton, *Buffalo Bone China*, 1997. TRIBE AKA, Saskatoon, installation detail.



Fig. 2.11: Rebecca Belmore, *Vigil*. Performance, Vancouver, June 23, 2002.
Photo in, *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion,* Daina Augaitis and Kathleen Ritter (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008), 106.



Fig. 2.12: Rebecca Belmore, *Vigil*. Performance, Vancouver, June 23, 2002.
Photo in, *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion,* Daina Augaitis and Kathleen Ritter (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008), 106.



Fig. 2.13: Rebecca Belmore, *The Named and the Unnamed* (detail), 2002. Installation: video projection, screen, light bulbs.
Photo: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver.



Fig. 2.14: Rebecca Belmore, *The Named and the Unnamed* (detail), 2002. Installation: video projection, screen, light bulbs.
Photo: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver.



Fig. 2.15: Rebecca Belmore, *The Named and the Unnamed* (detail), 2002. Installation: video projection, screen, light bulbs.
Photo: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver.



Fig. 2.16: Rebecca Belmore, *One thousand One hundred & eighty One,* 2014. Installation view from *Facing the Monumental*, Art Gallery of Ontario, 2018.



Fig. 2.17: Rebecca Belmore, *One thousand One hundred & eighty One,* 2014, detail.



Fig. 2.18: Rebecca Belmore, *One thousand One hundred & eighty One,* 2014, detail.

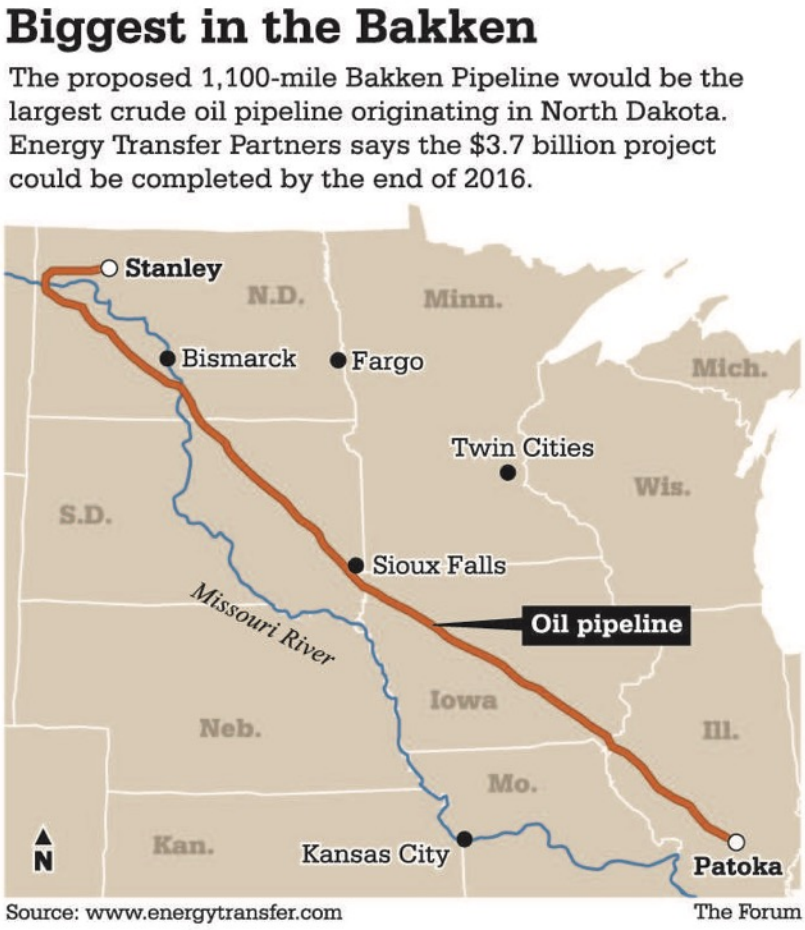

Fig. 2.19: Dakota Access Pipeline route. Photo: Bismarck Tribune.



Fig. 2.20: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.21: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.22: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.23: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.24: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.25: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .

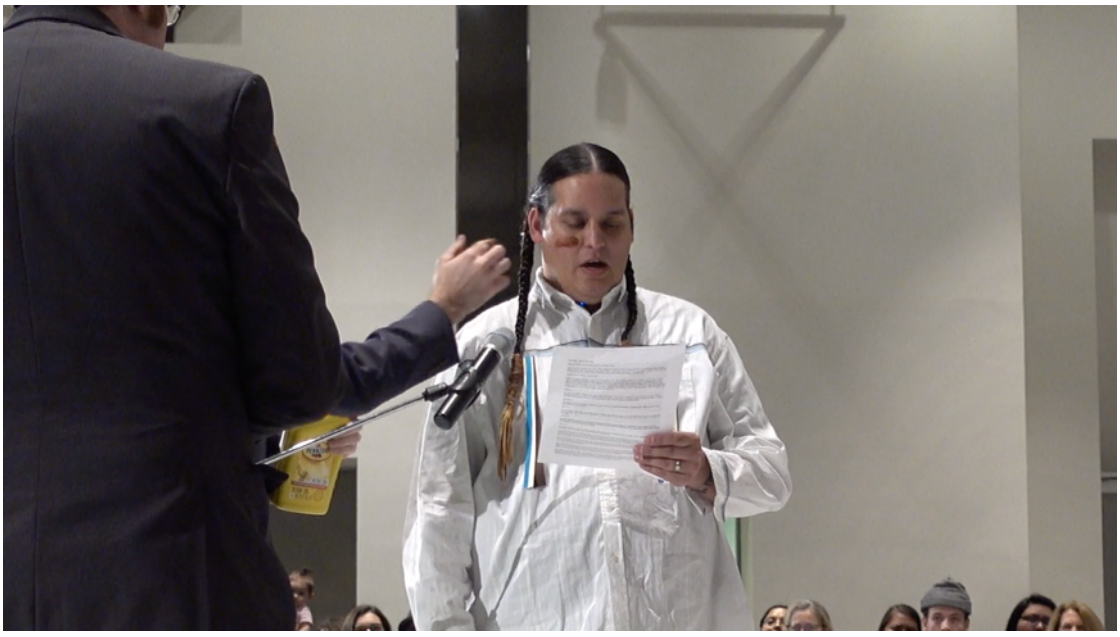

Fig. 2.26: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.27: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.28: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .



Fig. 2.29: Gregg Deal, *Supreme Law of the Land*. Performance, January 27, 2017, Denver Art Museum. Video still, http://greggdeal.com/Supreme-Law-of-the-Land .

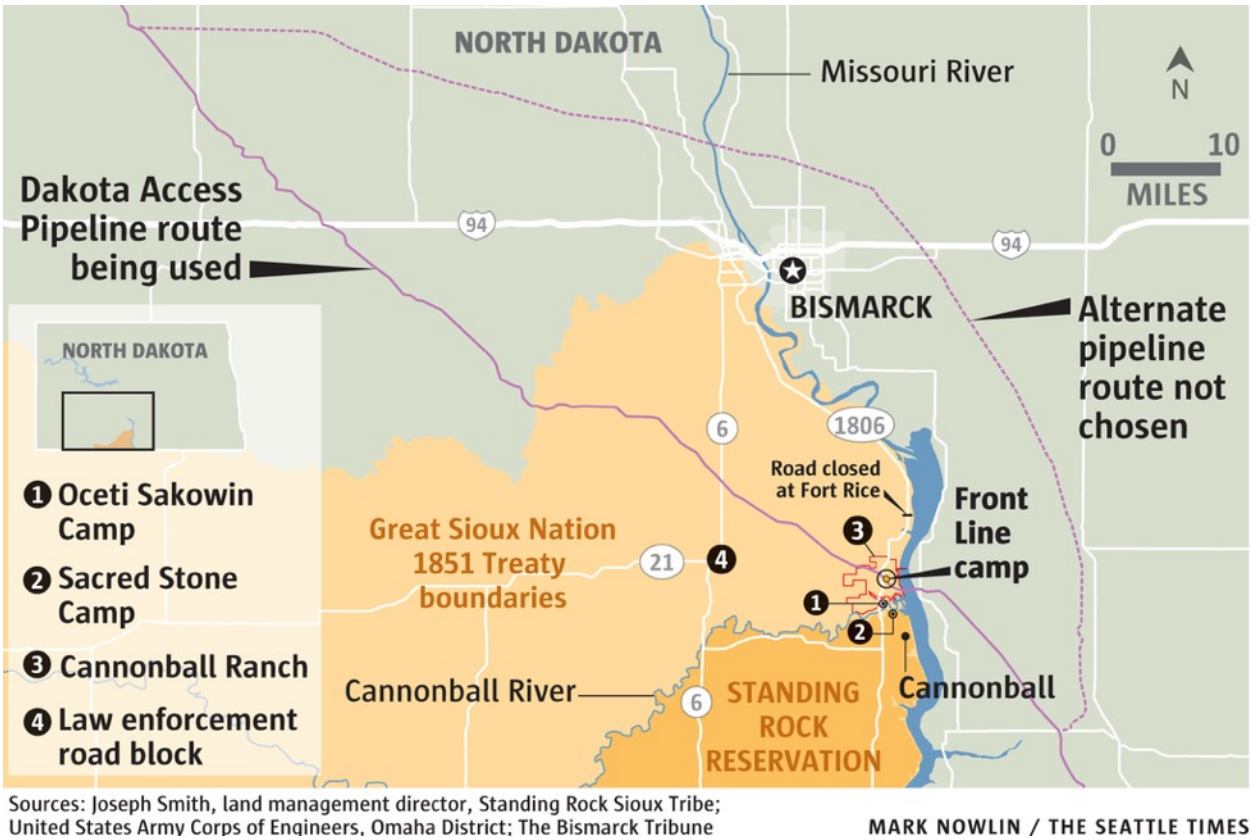

Fig. 2.30: Protest sites and original proposed route for the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photo: Seattle Times.



Fig. 2.31: Police officers use tear gas against protesters standing in the water during a protest against the building of a pipeline near Cannonball, North Dakota, Nov. 2, 2016. Photo: NBC News, https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/dakota-pipeline-protests/police-fire-rubber-bullets-pipeline-protesters-seek-protect-burial-site-n677051 .



Fig. 2.32: Police spray water on protesters during the night of November 20, 2016. Photo: The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/21/dakota-access-pipeline-water-cannon-police-standing-rock-protest .



Fig. 3.1: Robert Houle, *Paris/Ojibwa*, multi-media installation. 2010. Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.2: Maungwudaus' troupe. An 1851 daguerreotype of the Chippewa (Ojibwa) that visited Europe in 1845, Maungwudaus is second from right. Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.3: Left: Eugène Delacroix, *Cinq études d'indiens Ojibwas*, pen and brown ink on velum. 1845, Louvre Museum, Paris.
Right: Robert Houle, *Study for Reclining Ojibwa*, graphite on paper. 2006.
Images in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.4: Robert Houle, *Paris/Ojibwa*, multi-media installation, 2010. Detail: *Shaman, Warrior, Dancer,* and *Healer.* Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).

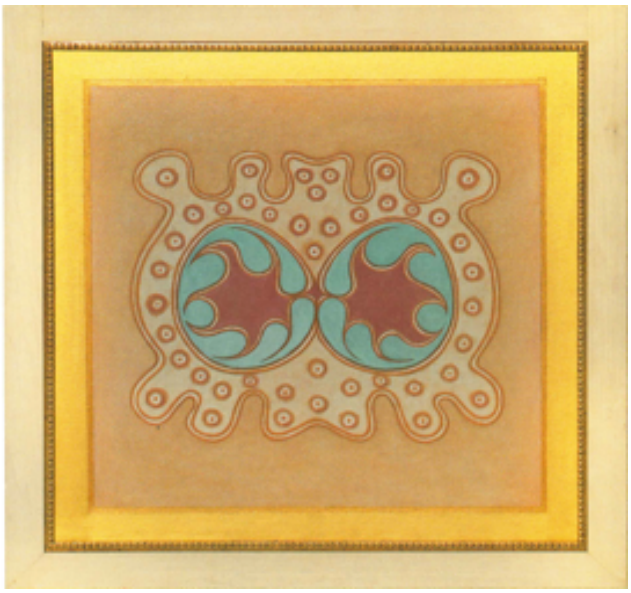

Fig. 3.5: Robert Houle, *Paris/Ojibwa*, multi-media installation, 2010. Detail: *Smallpox Virus*. Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.6: Louis XIV-style motif buffalo hide, undated. Collection of the Musée du Quai Branly. Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.7: Robert Houle, *Paris/Ojibwa*, multi-media installation, 2010. Detail: salon frieze. Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.8: Robert Houle, *Paris/Ojibwa*, multi-media installation, 2010. Detail of structural buttresses. Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.9: View of Lake Manitoba from Sandy Bay First Nation cemetery.
Image in *Robert Houle's Paris/Ojibwa* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2011).



Fig. 3.10: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, 2017.
Vinyl, Thermochromic Ink, charting tape; 16’ x 9’; http://ryanfeddersen.com/kill-indian-save-man/.

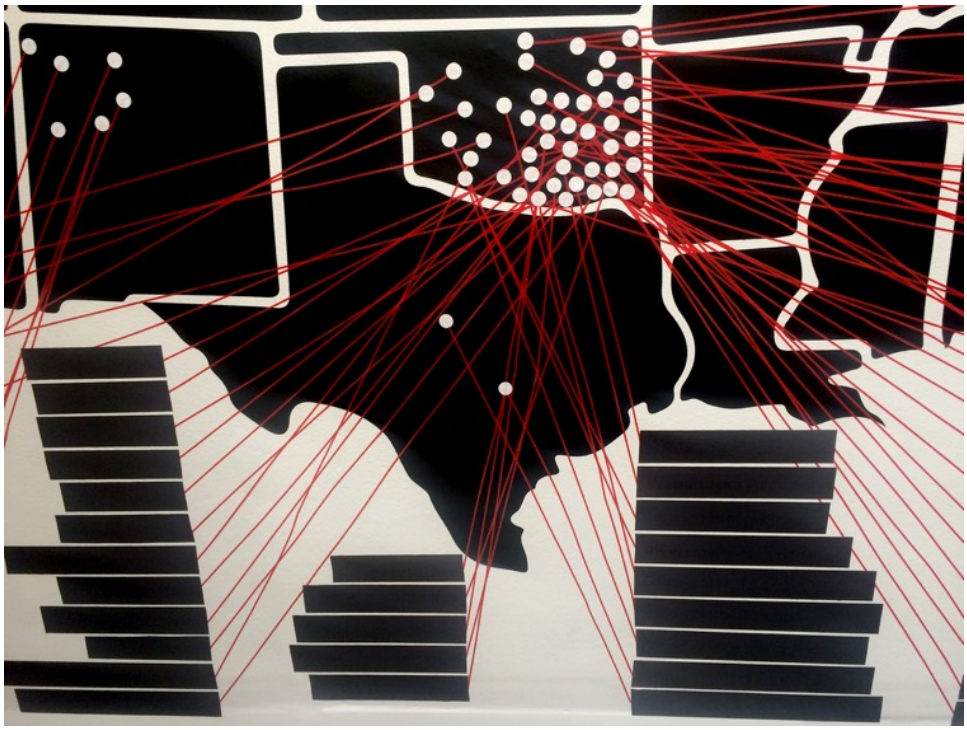

Fig. 3.11: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, 2017, detail.

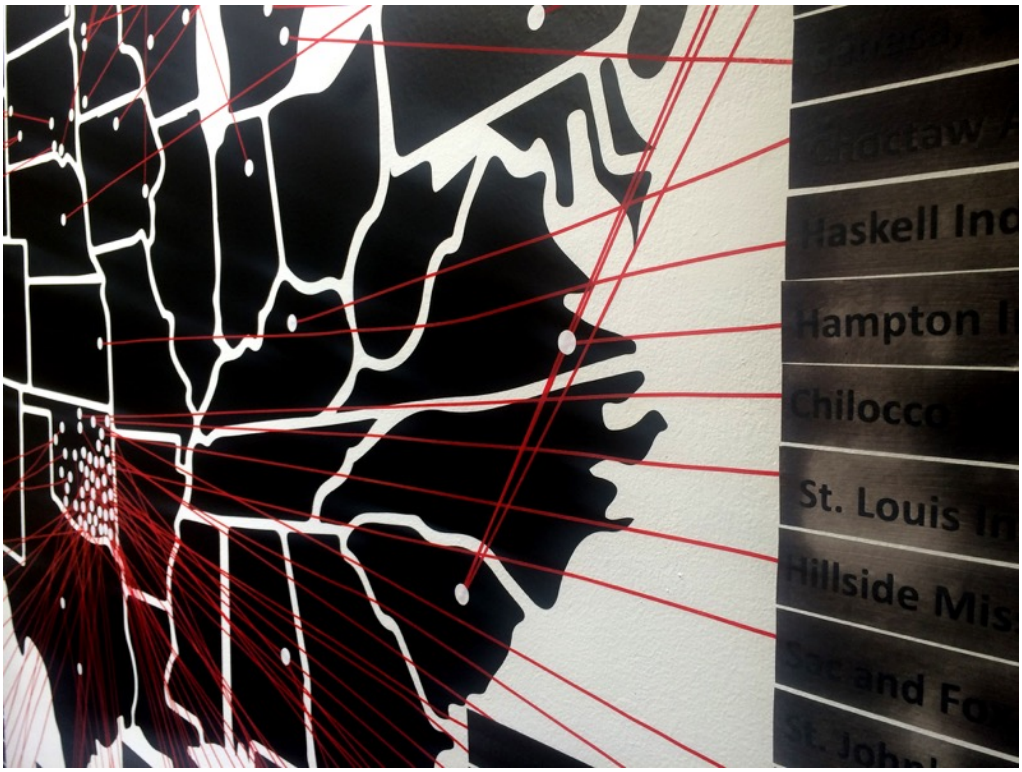

Fig. 3.12: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, 2017, detail.



Fig. 3.13: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, 2017, detail.



Fig. 3.14: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man - Borderlands*, 2018. Vinyl, Thermochromic Ink, charting tape, astro turf, and laser-cut acrylic. Commissioned by the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture for Borderlands. http://ryanfeddersen.com/kill-indian-save-man-borderlands/.

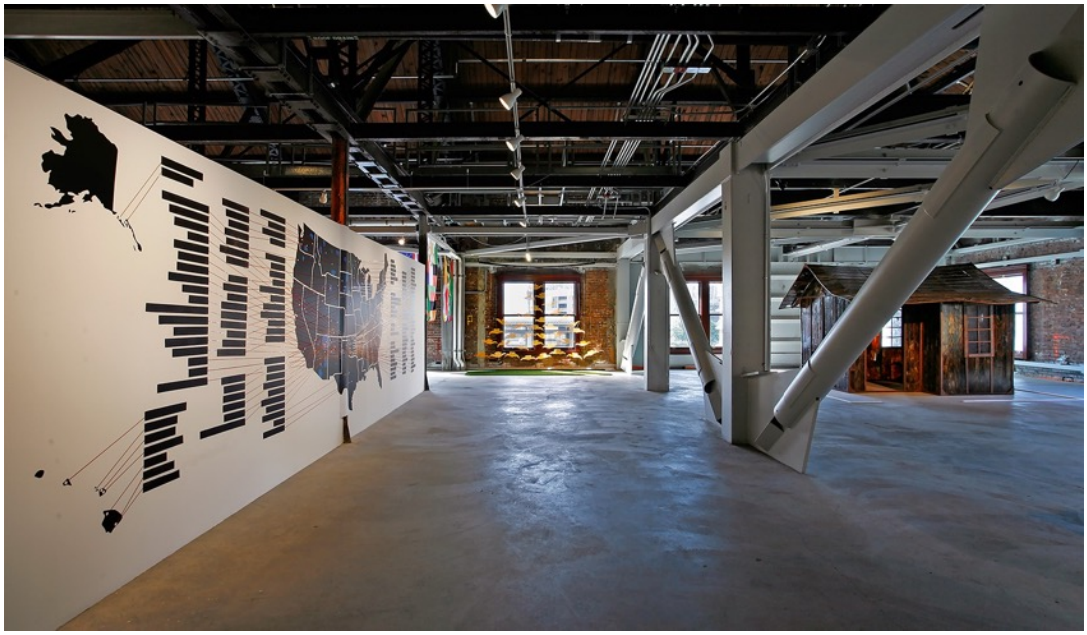

Fig. 3.15: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man - Borderlands*, 2018, gallery view. Commissioned by the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture for Borderlands.

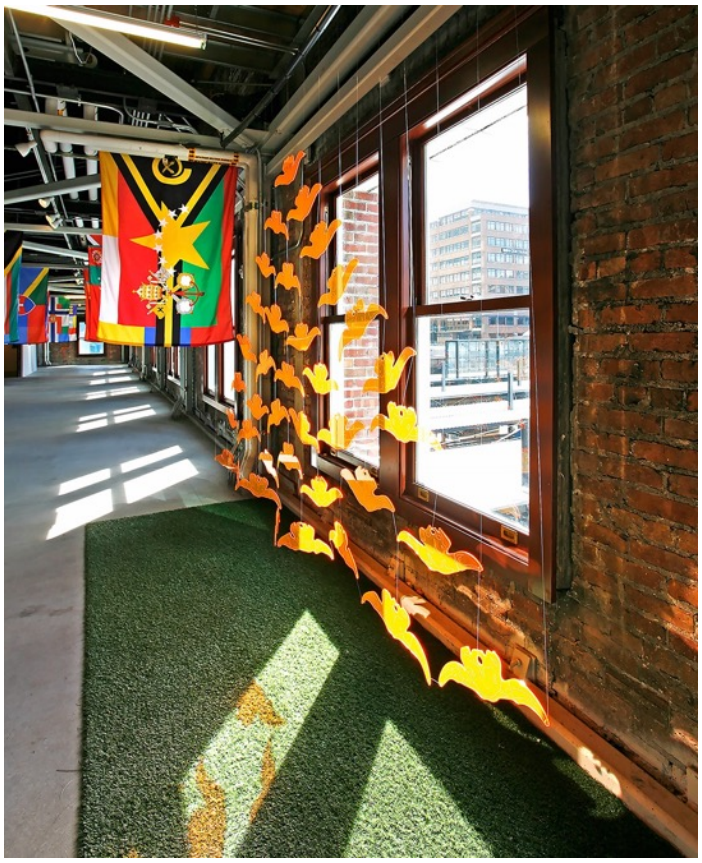

Fig. 3.16: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man – Borderlands*: *Bison Stack*. 2018.



Fig. 3.17: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man - Borderlands*, 2018, detail.



Fig. 3.18: RYAN! Feddersen, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man - Borderlands*, 2018, detail.


Fig. 3.19: Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Every One,* social collaboration, sculptural installation. 2018. 4,069 2” clay beads stained with ink; 12’ x 12’.

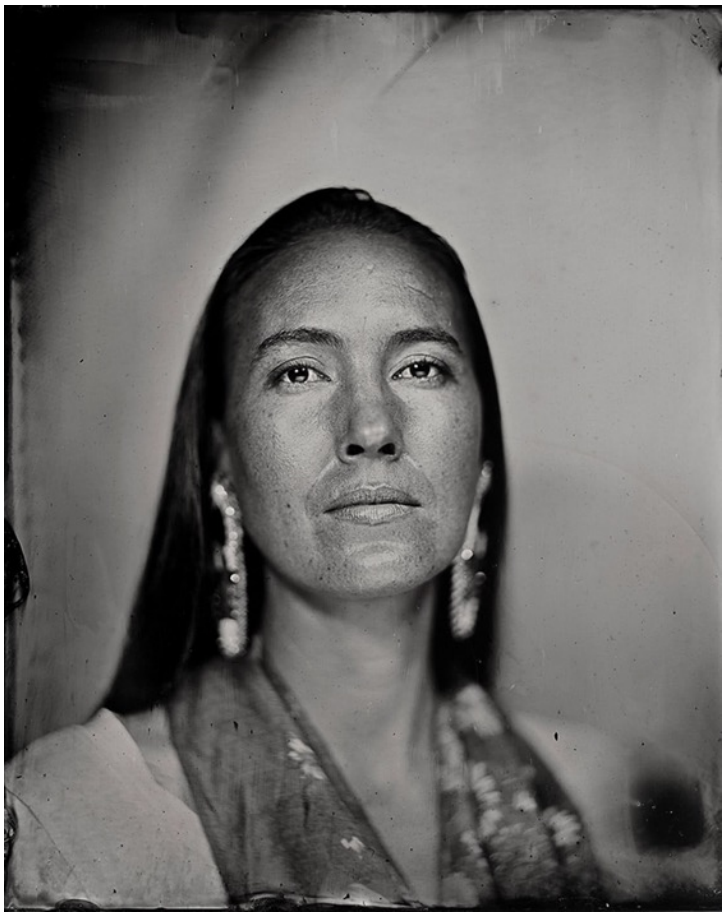

Fig. 3.20: Kali Spitzer, *Sister*, tin-type photograph. 2016.



Fig. 3.21: Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Every One,* social collaboration, sculptural installation. 2018. Gallery view, with Kali Spitzer, *Sister*, 2016 visible at the left.



Fig. 3.22: Armory Bead Workshop for the MMIWQT Bead Project.
Photo: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.



Fig. 3.23: Beads for the MMIWQT Bead Project.
Photo: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.



Fig. 3.24: *Every One* construction at IAIA.
Photo: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.



Fig. 3.25: *Every One* construction at IAIA.
Photo: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.



Fig. 3.26: Red Shawl Solidarity Society prayer action at the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM April 26, 2018. Photo: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.



Fig. 3.27: Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Every One,* gallery view. 2018.
Image: http://www.cannupahanska.com/every-one.



Fig. 3.28: Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Every One,* detail. 2018.
Photo: Albuquerque Journal.



Fig. 3.29: Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Every One,* detail. 2018.
Image: http://www.cannupahanska.com/every-one.



Fig. 3.30: Cannupa Hanska Luger, MMIWQT Bead Project.
Image: http://www.cannupahanska.com/mmiwqtbeadproject.



Fig. 4.1: *The White Man's Burden*, postcard.
Image courtesy of Tom Jones.

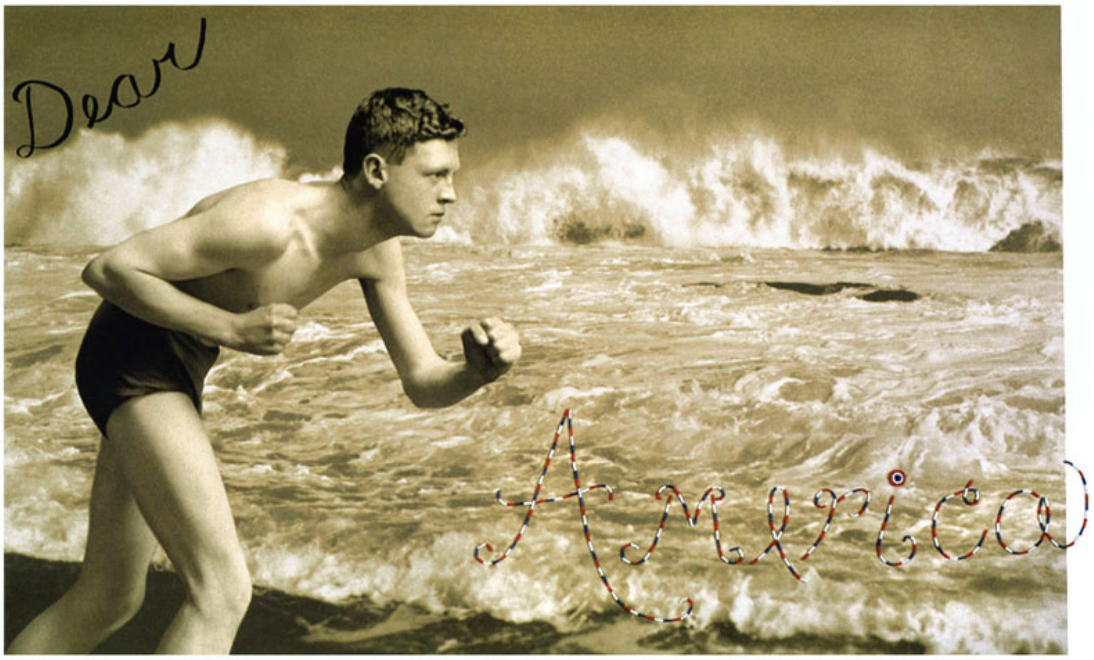

Fig. 4.2: Tom Jones, *Dear America*, *Dear America Series,* 2002.
Archival digital print, beadwork.



Fig. 4.3: Tom Jones, *My Country 'tis of Thee*, *Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print, ink.

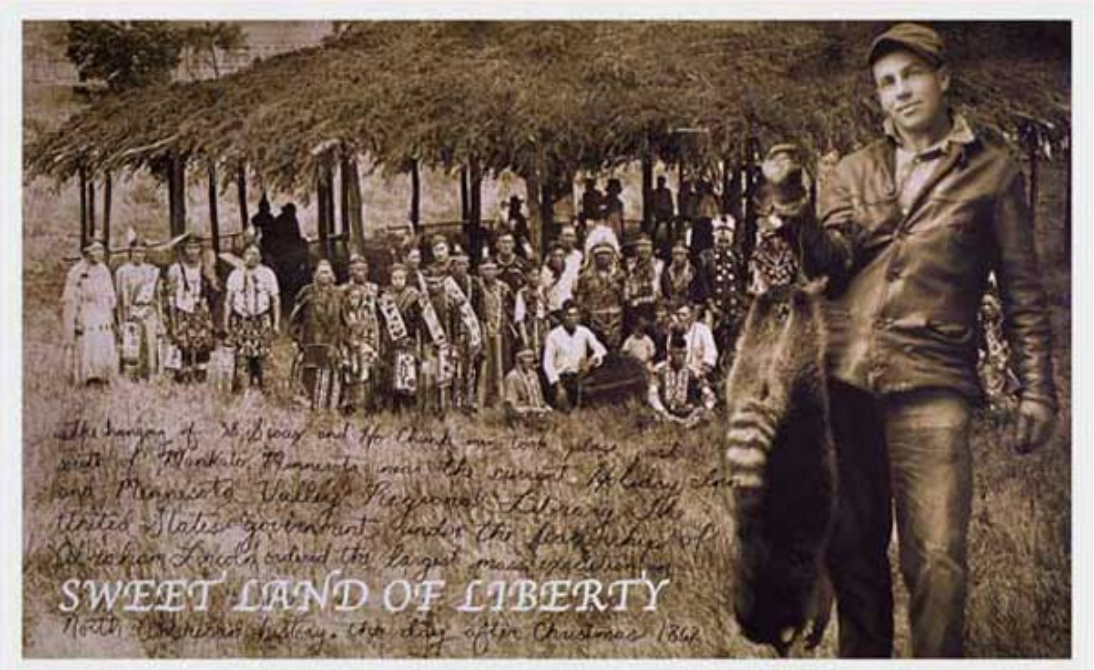

Fig. 4.4: Tom Jones, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, *Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print, ink.



Fig. 4.5: Tom Jones, *Of Thee I Sing, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print, beadwork.



Fig. 4.6: Tom Jones, *Land Where My Fathers Died, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print.



Fig. 4.7: Tom Jones, *Land of the Pilgrims' Pride, Dear America* series, 2002. Archival digital print, beadwork.

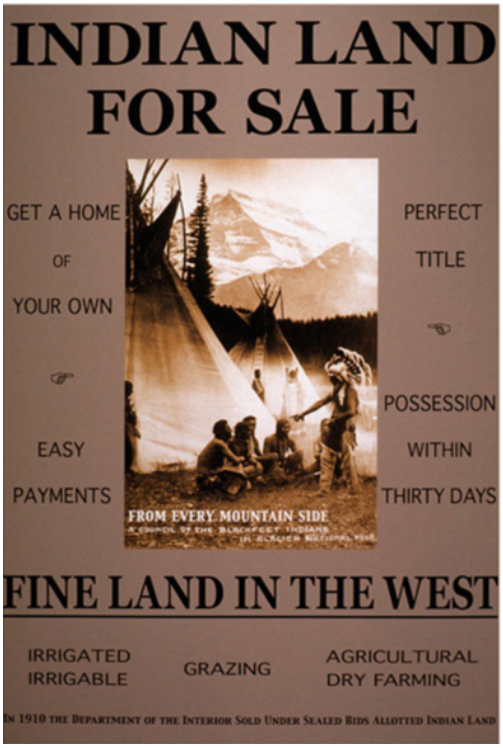

Fig. 4.8: Tom Jones, *From Every Mountain Side, Dear America* series, 2002. Archival digital print.



INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME
OF
YOUR OWN
☼
EASY PAYMENTS

PERFECT TITLE
☼
POSSESSION
WITHIN
THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED
IRRIGABLE
GRAZING
AGRICULTURAL
DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.	Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.
Colorado	5,211.21	$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT **350,000** ACRES WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: Hoopa.
COLORADO: Ignacio.
IDAHO: Lapwai.
KANSAS: Horton. Nadoan.
MINNESOTA: Onigum.
MONTANA: Crow Agency.
NEBRASKA: Macy. Santee. Winnebago.
NORTH DAKOTA: Fort Totten. Fort Yates.
OKLAHOMA: Anadarko. Cantonment. Colony. Darlington. Muskogee. Pawnee.
OKLAHOMA—Con. Sac and Fox Agency. Shawnee. Wyandotte.
OREGON: Klamath Agency. Pendleton. Roseburg. Siletz.
SOUTH DAKOTA: Cheyenne Agency. Crow Creek. Greenwood. Lower Brule. Pine Ridge. Rosebud. Sisseton.
WASHINGTON: Fort Simcoe. Fort Spokane. Tekoa. Tulalip.
WISCONSIN: Oneida.

WALTER L. FISHER,
Secretary of the Interior.

ROBERT G. VALENTINE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

wikipedia - www.CALIE.ORG

Fig. 4.9: Department of the Interior Indian Land Sale poster, 1910.
Image courtesy of Tom Jones.



Fig. 4.10: Tom Jones, *Let Freedom Ring, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print.



Fig. 4.11: Tom Jones, *Our Father's God to Thee, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print.

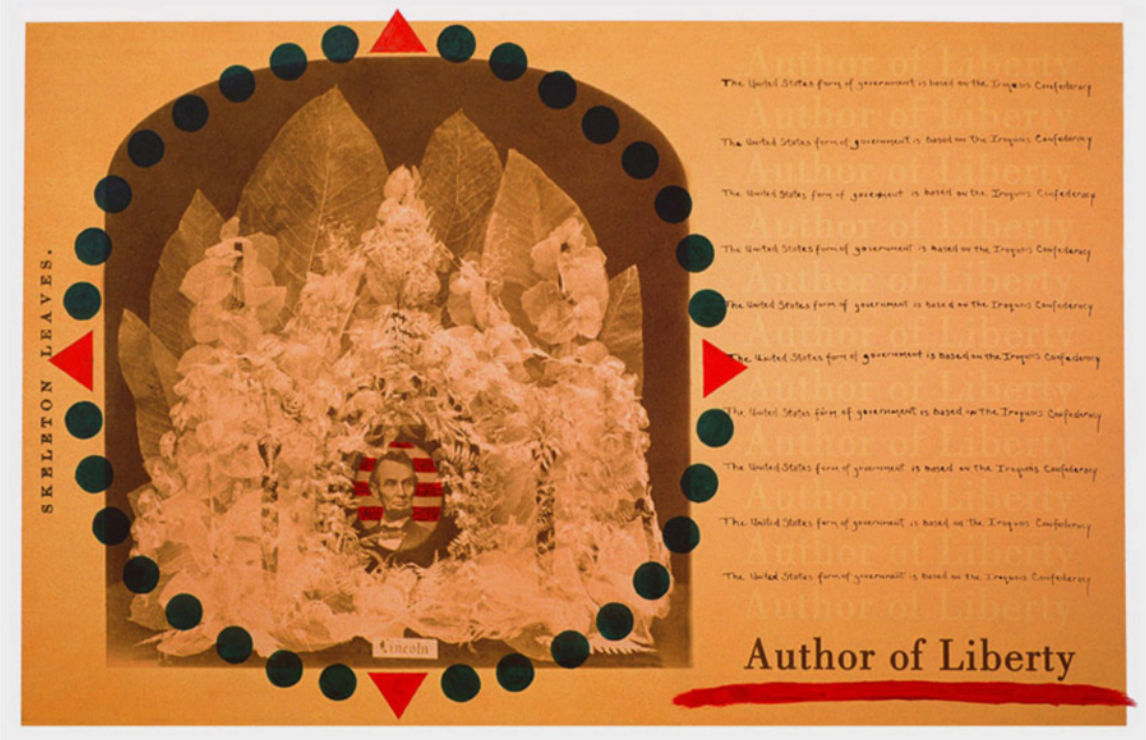

Fig. 4.12: Tom Jones, *Author of Liberty, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print.



Fig. 4.13: Tom Jones, *To Thee We Sing*, *Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print, beadwork.



Fig. 4.14: Tom Jones, *Long May Our Land be Bright, Dear America*, 2002.
Archival digital print.



Fig. 4.15: Tom Jones, *With Freedom's Holy Light, Dear America* series, 2002. Archival digital print.



Fig. 4.16: Tom Jones, *Protect Us by Thy Might, Dear America* series, 2002. Archival digital print, quillwork.



Fig. 4.17: Tom Jones, *Great God, Our King!, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print, ink.

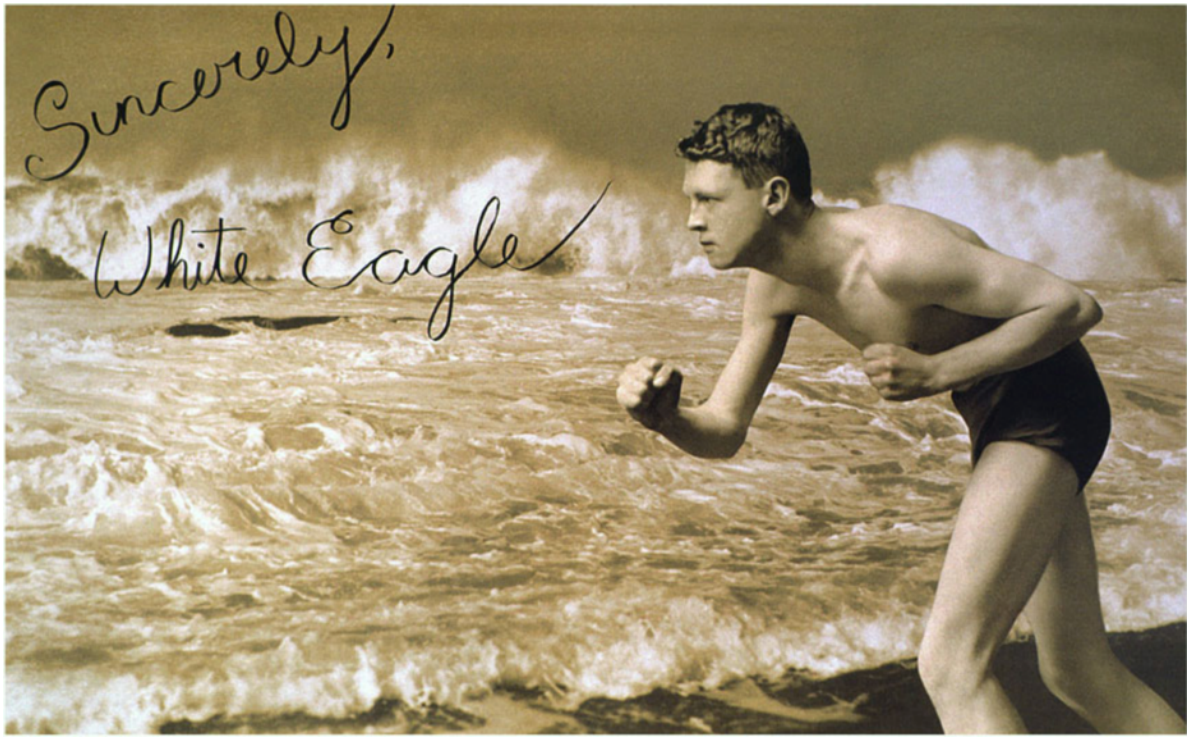

Fig. 4.18: Tom Jones, *Sincerely, White Eagle, Dear America* series, 2002.
Archival digital print, ink.



Fig. 4.19: *John Gritts, Citizen of the Cherokee Nation, US Dept. of Education, Indian Education expert, with an image of his great, great grandmother, Dockie Livers, survivor of the Trail of Tears*, 2013. Archival pigment print from wet plate collodion scan.



Fig. 4.20: Will Wilson, *Joe D. Horse Capture, Citizen of the A'aninin Indian Tribe of Montana and Associate Curator of Native American Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. CIPX*, NDN MRKT, 2012. Platinum print.



Fig. 4.21: Edward S. Curtis, *Horse Capture (WAÁTYÁNATH), Atsina,* 1908.



Fig. 4.22: Will Wilson, *Andy Everson, Artist, Citizen of the K'ómoks First Nations*. 2017. Talking Tintype, archival pigment print from wet plate collodion scan



Fig. 4.23: Edward S. Curtis, Andy Everson's grandmother as "princess" Naida. 1914.
Image: Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1907), 36.

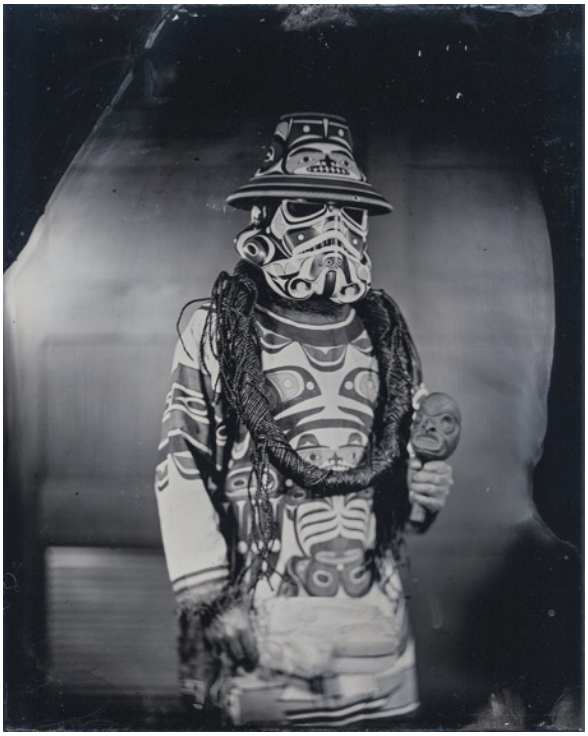

Fig. 4.24: Will Wilson, *K'ómoks Imperial Stormtrooper (Andy Everson), Citizen of the K'ómoks First Nation.* 2017. Archival pigment print from wet plate collodion scan.



Fig. 4.25: Will Wilson, *Mifaunwy Faw Faw, citizen of Otoe-Missouria Tribe, and Edna Faw Faw, citizen of Otoe-Missouria Tribe, and Katie Butler, citizen of Otoe-Missouria Tribe, Granddaughters of Lizzie Dailey Harper*. 2016. Archival pigment print from wet plate collodion scan.
Image: *PHOTO/SYNTHESIS* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2017) 11.



Fig. 4.26: Edward S. Curtis, *Standing on the Earth – Oto*. 1930. Photogravure.



Fig. 4.27: Edward S. Curtis, *Modern Dance Costume* (Pawnee Nation). 1930. Photogravure.



Fig. 4.28: Will Wilson, *Zachary Rice, citizen of Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, and Taylor Moore, citizen of Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma*. 2016. Archival pigment print from wet plate collodion scan, 8 x 10 in.



Fig. 4.29: Will Wilson, *Casey Camp-Horenik, citizen of Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, "Zhuthi," Tribal Council Woman, Leader of Ponca Scalp Dance Society, Sundancer, Delegate to UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Matriarch of wonderful family (grandmother, companion, mother, sister), Defender of Mother Earth*. 2016. Archival pigment print from wet plate collodion scan, 55 x 40 in.



Fig. 4.30: Matika Wilbur, *Stephen Yellowtail, Crow Nation.* c. 2013.



Fig. 4.31: Matika Wilbur, *Stephen Yellowtail (Crow Nation)*. c. 2013.



Fig. 4.32: Matika Wilbur, *Matthew Yellowtail (Crow Nation)*. c. 2013.

"It's great that she's shedding light on the diversity of cultures within each individual tribe, going against the generalization that all of us are prancing around fires…It's nice to have something portray us in a more modern, forward-thinking, positive approach that doesn't show us as impoverished victims to the government. It's showing that we are capable and modern and contributors to society." – Matthew Yellowtail
https://thesheridanpress.com/18135/indian-enough/





Fig. 4.33 & 4.34: Matika Wilbur, *Dr. Jessica Metcalfe (Turtle Mountain Chippewa).* c. 2013.

"When people say we live in two worlds, that is not how we it understand up North. We do not live in two worlds. We are not split in half. We do not strip our Indianness. We do not leave our Indianness at the door when we walk into a grocery store or an academic situation. We are who we are wherever we walk; and we carry all of that with us wherever we go. The fact is that we need Native American people everywhere- in every field. So if you are passionate about becoming a lawyer, or a doctor, or a fashion designer, or a filmmaker, do it! Whatever your strengths are, whatever your passions are, pursue them! Turn your passions into your career. And the very fact that you are Native American is going to add so much to that field. We need representation everywhere because we are so vastly under represented everywhere. We need you." – Dr. Jessica Metcalfe, Turtle Mountain Chippewa
https://www.instagram.com/p/vJWTBNCYGi/



Fig. 4.35: Matika Wilbur, *Rosebud Quintana (Northern Ute and Dine)*. c. 2016.

"In school, the chapters on Native American histories are mostly lies, or are just about the wars. *It's only one perspective.* But when you're at home you have your parents and grandparents who tell you the stories that were passed down. Then you have the whole picture and can choose your side." – Rosebud Quintana
https://www.instagram.com/p/BNPiifaje8n/



Fig. 4.36: Matika Wilbur, *Hannah Tomeo (Colville, Yakima, Nez Perce, Sioux and Samoan Nations) Northwest Indian Youth Princess*. 2017.

"Running has been my absolute passion and my stability. When I transferred schools, I felt as if no one wanted me to succeed. My teacher told me it was in my genetics to be an alcoholic, my basketball coach would drug test only me on the team, and my track coach told me I would just be another stupid Indian runner with no chance in the real running world. I let those words motivate and push me until I earned the fastest times in the school, but she still wouldn't let me race. Once, I remember my whole family coming to watch me run, it was a big deal to me. I was scheduled to run the 800 meters, 1600 meters and the 4x4 meter races. But one after another my coach pulled me off the start line and put someone in my place without explanation. Finally, for the last race I thought, she has to let me do this one. But again, as I was standing on the start line ready to grab the baton for my leg of the 4x4, she pulled me out and put another girl in. I looked up at my family who had waited the whole meet in the cold just to watch me race. As I took my spikes off, embarrassed, my coach stood over me, scolding me in front of my team, my family and the spectators. I had had enough. I stood up, handed her my jersey and walked away. My spirit had officially been broken. I never thought I would run again. Then my dad gave me these words "You can either be a quitter, or come back a success story. Your choice." That summer I trained harder than ever and came back strong. I made it to State. I made first team and placed in the Nike meet in Boise and Footlocker in California. I was Mead High School's #1 runner. My story isn't over. I will keep working hard to reach my goals. I will go to college so I can continue my success story that will inspire my fellow Native youth. I want to let them know that although the odds might not be in our favor, we come from a strong people. We are strong and will rise!"
– Hannah Tomeo
https://www.instagram.com/p/BSzhnTpFZhd/



Fig. 4.37: Matika Wilbur, *Caleb and Jared Dunlap (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe).* c. 2014.

"[Wilbur's] work is about changing how people perceive us by demonstrating how we perceive ourselves." – Caleb Dunlap
https://www.thestranger.com/seattle/shooting-and-capturing/Content?oid=18382775.



Fig. 4.38: Matika Wilbur, *Stephen Small Salmon (Salish Kootenai)*. c. 2014.

"I did the language all my life. I went to boarding school, but my mom, dad and grandparents all talked Indian to me when I came home. So I was honored for that. I have a drummers group. I dance to honor the elders that came before me. I enjoy working with kids, especially the little ones. They're really happy all the time. I never did think that we would lose our language. Today, I can truly say we almost did. And so today, we do our best to save it."
– Stephen Small Salmon
https://www.instagram.com/p/u_0pjfiYE2/



Fig. 4.39: Matika Wilbur, *L. Frank (Tongva and Ajachmen)*, c. 2017.

"Our people are becoming whole again. That's what this pow wow does, I've watched people change. It's only been around for 6 years. One year, he'll wear something a little feminine, next year maybe a top and those earrings, and then it's a full-on skirt and everything. He's alive and whole. They're finding their wholeness and I've seen it there at one pow wow and I know its happening all over the place. To the two-spirit youth we need your skills, your love, your laughter. We need you. If you don't think the world needs you. We do. We need you. Your people need you. They can't be whole if they leave out a big part of the wholeness. You're more than o.k. You're necessary." – L. Frank
http://www.project562.com/blog/embracing-the-spirit-of-inclusion-san-franciscos-two-spirit-pow-wow/

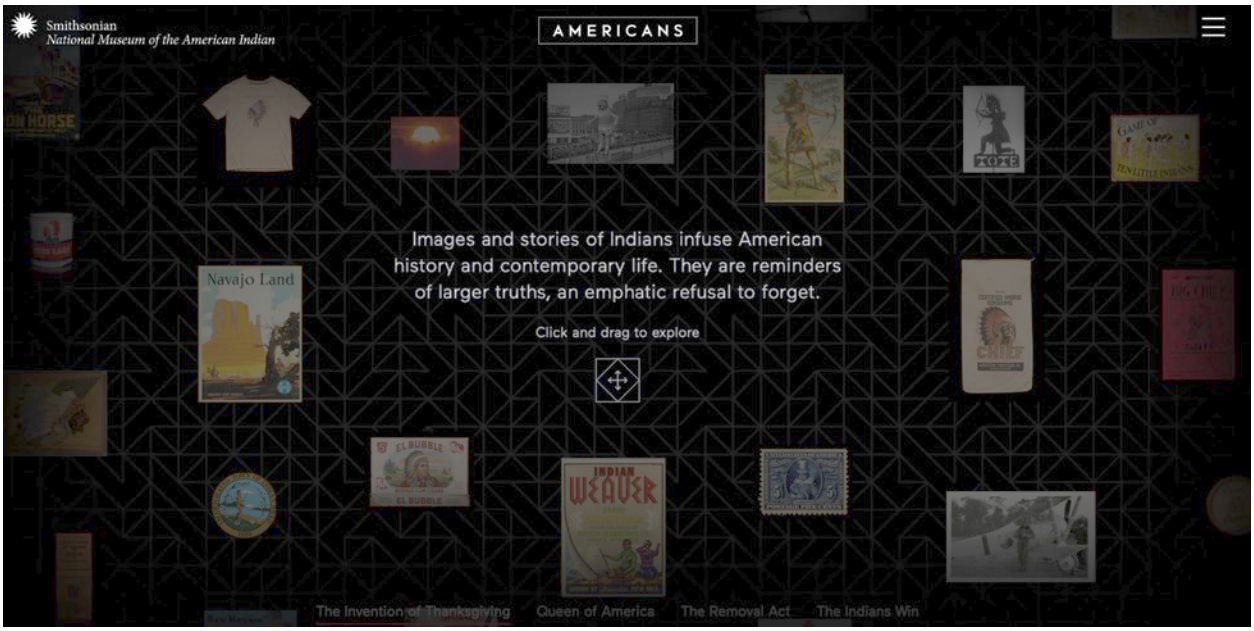

Fig. 5.1: "Entrance" in to the *Americans* exhibition website.
https://americanindian.si.edu/americans/


Fig. 5.2: "Indians Everywhere," *Americans* exhibition, NMAI.
https://twitter.com/SmithsonianNMAI/status/951652760839049216.





Fig. 5.3 & 5.4: "Indians Everywhere," *Americans* exhibition, NMAI. Images by Ashlea Espinal.