

## MOMENTUM: THE RIPPLE OF ART ACTIVISM FROM IDLE NO MORE

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### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*For Volume VII, Hemisphere deviates from the traditional exhibition review to feature a conceptual review of the Canadian Movement Idle No More by Volume VI Editor-in-Chief, India Rael Young. Under Young's direction, Volume VI highlighted the arts and artists of Idle No More with the Artist's Spotlight Visible Movement: the Arts of Idle No More, which coincided with a round table discussion and an exhibition at the John Sommers Gallery. This review presents Young's perspective on the ongoing practice of Idle No More, which continues to bridge the gap between physical and digital communities to provoke change.*

Since the start of the new millennium, the world has encountered unprecedented environmental and geopolitical events. In response, there has been an emergence of new community action. From the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street, citizens of the world have developed millennial strategies that galvanize dispersed populations around shared concerns. A unifying feature of these movements is their newfound power in digital media. This article reviews the Canadian movement Idle No More through the Aboriginal artists who have deployed the Internet in service of expression.

From the movement's outset in Fall 2012, social media has constructed an intertextual web of relationships between events, images, and texts, which artists and activists alike employed in their favor. The movement's moniker, Idle No More, originated with a hashtag call-to-action by a group of women—Nina Wilson, Sheelah Mclean, Sylvia McAdams, and Jessica Gordon—organizing teach-ins about Bill C-45 around Saskatchewan. Bill C-45 set a new Canadian precedent as an American-style omnibus bill that conflated a host of seemingly unrelated legislative issues, including First Nations treaty rights, immigration, trade, and amendments to economic, environmental, and labor acts. Aboriginal peoples were concerned that the bill usurped treaty rights, threatened Aboriginal oversight of allocated territories and resources, and exposed the Canadian landscape to unprecedented environmental threat.<sup>1</sup> First Nations in Canada began organizing demonstrations opposing new governmental legislation. The physical unifying feature of these community actions was the Round Dance:

a drum dance whose powerful beat and simple steps transcend cultural barriers. Each dance, teach-in, march, and protest was linked in solidarity through the hashtag, and the digital exchange of shared experiences. While Idle No More began with particular resistance to Bill C-45 calls for justice quickly drew attention to the interrelated injustices facing Aboriginal peoples today.<sup>2</sup>

Passed in December 2012, Bill C-45 became the Jobs and Growth Act. With its passing, the women responsible for the first call to action have diversified their strategies. Today, there is no center for Idle No More and it has become a web of connected activities and expressions. As is often the case within Indigenous frameworks, the power structure has decentralized to be shared amongst the community members themselves. Communities and individuals have continued to use the hashtag and associated imagery to thread together concerns shared by First Nations across Canada. Artists have played invaluable roles in establishing visible messaging as the movement has progressed, and the network of community action between artists and activists has grown.

First Nations have had a long history of resistance to imposed external authority, first from the British Crown and later from the government of Canada. As Idle No More originator Sylvia Adams has said:

Like anything, a journey begins somewhere perhaps even before a person realizes their path. Idle No More resistance began long before in different names, different locations through the generations since the arrival of Europeans.<sup>3</sup>

The latest in a deep history of Aboriginal community action, the significant hallmark of Idle No More was an outpouring of solidarity between Aboriginal Nations and likeminded Canadians concerned about emerging federal policies on the environment, education, and treaty rights. Within months, the movement swept the nation, with rallies held throughout Canada and the world, and local communities quickly invoked the title "Idle No More" to relate their regional concerns to the larger call to action. Throughout the fall, winter, and spring of 2012, protests were held regionally, from rural villages to provincial capitals to lawns of parliament. Most visible was the forty-four day ritual fast held by Chief Theresa Spence from Attawapiskat First Nation.

In British Columbia, many nations voiced concerns for the environment, particularly speaking out against Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline, which was and is backed by the federal government. Across the Prairies, communities expressed similar concerns about the Tar Sands. In these areas, destruction to the environment has been tied to devastating health conditions in surrounding communities. In urban centers from Vancouver to Toronto, First Nations women's groups connected the movement to their ongoing call for justice and recognition of violence against Aboriginal women.<sup>4</sup> Each of these regional expressions of resistance united under the common banner of Idle No More.

As the movement grew in breadth, it consolidated around certain kinds of expression. Teach-ins, flash-mobs of round dancers and drummers, and walking journeys became the physical sites for expressions of protest and solidarity. Along with hashtags, graphic emblems and posters digitally announced these community actions and garnered publicity. Round dances were hosted in public places throughout Canada, often in malls, or before local seats of government (Figure 1). Through both mainstream and social media, images, video, and stories of these sites of resistance were shared. Artist Nathalie Bertin saw an aerial video of the New Year's Day round dance at Dundas Square in Toronto on January 1, 2013.<sup>5</sup> The sheer number and moving form of those gathered inspired two works by Bertin: a canvas painting, and a pair of *vamps*, or moccasin tops (Figure 2).<sup>6</sup>

Bertin created the *vamps* specifically for a commemorative art installation organized by another artist, Christi Belcourt. Belcourt was collecting *vamps* from artist friends across Canada to call attention to the missing and murdered Aboriginal women of Canada. When she began her project in 2012, over 800 Aboriginal women had been documented as missing or murdered since 1961.<sup>7</sup> Belcourt, primarily a textile artist, reached out to her artist friends to ask for 600 *vamps* that would symbolically honor the lives of these women. These works would travel as an installation throughout Canada in remembrance, raising awareness about the situation. Quickly, the call spread from friend to friend, and from family member to community member. From its first artist's call, the entire project was crowdsourced through social media. Belcourt recalls, "Within a few months thousands were joined in with the group and beading groups were being formed... In addition to the art, all community organizing, fundraising, and media

## HEMISPHERE

FIGURE 1. Hayden King, *Idle No More Round Dance*, Dundas Square, Toronto, 2012. Image courtesy of the photographer.



FIGURE 2. Nathalie Bertin, *Idle No More*, 2013, felt, beads, thread. Image courtesy of the artist.

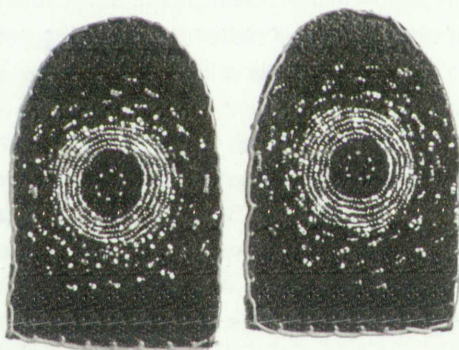


FIGURE 3. *Walking with Our Sisters* Installation, Thunder Bay, ON, 2014. Image courtesy of Christi Belcourt.



relations has been done through social media.”<sup>8</sup> By July 25, 2013, over 1,600 vamps were collected. The exhibition, *Walking With Our Sisters*, will travel through 2018 (Figure 3).

In the fall of 2013, the conservative government and Prime Minister Harper rejected yet another international call to inquiry into violence against Aboriginal women.<sup>9</sup> In September 2013, the United Nations concluded a periodical review of Canada’s human rights record and found the government wanting. The UN requested that the government address several issues facing Aboriginal peoples, including poverty, prostitution, the criminal justice system, and violence against women. This was the UN’s second broad request since 2009. A month later, James Anaya, then UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically called to Canada to address the issue of missing and murdered women.<sup>10</sup> The government took no action. Early this year, the larger Canadian nation was finally shocked into awareness at the disappearance and death of Loretta Saunders, a pregnant Inuk woman studying missing Aboriginal women at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax. Media coverage of her disappearance and death finally prompted the larger nation to recognize the violence First Nations women face. After years of silence on the issue, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police finally released their numbers, listing 1,186 murdered or missing Indigenous women over the past thirty years.<sup>11</sup>

At Ms. Saunders’ disappearance, new calls for solidarity and action became both physical and viral. Hashtags “IdleNoMore,” “INM,” and “MMIW” (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women) rippled through social media. Aboriginal women’s groups hosted teach-ins across the nation, and Belcourt’s exhibition spearheads talks in each community where it is installed.<sup>12</sup> Healing walks occurred in Labrador, Halifax, and across Canada. Bertin, who created the vamps in Figure 2, participates in *Walking With Our Sisters* functions, and has organized a few of her own:

I donated the original “Round Dance” painting to raise funds for WWOS, in addition to the vamps for the actual installation. I lead local workshops or share knowledge on social media when appropriate. I was also quite busy over the past couple of years producing and curating an exhibition of women artists, entitled *Indiginesse* [which opened May 2014]. The purpose of the show

was to educate Canadians about native culture through the lives of contemporary female artists – the women being the original storytellers in traditional society. It was a balanced approach that showed the troubles, hopes and dreams of modern indigenous women's lives without the sense of victimization that seems to be so prevalent in media stories. It was meant as a creative forum to open up discussion, encourage understanding and bridge the gap between Native and non-Native people. It was also meant to show indigenous women in a realistic way, outside the pages of history books.<sup>13</sup>

Bertin's curatorial goals mirror the greater *esprit de corps* of Idle No More solidarity. She and Belcourt's tools for communication—art therapy, collaboration, performances, and teach-ins—make visible the strength and ingenuity of Indigenous women and their communities.

Despite the nation-wide coverage about violence against Aboriginal women, the government remains unmoved. Throughout the fall of 2013 and into 2014, top-down legislation continues to be written, and the nation continues to protest. When Bill C-33, the First Nations Education Act, was announced in the New Year, critics of the act asserted that few Aboriginal communities had been consulted and that the act failed to give authority to the communities themselves, perpetuating a dangerous history of the Canadian residential school system.<sup>14</sup>

In February 2014, Prime Minister Harper, then-Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo, and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt staged the public announcement of Bill C-33 on the Blood Tribe Reserve in Alberta. The irony, inequality, and injustice of the announcement were not lost on First Nations communities. The day of the conference, attendees were met at the entrance with stickers. Those with pre-arranged invitations were given yellow stickers and ushered into the main auditorium of the reserve's school. Blue dots were handed out to those without personal invitations, who were escorted to a gymnasium where screens had been prepared for viewing. At the end of the speeches, the dignitaries were hosted in the gymnasium for a feast. At this time, several guests with blue dots were forced to leave for using their cell phones, either to tweet, text, or for the supposition that they were tweeting.<sup>15</sup>



FIGURE 4. Ossie Michelin, *Amanda Polchies: Wisp of Hope*, 2014, photograph. Image courtesy of the photographer.

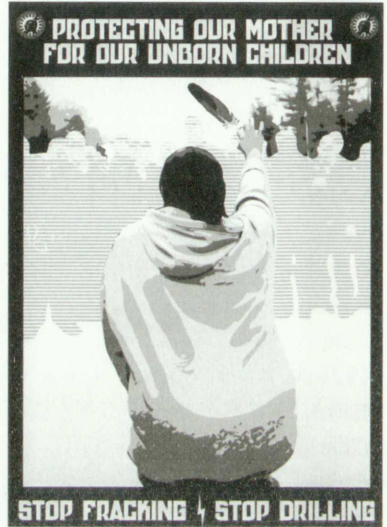


FIGURE 5. Gregg Deal, *Protecting Our Mother for Our Unborn Children*, 2014, digital print. Image courtesy of the artist.

When Belcourt heard about this latest injustice, she immediately took to the Internet to make visible those in solidarity against bill C-33. She posted a call, which was echoed around the cyber-sphere: "I'm claiming the blue dot for us as a mark of pride. We are the 'uninvited' and I reject the essence of what that means in its entirety within my being."<sup>16</sup> Within a day, thousands of Facebook profile pictures showed a person and their blue dot.<sup>17</sup> Belcourt and others circulated historic photos of individuals and groups who had been silenced throughout the colonial period (Plate 13 and 15). Within a few months, Shawn Atleo resigned over the controversy and the act was tabled, where it remains today.

First Nations communities have successfully ignited two other nationwide debates this year, both of them environmental. On the West Coast, First Nations, environmentalists, fisherman, and landowners have banded together to protest the Northern Gateway Pipeline. Across the country, the Elsipogtog First Nation of New Brunswick blockaded their territory from SWN Resources Canada, a resource extraction company. In 2010, the company was granted a license to explore the territory for shale gas, a process that includes seismic testing. The protestors set up barricades on

their territory and asserted that their treaty rights clearly stated a “duty to consult” the community, which never occurred. The community vehemently opposed SWN’s licensing and protested any future resource extraction from their territory – on the land, in the courts, from the jails, and through the Internet.<sup>18</sup> The community actions were organized, and fierce. The media quickly caught onto the vivid imagery of policemen in riot gear, protestors with drums, and blazing fires in the background.

James Jasper, in his tome on the history of protest theory, *The Art of Moral Protest*, has noted an historic tendency to frame protests through the dangers of mob mentality. He notes that “herd” or “crowd” rhetoric has historically been used to argue that collective behaviors are “pathological,” “irrational,” and “prone to violence.”<sup>19</sup> One could easily claim, from the imagery of bonfires and burning cars that circulated during the Elsipogtog rallies, that the media employed just such sensational images to excite a maddening crowd of readers. The Elsipogtog, however, circulated equally powerful images of their own. Perhaps the most iconic was Ossie Michelin’s image of Amanda Polchies: one woman holding back a line of faceless law enforcement with a single feather (Figure 4). Instantly, the photograph went viral.<sup>20</sup>

Gregg Deal, artist and member of the American group Honor the Treaties, saw the image and responded with his own (Figure 5). As he recalls, he was instantly moved by the force of the image. “I stayed up to the wee hours of the morning [finishing the piece]. Once it was done I posted it and went to bed.”<sup>21</sup> By the time he’d awoken, his own artwork was already in heavy circulation. He wanted to make sure the image was available for the Mi’kmaq (the larger affiliation of the Elsipogtog) and those in solidarity, so he redesigned a square image specifically for Instagram and an original poster which can be downloaded in various formats from the Honor the Treaties website.<sup>22</sup>

Gord Hill, an artist from the West Coast of Canada, was also inspired by the protests in New Brunswick. Along with many other Native activism projects, Hill runs the digital zine *Warrior Publications*. His writings and reposts of social and major media coverage helped garner attention for the men who came to be known as the Mi’kmaq Warriors.<sup>23</sup> Over the course of the winter’s blockades, legal battles were fought from both sides and many community



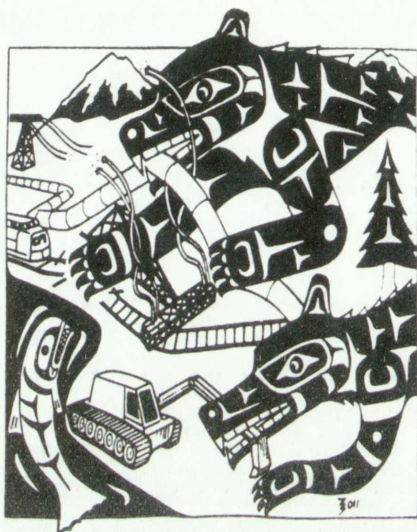


FIGURE 6. Gord Hill, *Untitled*, 2013, digital and textile print. Image courtesy of the artist.

members were jailed. Some continue to serve sentences. Nevertheless, the Elsipogtog have maintained a quiet and determined resistance through the spring of 2014. In the height of summer, the Nation organized a weekend session of protest strategy and civil disobedience training.<sup>24</sup>

Hill printed tee shirts with his designs for the Mi'kmaq Warriors. He has designed and circulated many such shirts as vehicles for Indigenous resistance.<sup>25</sup> He has also printed and digitally distributed artwork that protests the Northern Gateway Pipeline (Figure 6). Enbridge is already a major producer of oil and gas, with large holdings in Canada's "oils sands region," which the company itself described as "the second-largest resource play in the world."<sup>26</sup> Enbridge fights an array of controversies over its resource extractions, yet the most visible has been the resistance to the Northern Gateway Pipeline. The pipeline would run from Bruderheim, Alberta to the remote West Coast community of Kitimat, British Columbia. First Nations have protested the pipeline since Enbridge made its plans public in 2006, while the federal government has openly supported it. Many critics of the pipeline saw Bill C-45 as governmental collusion with the corporation.<sup>27</sup> The bill, which amended the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and the *Fisheries Act*, reduced protected waterways from 2.5 million to sixty-two specific rivers and ninety-seven lakes.<sup>28</sup> Hundreds of rivers and lakes between

Alberta and the coasts became free for commercial exploitation. The bill also strategically altered previously mandated consultation policies with First Nations, which eased external building regulations on First Nations lands.<sup>29</sup> British Columbian First Nations immediately recognized the environmental threats to their territories and, like the Mi'kmaq, have fought their battles in courtrooms and on the land.

In the height of Summer 2014, Kwakwaka'wakw artist and hereditary chief Beau Dick lead Awalaskenis II, a journey from his home community on the Pacific to the federal seat of parliament. It was a journey to connect, share, and educate communities across Canada, as well as a political Nation-to-Nation appeal. Travel to Ottawa took twenty-eight days, with representatives from coastal nations stopping at *reserves* along the way. Sojourners posted updates to Facebook and Twitter, and announced opportunities to meet and share at each place they came to rest, from the grounds of the sit-in at Oppenheimer Park in Vancouver to the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. For this journey, a second appeal, Chief Dick allied with leader Giindajin Haawasti Guujaaw of the Haida Nation in the creation and ceremonial breaking of a copper—a traditional coastal practice performed to shame a community leader who has dishonored their position (Figure 7).<sup>30</sup> As Chief Dick explained to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation after the ceremony:

We're using this [ceremony/journey] to focus on our concerns for Mother Earth and our environment. Being the true stewards of the land we have to step up in our healing, being empowered in modern times to have a voice, and we're using that voice to bring attention to our concerns about protecting mother earth and bringing attention, also, to social injustice. This becomes encompassing, and in a sense, global. There's a lot involved... [The copper] is a symbol of justice, a symbol of balance, a symbol of truth. There's a lot of prestige associated with it. It's like a credit card in the sense that a chief honors anybody's debts. For feasting the distribution of wealth is credited to the copper so the copper becomes more and more valuable all the time... So to us this symbol is a symbol of prestige and it has that value, but it is also a symbol of justice because the people who carry these coppers are the chiefs who are sworn to maintain that balance.<sup>31</sup>



FIGURE 7. Audrey Siegl, Copper Cutting Ceremony, 2014, photograph. Image courtesy of the photographer.

Travelers included representatives from several coastal communities, from the Coast Salish, to the Kwakwaka'wakw, to the Haida. On parliament lawns, the group unraveled a banner quoting Prime Minister Harper's 2008 apology for Canadian residential schools, spoken on the floor of the House of Commons:

"Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm and has no place in our country... The government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly. We are sorry."<sup>32</sup>

In 2008, Prime Minister Harper also issued a formal statement of apology that acknowledged some of the atrocities of the Canadian residential school system, and wrote that the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be instrumental in "forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians."<sup>33</sup> Later that same year, the Harper government critically defunded the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—a governmental panel organized at the recommendation of a ten-year external inquiry to redress systemic Aboriginal trauma—and reduced its duration from twenty-five years to five.

The quotation from the speech was physically employed in the copper breaking ceremony to demand accountability from the Prime Minister and his government (Figure 8). Over tee shirts designed by Dick depicting the graphic image of a broken copper, participants young and old donned dance masks and Chilkat, Button, and Salish blankets. They picked up their drums, and performed the ceremony. After the breaking of the copper, the banner was rolled up and, with the fragment placed atop, it was walked to the doorstep of government where it was left as a symbol of the broken relationship.

Those gathered left as they came, journeying across Canada, and resting with hosting nations in each province. In Ontario and Quebec, the group visited museums containing the objects of their ancestors and discussed repatriation with curators.<sup>34</sup> Major media recorded some events, but global supporters of *Awalaskenis II* used social media to bear witness. Over 3,000 members of the Facebook group watched as photographs and video were posted in real time. As *Guujaaw* expressed it, "When somebody offends you there are a lot of ways to deal with it. But there's the cultural, proper way to deal with it."<sup>35</sup>



FIGURE 8. Audrey Siegl, *Copper Cutting*, 2014, photograph. Image courtesy of the photographer.

From the Haida and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the West Coast to the Mi'kmaq of the Maritimes, those protesting injustices against Aboriginal peoples are working from an Indigenous way of knowing. The methods for expressing this way of knowing are simultaneously ancestral and modern. For Chief Dick and Guujaaw, their demonstration required a balance of authority and responsibility. Within First Nations communities, the beadwork in *Walking With Our Sisters* is as much a symbol of the strength of Indigenous women as it has become a symbol for them.

Through digital media, intentions and actions unite as vessels of Aboriginal cooperation. These vessels have proven powerful enough to rally thousands of individuals across the nation and the world, as artists bridge physical and digital communities to unite, broaden, and strengthen the voices of resistance. And with such demonstrations of strength, changes are ahead. The First Nations Education Act remains tabled, and the "uninvited" continue to demand that their voices are heard. Despite the federal government's continued blindness to violence against Aboriginal women, international agencies are taking notice and calling for action. Most encouragingly, at the end of June the Supreme Court of Canada granted additional lands to an Aboriginal nation for the first time. After a thirty-one year legal battle, the Tsilhqot'in First Nation in central British Columbia was unanimously granted 1,700 square kilometers of historically unceded lands beyond their reserve.<sup>36</sup> As Enbridge's pipeline proposes to cross four territories already under legal dispute with four separate nations, their legal battles become more complex. Art action has contributed not only to the national and international visibility of these issues, but also to the very real moments of change.

To continue to follow Canadian Aboriginal artists is to continue to follow engaged art practices that are reshaping our world. For more Idle No More artwork, see Andy Everson, George Littlechild, Erin Konsmo, Tannish Nielsen, David Garneau, and Aaron Paquette. I would like to thank the artists above, as well as lessLIE, Nanibah Chacon, Wanda Nanibush, and Sonny Assu for speaking with me about their art and activism.

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Somewhere between childhood in Alaska, college education in New York, and peace riots in La Paz, INDIA YOUNG decided activism is best expressed through art. She returned to school to learn the practice of sharing her

passions. In 2011, she graduated from the University of Victoria with a Masters in the history of art and has continued her course as a doctoral student at the University of New Mexico. Ms. Young's current research and curatorship focuses on the spaces of interconnection between Indigenous artists, arts communities, and the larger world. Her work stresses artistic agency as a tool for translations of cultural understanding.

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Mia Rabson, "A guide to the Idle No More movement, treaties, and legislation," *Winnipeg Free Press*. January 16, 2013, accessed July 23, 2014, [www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/fyi/movers-and-shakers-188470781.html](http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/fyi/movers-and-shakers-188470781.html).

<sup>2</sup> Aboriginal peoples in Canada are recognized under various official titles. The term 'First Nations' legally refers to the Indigenous peoples of Canada, excluding Northern peoples. The Inuit, Inuk and related peoples are legally subsumed under the overarching legal term, 'Aboriginal,' or 'Indian,' in relation to the federal Indian Act. Indigenous communities largely refer to themselves through their first languages, and tribal titles.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvia Adams or Saysewahum, "Armed with nothing more than a song and a drum" *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement*. Eds. The Kino-nada-niimi Collective (Winnipeg: Arp Books, 2014), 65.

<sup>4</sup> Sixteenth Annual Dame Nita Barrow Lecture at the Center for Women's Studies in Education, University of Toronto, "Wanda Nanibush: Idle No More: Histories of Indigenous Women's Resistance," *Youtube* video, 1:53:24. December 3, 2013. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cC0q8niYwuo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cC0q8niYwuo).

<sup>5</sup> "Idle No More Toronto Shuts Down Dundas Square -2013 New Years Day," *Youtube* video, 4:29. January 2, 2013. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg9a49V3WAo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg9a49V3WAo).

<sup>6</sup> Wanda Nanibush, "Image Warriors," "Armed with nothing more than a song and a drum," *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement*. Eds. The Kino-nada-niimi Collective (Winnipeg: Arp Books, 2014), 242.

<sup>7</sup> Researcher Maryanne Pearce singlehandedly documented 824 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women; Christi Belcourt, "Our Sisters," Walking with Our Sisters website. Accessed August 10, 2014. [walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/our-sisters/](http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/our-sisters/).

<sup>8</sup> Christi Belcourt, email interview, September 2, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Mike Blanchfield, "Canada rejects UN call for review of violence against aboriginal women," *The Globe and Mail*, September 19, 2013. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-to-reject-un-panels-call-for-review-of-violence-on-aboriginal-women/article14406434/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-to-reject-un-panels-call-for-review-of-violence-on-aboriginal-women/article14406434/).

<sup>10</sup> The Canadian Press, "UN human rights investigator says Canada needs inquiry into missing aboriginal women," *The Globe and Mail*, October 13, 2013. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/un-human-rights-investigator-says-canada-needs-inquiry-into-missing-aboriginal-women/article14870214/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/un-human-rights-investigator-says-canada-needs-inquiry-into-missing-aboriginal-women/article14870214/).

<sup>11</sup> Steve Lambert, "RCMP report on missing and murdered aboriginal women says native women are 4.3% of female population, but 16% of female homicides," *National Post*, May 16, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [news.nationalpost.com/2014/05/16/rcmp-report-on-](http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/05/16/rcmp-report-on-)

missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-says-native-women-more-prone-to-violent-death/.

<sup>12</sup> Announcements for these talks are posted to Walking With Our Sisters Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/groups/walkingwithoursisters/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/walkingwithoursisters/). Accessed September 2, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Nathalie Bertin, email interview, August 6, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Lee-Anne Goodman, "First Nations Education Act Tabled Amid Criticism From Some Aboriginal Groups," *The Huffington Post*, Canada, March 10, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/04/10/first-nations-education-act-bernard-valcourtories\\_n\\_5125937.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/04/10/first-nations-education-act-bernard-valcourtories_n_5125937.html). For the poster campaign from Idle No More see "Graphic Images," Idle No More website. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.idlenomore.ca/graphics\\_images](http://www.idlenomore.ca/graphics_images). Harper has also been heavily criticized for his dismissal of a ten-year public inquiry into residential schools. When the committee made many recommendations as to how to redress a history of wrongs, the Harper government drastically cut funding to the panel convened for such redress, and limited its longevity, from twenty-five years to five. Linda Diebel, "No truth, no reconciliation for aging residential school survivors," *The Toronto Star*, July 23, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.thestar.com/news/canada/2010/07/23/no\\_truth\\_no\\_reconciliation\\_for\\_aging\\_residential\\_school\\_survivors.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2010/07/23/no_truth_no_reconciliation_for_aging_residential_school_survivors.html).

<sup>15</sup> Reports circulated that many who had not brought their phones had been asked to leave on the pretext they were texting. Angela Serritt, "Blue dots becoming symbol for First Nations Education Act resistance," *CBC News*, February 12, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/blue-dots-becoming-symbol-for-first-nations-education-act-resistance-1.2534518](http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/blue-dots-becoming-symbol-for-first-nations-education-act-resistance-1.2534518).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally the David Suzuki has recently announced a tour of the same title, which employs the same blue dot. "The Blue Dot Tour," website. Accessed August 10, 2014. [bluedot.ca/](http://bluedot.ca/). Several celebrities who have already stood in solidarity with Idle No More are slated for guest appearances. Anna Lazowski, "Idle No More gains support from Canadian artists," *CBC News*, January 9, 2013. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/music/2013/01/09/idle-no-more-gains-support-from-canadian-artists/](http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/music/2013/01/09/idle-no-more-gains-support-from-canadian-artists/).

<sup>18</sup> Andrea Schmitt, "Anti-fracking activists denied injunction in Canada," *Al Jazeera America*, November 18, 2013. Accessed August 10, 2014. [america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/11/18/judge-denies-injunctionagainstcanadashalegasexploration.html](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/11/18/judge-denies-injunctionagainstcanadashalegasexploration.html).

<sup>19</sup> James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997), 21; he continues to say, "Most crowd theorists, moreover, concluded that the emotional and creative aspects of protest rendered the protestors irrational," Jasper, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Ossie Michelin, "Amanda Polchies, the woman in iconic photo says image represents 'wisp of hope,'" *Aboriginal Peoples Television Network*, October 24, 2013. Accessed August 1, 2014. [aptn.ca/news/2013/10/24/amanda-polchies-woman-iconic-photo-says-image-represents-wisp-hope/](http://aptn.ca/news/2013/10/24/amanda-polchies-woman-iconic-photo-says-image-represents-wisp-hope/).

<sup>21</sup> Gregg Deal, email interview, July 29, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; Honor the Treaties is an American organization, which promotes Indigenous activism through art, and solidarity with Indigenous concerns. Many artists are involved and their works are all available on the website in various formats. Honor the Treaties website. Accessed 10, 2014. [www.honorthetreaties.org](http://www.honorthetreaties.org).

<sup>23</sup> Gregg Deal, "A Close Look at Two Jailed Mi'kmaq Warriors Who Protested Big Oil in New Brunswick," *Warrior Publications* blog, August 5, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [warriorpublications.wordpress.com/tag/elsipogtog-first-nation/](http://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/tag/elsipogtog-first-nation/).

<sup>24</sup> Canadian Press, "Fracking protesters get non-violent civil disobedience tips," *CBC News*, July 20, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/fracking-protesters-get-non-violent-civil-disobedience-tips-1.2712644](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/fracking-protesters-get-non-violent-civil-disobedience-tips-1.2712644).

<sup>25</sup> Tee shirts as identity markers, and as symbols of solidarity have a long history among West Coast First Nations. Famed artists Bill Reid, and Joe David, among others, have made tee shirts to support community action. See Aaron Glass "Crests on Cotton: "Souvenir" T-Shirts and the Materiality of Remembrance Among the Kwakwaka'wakw of British Columbia," *Museum Anthropology* 31 (Spring 2008): 1-18; and Anna Hoover, "Sounding the Alarm: Fashion STATEMENT: Native Artists Against Pebble Mine," *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas*, 7 (2013): 54-74.

<sup>26</sup> Enbridge Companies website. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.enbridge.com/DeliveringEnergy/OurPipelines.aspx](http://www.enbridge.com/DeliveringEnergy/OurPipelines.aspx).

<sup>27</sup> "Assembly of First Nations States Concerns on Bill C-45 to Senate Standing Committee," Assembly of First Nations website, November 27, 2012. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.afn.ca/index.php/en/news-media/latest-news/assembly-of-first-nations-states-concerns-on-bill-c-45-to-senate-stand](http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/news-media/latest-news/assembly-of-first-nations-states-concerns-on-bill-c-45-to-senate-stand).

<sup>28</sup> Erin Flegg, "Changes to Navigable Waters Protection Act dangerously undermine environmental protection, say critics," *Vancouver Observer*, January 1, 2013. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.vancouverobserver.com/politics/changes-navigable-waters-protection-act-dangerously-undermine-environmental-protection](http://www.vancouverobserver.com/politics/changes-navigable-waters-protection-act-dangerously-undermine-environmental-protection).

<sup>29</sup> Expositor Staff, "Government on path to dissolve First Nation treaty rights, says Madahbee," *The Manitoulin Expositor*, December 7, 2012. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.manitoulin.ca/government-on-path-to-dissolve-first-nation-treaty-rights-says-madahbee/](http://www.manitoulin.ca/government-on-path-to-dissolve-first-nation-treaty-rights-says-madahbee/); Janyce McGregor, "22 changes in the budget bill fine print," *CBC News*, October 26, 2012. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.cbc.ca/news/politics/22-changes-in-the-budget-bill-fine-print-1.1233481](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/22-changes-in-the-budget-bill-fine-print-1.1233481).

<sup>30</sup> For the story of Beau Dick's journey from Alert Bay to Victoria, British Columbia, and for a brief history of copper shaming ceremonies see Mariah Carrillo, Kathryn Manis, Leslie Woolson, "Visible Movement: the Arts of Idle No More," *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas*, 7 (2014), 80, 81.

<sup>31</sup> "Shaming Ceremony on Parliament Hill," *CBC News*, video. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.cbc.ca/player/News/Politics/ID/2478525994/](http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Politics/ID/2478525994/).

<sup>32</sup> "A long awaited apology for residential schools," *CBC Digital Archive*, website. [www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/education/a-lost-heritage-canadas-residential-schools-a-long-awaited-apology.html](http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/education/a-lost-heritage-canadas-residential-schools-a-long-awaited-apology.html). Accessed September 3, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> "Statement of Apology," *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development*, website. [www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649). Accessed September 3, 2014; Diebel, "No truth, no reconciliation."

<sup>34</sup> Tim Fontaine, "Hereditary Chief demands Ottawa museum returns artifacts without bill of sale," *Aboriginal Peoples Television Network*, July 29, 2014. Accessed August 1, 2014. [aptn.ca/news/2014/07/29/hereditary-chief-demands-ottawa-museum-return-artifacts-](http://aptn.ca/news/2014/07/29/hereditary-chief-demands-ottawa-museum-return-artifacts-)



show-bill-sale/; the group also visited the Mendel Gallery in Saskatoon, which unites their cause and actions with the related history of performance art.

<sup>35</sup> "Shaming Ceremony on Parliament Hill," *CBC News*, video.

<sup>36</sup> Amber Hildebrandt, "Supreme Court's Tsilhqot'in First Nation ruling a game-changer for all," *CBC News*, June 27, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2014. [www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/supreme-court-s-tsilhqot-in-first-nation-ruling-a-game-changer-for-all-1.2689140](http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/supreme-court-s-tsilhqot-in-first-nation-ruling-a-game-changer-for-all-1.2689140).