MOTHER TONGUE
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES & ART

NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL
Invitational Exhibit

Sm Łoodm ‘Nüüsm - Dr. Mique’l Dangeli, PhD and Jennifer C. Vigil, PhD, Guest Curators

June 25 - July 21, 2018
Parks Exhibition Center
CURATORS’ STATEMENT

Globally, Indigenous people are actively fighting for the survival of their languages through family, community, and university-based initiatives. Mother Tongue brings together Indigenous women artists from many different Nations across the US and Canada whose work critically engages with complexities inherent to the process of reclaiming and strengthening Indigenous languages.

Indigenous languages are endangered as a result of genocidal acts of colonialization in the past and the resultant biases that persist today. As Sallyann Paschall shares in her artist statement, even in the home efforts to teach Indigenous languages today are continually thwarted by prejudices that are a product of such biases, the legacy of intellectual colonization. Current English-only movements in the US, and the English and French movement in Canada, perpetuates the marginalization of the Indigenous languages that has gone on in both countries since the arrival of the first settlers.

Marianne Nicolson critiques the settler erasure of Indigenous languages through her use of Chinook Jargon, a trade language introduced by Canadian settlers, in The Sun is Setting on the British Empire (2017).

The urgency of Indigenous language revitalization efforts cannot be overstated as a large number are predicted to become extinct in the next fifty years. Alison Marks’s Heaven and Earth (2017) grapples with the reality of language death in a way that searches for hope in other realms of existence. With the loss of Indigenous languages, so goes ancient land and waterway-based knowledge systems vital to understanding and restoring the health of our environment. Tania Willards’s We know the Earth, and the Earth Knows Us (2018) speaks to the connection between Indigenous language and the environment as well as to the powerful emotions brought on through language learning.

Not only are these languages foundational to Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, but they are also directly connected to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the people to which they belong. For Indigenous people, the healing experiences integral to the process of learning one’s language are simultaneously filled with moments of tremendous grief over the loss caused by horrific assimilation policies and corporal punishment aimed at its eradication. Recently, apologies for such heinous acts have been made by governments, religious leaders, others, similar to the apology documented in the work of Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie’s Veterans Standing at Standing Rock Series (2016).

Lyn Risling’s Pa pi’êep ithivthaneen aachip kúma’araaras... (Long Ago Center of the World People…) (2017) highlights the critical role language plays in positioning Indigenous communities to land and their origin narratives.

Ultimately, Mother Tongue seeks to raise critical awareness about the need for Indigenous language preservation and for advocacy for policies that support Indigenous languages revitalization.

Sm Łoodm ‘Nüüsm - Dr. Mique’l Dangeli, PhD
Jennifer C. Vigil, PhD
Guest Curators
SHAN GOSHORN
Cherokee

Leveling the Playing Field
Woven paper basket, Arches watercolor paper, archival inks, acrylic paint, gold foil.
2013

From the collection of Sallyann Milam Paschall.
ARTIST STATEMENT

Woven in the shape of a Cherokee gambling basket, this piece is a contemporary comment on Indian casinos and the gaming industry. It is woven from a reproduction of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which governs the tribes’ ability to operate gaming establishments on Indian land. The paper splints have a metallic gold and opalescent wash applied to them acknowledging the tremendous exchange of money as a result of casinos. Woven into the interior of the basket is a photo of Cherokee gamblers; the exterior bottom features a photograph of Cherokee gaming pieces (dice) carved out of wood. It has been titled “Leveling The Playing Field,” referring to the way this unprecedented income has changed life for Indian people across the country. No longer are tribes inconsequential ‘wards of the government’ but rather powerful entities with bargaining power.

BIO

Although Eastern Band of Cherokee artist, Shan Goshorn, launched her career in the early 1980’s with hand-colored black and white photographs, she does not consider herself a photographer...nor a painter, a silversmith, a glass worker or storyteller even though she is proficient within all these genres. Rather, she considers herself an artist who chooses the medium that best expresses a statement, most often a statement on the challenges and triumphs unique to Native people.

Shan is most notably known for her baskets, which combine traditional Cherokee weaving techniques with non-traditional materials. In place of oak and river cane splints, her interpretations are woven from reproductions of manuscripts and photographs that document key themes including removal, sovereignty, the use of Indians in commercial products, health concerns, domestic violence and boarding schools.

Shan’s work has been acquired by dozens of museum collections worldwide and her baskets travel extensively carrying Native stories, both traumatic and celebratory, with them. Her work represents tribal human rights issues with clarity and heart, often amplifying the courage, creativity and spirit of Native people while, at the same time, making absolutely clear the injustice of their history in America.
MARIA HUPFIELD
Wasauksing First Nation Anishinaabeg

*Solidarity Acknowledgment Banner*
Acrylic paint on cotton fabric.
2017

*Greetings Neon Culture Cybersurfers*
Audio recording.
2018
ARTIST STATEMENT
The Solidarity Acknowledgment Banner created during the Summer Indigenous Intensive, UBCO 2017, looks at the language and symbols of land and territorial acknowledgement with respect to place based Indigenous Knowledge and Anishinaabe Intelligence. This work combines conceptual text based art with concrete poetry. Presented as a continuous uninterrupted presence against the work prompts engagement with what it means to act in awakened solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Rather than restate a literal local acknowledgment, Maria Hupfield points to the reciprocal nature of critical accountability to Indigenous Nations leading the movement for resurgence, decolonization, and reclamation of their homelands in North America. The work emphasizes the importance of building radical solidarity among Indigenous peoples, settlers, and people of colour. As is the case with much of Hupfield’s work, the banner is to be activated during a live performance at a future date.

BIO
Maria Hupfield is a Brooklyn-based artist whose live performances create shared experiences and open spaces for new narratives. Working with industrial felt, she hand sews objects, renewing their meanings and activating them with movements. A member of the Wasauksing First Nation Anishinaabeg in Ontario, Canada, Hupfield is deeply invested in indigenous feminisms and exploring the intersections of race, gender, and class. Her current solo exhibition “The One Who Keeps On Giving” premiered at the Power Plant, Toronto, in January 2017 with multiple venues across Canada and in Paris. She is the 2018 Triangle and Indigenous Artist Resident at ISCP International Studio and Curatorial Program.
ALISON MARKS

Tlingit

Heaven and Earth

Audio, vinyl.

2017
**ARTIST STATEMENT**
The Tlingit language has fewer than 100 fluent speakers remaining. It has been estimated that if current trends continue, the language will be extinct by the end of this century. I found a free star naming website and began naming stars after entries in the Tlingit verb dictionary. Symbolically sending the language into space, so it may survive there if we do not save it on earth.

**BIO**
Alison Marks is a multidisciplinary Tlingit artist born and raised in Southeast Alaska. In addition to her contemporary practice, Marks is committed to the revitalization of Tlingit culture and language in her hometown of Yakutat, Alaska. Marks has learned under master artists David R. Boxley and David A. Boxley. Marks’ work can be found in the permanent collections of, among others, the British Museum, the Burke Museum, the Portland Art Museum, the Frye Art Museum and the Bainbridge Art Museum.

**COLLABORATOR BIO**
Paul Marks II is a Tlingit leader and culture bearer from the Kaagwaantaan Gaaw Hít. Marks was raised on Marks Trail, the last remaining Tlingit language stronghold. Marks is an active participant in the Tlingit culture, assisting with potlatch ceremonies throughout Southeast Alaska. Paul Marks II currently works as a Cultural Specialist with the Juneau School District, serves as a Tlingit & Haida Central Council Delegate and is a member of the Alaska Tribal Leaders Committee.
According to early oral history accounts, British Columbia’s flag originally featured the sun over the Union Jack. This flag was distributed to Indigenous nations in the province’s interior as a symbol of early “treaty” or land use agreements, with the Indigenous interpretation that the sun and wavy lines meant the agreements would last “for as long as the sun shines and rivers flow.” But in the early 20th century, to reflect the notion that “the sun never sets on the British Empire,” the positions of the sun and the Union Jack were officially reversed. In 21st-century protests over land jurisdiction, some First Nations reclaimed the flag’s original version as an assertion of Indigenous land rights and the unresolved issue they constitute. In my version, RCMP tunic buttons along Union Jack’s horizontal line represent the “legal” imposition of colonial authority; the sun is given its original position above the British flag and the text in Chinook Jargon reads, “The Sun is Setting on the British Empire.”
ARTIST STATEMENT
My work stems from a strong belief in the value of Indigenous philosophies and ways of being on the land. It is also driven by a mandate for social justice and the well-being of all peoples. Art, writing, performance, and academics are all platforms for the expression of these ideas. Fundamentally, it is about communication, resolution and inspiration. My inquiry questions the social and political contexts which frame the existence of my own Nation, the Dzawada’enuxw of the Kwakwaka’wakw peoples. Our history, both magnificent and tragic, is deeply rooted in the lands we inhabit, the Kingcome Watershed and the Broughton Archipelago. Since contact, this relationship has been threatened by outside forces and we are under duress to hold onto our traditional ways of being. My practice is an attempt to manifest these philosophies into contemporary spaces and conversations. My hope is that through this process of expression that the ideas remain alive and that others can experience their value. I do this because I believe that Indigenous worldviews can benefit all peoples, in particular, our notions of community connection to one another and to the land.

BIO
Marianne Nicolson (Tayagila’ogwa) is an artist of Scottish and Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw Nations descent. The Musgamakw Dzwada’enuxw People are part of the Kwakwaka’wakw (Kw’kala speaking Nations) of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Her training encompasses both traditional Kwakwaka’wakw forms and culture and Western European based art practice. She has completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University of Art and Design (1996), a Masters in Fine Arts (1999), a Masters in Linguistics and Anthropology (2005) and a PhD in Linguistics and Anthropology (2013). She has exhibited her artwork locally, nationally and internationally as a painter, photographer and installation artist, has written and published a numerous essays and articles, and has participated in multiple speaking engagements. All of her practice engages with issues of Indigenous histories and politics arising from a passionate involvement in cultural revitalization and social justice. Current projects include a 36’ glass wall for the Canadian Embassy in Paris, France; a 15’ x 8’ slab rock wall in Edmonton, Alberta; and a 16’ cedar sculpture being installed in the Surrey Skytrain Station, Vancouver.
SHELLEY NIRO
Mohawk

Tree
Film
2005
**ARTIST STATEMENT**

Personifying Mother Earth, she walks through her domain. She observes her environment and what has happened to it. She weeps. She feels violated. Not only has man damaged her but they continue to damage each other. She sighs. She will visit and start again sometime soon.

**BIO**

Niro was born in Niagara Falls New York. She is a member of the Turtle Clan, Bay of Quinte Mohawk. Niro is a practising artist, concentrating on painting, photography and film. Her points of focus have been centred on Indigenous Female representation. In 2017 Niro was awarded the Canada Council For The Arts Governor General award in Visual Art, the Reveal Award from the Hnatyshyn Foundation, Dreamcatcher’s Visual Award and the Scotiabank Photography Award. Currently she is working on a feature film, The Incredible 25th Year Of Mitzi Bearclaw. Shelley believes in the power of imagination and the community of artists who work towards finding the courage to making their vision real.
SALLYANN MILAM PASCHALL
Cherokee

Digadoi VI
(Mountain Rhododendron)
Mixed media

From the collection of Chessney Sevier.
ARTIST STATEMENT

When I was a small child, my father began to teach my sister and myself words in the Cherokee language. We only learned a few before my mother, a white woman, objected heartily. I think of that scene frequently when I address the Cherokee syllabary in my art as strictly a design motif. You see, I was never able to learn the language, but I can appreciate the beauty of the written Cherokee words.

In this mixed media painting, the words mean digadoi, or “the plants are among us”. The mountain rhododendron represents a few of the plants and the birds’ nest represents the birds and animals in the forests and woods. And of course the syllabary is there, as well as ancient Mississippian designs. The relationship is strong and brings me great pleasure.

BIO

Enrolled in the Cherokee Nation and raised in Oklahoma, Sallyann Paschall is a New Mexico printmaker, painter and mixed media artist. As a painter, she is equally comfortable in naturalist realism as with non-objective abstraction. As a printmaker, she produces monotypes and lithographs as well as a variety of etchings. In many instances, she produces mixed media works that utilize a variety of media. Sallyann has shown her work extensively and has won numerous awards, particularly at the Heard Indian Market and the Santa Fe Indian Market. Her work is held in private and Museum collections nationwide.
LYN RISLING
Karuk, Yurok & Hupa

*Pa pi’êep ithivthaneen aachip kúma’araaras...*
*(Long Ago Center of the World People...)*
Acrylic on canvas.
2016
ARTIST STATEMENT
My art reflects the renewal and continuation of the cultural traditions and connections to the natural world of my tribal peoples, the Yurok, Hupa and especially the Karuk. I have had the privilege of participating, for many years, in this renaissance and reconnection.

As I learn to speak and pray in my Karuk language I feel connected to my ancestors and the Spirits of the land in a deeper way. I know the language is their voices and is becoming part of me, and what I pass on to my grandchildren and others will help carry those voices and knowledge into the future. The knowledge that our ancestors gave to us through our language defines who we are. Like our ancestors our language emerged from a place, “Ithivthaneen aachip,” the Center of the World, of which we are deeply connected.

\[pa\ \ pi’êep\ \ ithiívthaneen\ \ aachip\ \ kúma\ \ araaras\]
Long ago Center of the World People

\[xàatik\ \ mukun’araráih\ \ nuthítiv\]
Let it be their language we hear

\[xàatik\ \ mukun’araráih\ \ nu’àapunmutih\]
Let it be their language we know

\[mateek\ \ xara\ \ nik\ \ nanu\ \ araráih\ \ nuchuupeesh\]
May it be a long time we are going to speak “our” language

BIO
Lyn Risling graduated with a BA in Art with a minor in Native American Studies at University of California Davis and received teaching credentials and a Masters Degree from Humboldt State University.

Besides being a contemporary artist, Lyn has long been involved in traditional arts and many other aspects of her cultures, including the revival of and participation in tribal ceremonies and other traditions.

Lyn was a recipient of The Community Spirit Award from First Peoples Fund in 2005 for her artwork and commitment to her Native culture and community. She has worked with Native youth to create mural panels that reflect their history, culture, languages, and contemporary issues.

Her art is often seen in tribal cultural curriculum, language materials, brochures, t-shirts, and posters, throughout California.
HULLEAH TSINHNAMJINNIE
Duskegee

Veterans Standing for Standing Rock Series
Photograph.
2016
ARTIST STATEMENT
Native American Veteran, L. Frank Manriquez traveled from Santa Rosa, CA to Oceti Sakowin, to participate in the “Veterans Action”, Dec. 4, 2016. The estimated number of veterans who answered the call to action was 3,000-4,000.

BIO
Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie was born into the Bear Clan of the Duskegee Nation, and born for the Tsinajinnie Clan of the Diné Nation. Exhibited nationally and internationally, Tsinhnahjinnie claims photography and video as her primary languages. Creating fluent images of Native thought, her emphasis is art for Indigenous communities.

Tsinhnahjinnie has been a recipient of the Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art, a Chancellor’s Fellowship at UC Irvine, the First Peoples Community Artist Award, and a Rockefeller artist in residence. She is currently Director of the C.N. Gorman Museum and Professor in the Native American Studies Department at UC Davis.
TANIA WILLARD
Secwépemc

R Tmicw Tselxstelt ell Tselx Stem r Tmicw
(We Know the Earth and The Earth Knows Us)
Face-mounted acrylic paint.
2018
ARTIST STATEMENT
Consisting of around 400 scans of a 1300 + Coastal Douglas fir made with a portable scanner and auto-stitched together this composite image is a result of a process of layering, copying, matching and simulating data. The tree rings represented in the scan also contain their own data, recording weather patterns, climate change, ecological conditions and more in their growth rings. The process of scanning and compositing the original 1300 year old Coast Douglas Fir cross cut section represents a data loop with simultaneous loss and reconstruction coded into the image. It is the stitching together and the recording of worlds encoded in the tree rings and the small gaps in the digitization that become representative of learning language and the deep generative knowledge inherent in a language. This cross cut section is displayed in the Duncan Museum (Duncan, BC) with an acrylic sheet fixed to it that matches a timeline of colonial history to the dates recorded in the rings, now burnt into the wood and varnish after years in display in the Duncan Museum, there is a beautiful futurity in the fading Settler histories it recounts. The work is engaged with concepts of learning an Indigenous language, the attempts to listen to copy and record first language speakers and all that we both capture and lose simultaneously. Worlds within worlds within worlds that we learn and speak and fail and dream and miss and mourn and love and live.

BIO
Tania Willard, Secwépemc Nation and settler heritage, works within the shifting ideas around contemporary and traditional, often working with bodies of knowledge and skills that are conceptually linked to her interest in intersections between Aboriginal and other cultures. Willard’s ongoing collaborative project BUSH gallery, is a conceptual and land-based gallery grounded in Indigenous knowledges and relational art practices that seek to transform the colonial gallery model. Willard’s current research constructs a land rights aesthetic through intuitive archival acts.
Beyond “Language”: Indigenous Art & Expression
Featuring Native American artists, scholars, curators and tribal community members.
Native food tastings daily by Chef Freddie Bitsoie, executive chef, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

SUNDAY, June 24
7pm: Hopi-Tewa Pottery Demonstration & Remembering Mark Tahbo.
Dorothy and Emerson Ami, Larson Goldtooth, Deborah Clashin. Krone Library

MONDAY, June 25
7pm: Gallery Talk: Curators Jennifer Vigil and Mique’l Dangeli, guest artist Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie. Parks Exhibition Center
8pm: Opening Reception. Invitational Exhibition, Mother Tongue
Artwork by: Shan Goshorn, Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, Maria Hupfield, Shelley Niro, Alison Marks, Sallyann Paschall, Lyn Risling, Tania Williard, Marianne Nicolson. Parks Exhibition Center

TUESDAY, June 26

WEDNESDAY, June 27

THURSDAY, June 28
12-1pm: Kabotie Lecture Series. Randy Redroad, filmmaker, Through a Mythic Lens: A Native Filmmaker’s Journey. Krone Library
7pm: Film Night. Krone Library

FRIDAY, June 29
7pm: Canadian Inuit Throat Singers, Kathleen Merritt and Charlotte Qamaniq. Welcome by the Mt. Cahuilla Bird Singers. IAF Theatre
SPECIAL THANKS TO

Senior Consultants to the Native American Arts Festival
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Heather Companiott

Native American Arts Coordinator
Kelly Kinder (Yurok)

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