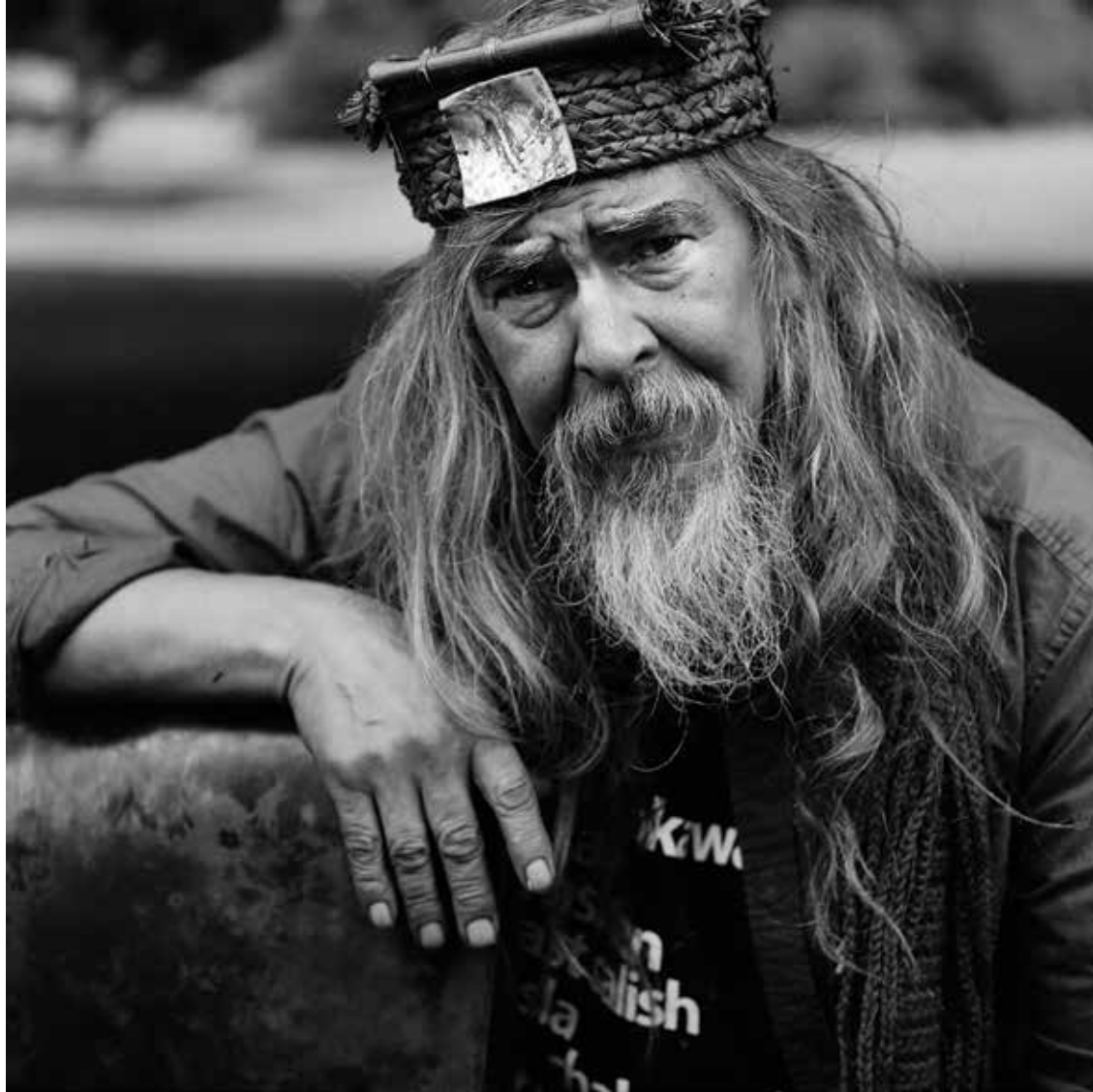




MORRIS AND HELEN **BELKIN ART GALLERY**  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**LALAKENIS /**  
**ALL DIRECTIONS**  
**A JOURNEY OF TRUTH AND UNITY**



We are sincerely grateful to all those who contributed spiritually and financially to the Journey. We thank those who walked with us and those who supported us from home. We thank the communities who opened their doors and sheltered us and bestowed their treasures on us. We thank those who have loaned their sacred objects to us for this exhibition. I send a special thank you to my sister Adiya and to my Auntie Doreen, my pillars of support.

Gila'kasla

**/ Wallas Gwy Um (Beau Dick)**



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The occasion of the exhibition *Lalakenis/All Directions: A Journey of Truth and Unity* at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery is such a profound moment as it is indeed about a timeless journey that we have been on for a very long time. As First Peoples of this country, we have millennia of our own history. Following the arrival of newcomers, we have a shared history that has not been a good one. Reading the words written on Cathy Busby's *WE ARE SORRY*,<sup>1</sup> on which are arranged many of the sacred objects that were taken on the journey from UBC to Ottawa, I am reminded of when I and three other survivors of Indian Residential Schools sat with former Prime Minister Stephen Harper and told him what we wanted to hear in this apology. As I look at this scene before me of the apology overlaid with the masks, drums and regalia, I know that when we discover our own spirit and our own culture, the way we are and the way we see the world, we — just like these objects — will overlay that dark period of history.

We have come so far in a short time in changing the mindset of this country about us as Indigenous peoples and about us as Canadians. Some have used the term “genocide” to characterize the actions of the Government. Right now, seven out of ten Canadians agree with this characterization and, more significantly, seven out of ten Canadians want reconciliation. Together we can create a new way forward towards healing and reconciliation. It is about respecting each other, embracing our differences and diversity, and allowing everybody — and especially every child — to grow up experiencing that sense of value and worth, knowing that every individual has value.

As Indigenous peoples of this country, we have a great deal to teach the world about how we should treat one another and how we should treat Mother Earth. The cultures represented in this exhibition are tools in our toolbox that can help us teach these lessons about equality, justice and care for the environment. I am grateful to Chief Beau Dick Wallas Gwy Um and his beautiful travellers for their willingness and dedication to take on this visionary journey across the country. What they did was courageous, powerful and impactful. Through their journey, they have begun to tell the story about this country and our peoples that must be added onto the layers of truth.

I would like to thank the Belkin Art Gallery for their courage, willingness and insight in allowing this unconventional process to take place. This exhibition is a step towards reconciliation.

As we move forward, I ask you to think about how you are going to carry this message of hope and optimism that we can achieve better things for this great country of ours. Justice can be had and equality is real. This reconciliation that we are moving towards is an undiscovered journey and has to be a new covenant between all of us. We are going to dream dreams that we have never dreamt for ourselves. And finally, I hope that the objects, the sounds and the images in this exhibition will be part of the sacred space that allows us to embrace this knowledge into our hearts and minds.

<sup>1</sup> *WE ARE SORRY* (2008/2013/2015) is Cathy Busby's edited version of Stephen Harper's 2008 apology from the Canadian Government to Indian Residential School survivors in Canada printed on a vinyl banner, and was first exhibited in Melbourne, Australia as part of the City of Melbourne Laneway Commissions in 2009. In its entirety it included an edited version of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the Australian Indigenous people. In addition to the banner, Busby published a pamphlet inventorying the news headlines contradicting the intentions of the apologies and highlighting both Governments' continued lack of commitment to changing their countries' relationships with their Indigenous communities. A second edition of this work was made in 2010 when Chief Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, requested a replica of it for the TRC event at the Winnipeg Art Gallery that year. This edition was gifted to the Winnipeg Art Gallery at the end of the exhibition. The original banner from Melbourne was adapted for display in the UBC Koerner Library in 2013 as part of *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools*, an exhibition organized by the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. The banner was cropped to fit the wall and the remainder was cut into 13-inch squares made available for distribution to visitors. In 2014, at the request of Beau Dick, Cathy Busby gifted the original cropped banner to accompany the *Awalaskenis II* journey to Ottawa. This cropped piece was left on the steps of Parliament Hill on July 27, 2014 along with the broken piece of copper, and a new version was reprinted for the *Lalakenis/All Directions* exhibition.





Kerri Dick, Gyauusteers and other community members, and once the curtains' true purpose was fulfilled at the event, they were hung in the Gallery as a commemoration.

A great many treasures accompanied the travellers and were present at the copper-cutting ceremonies. When *Lalakenis* opened to the public, these objects were carried in a procession to the Gallery and placed by their lenders in a reconstruction of their appearance in Ottawa. Regalia have been assembled, including the pieces bequeathed to Sonny Wallas by his grandmother, gifts that she bestowed along with his fluency in Kwak'wala that he shared during the opening speeches. Surrounding these garments are masks, rattles and medicines, as well as *Namgamala* and *Taaw* and the other coppers that made the trip. As the most senior traveller on the journey, Doreen Fitch kindly loaned the many gifts that were given to her. Arranged in vitrines and laid on the floor are ceremonial objects and medicines cared for by Gyauusteers on the way to Ottawa. In preparation for their placement in the Gallery, Gyauusteers conducted ceremonies in several sessions as a guest of the Museum of Anthropology and he has attended to these sentient beings throughout the duration of the exhibition. Frequently, lenders removed the coppers, pipes and medicines for use in their own community ceremonies, and returned them to the Gallery once their work was complete. There is an unease and a suggested potential in this arrangement, a suspense hovering between previous actions and actions to come. An exhibition is ordinarily a stable and fixed selection of materials, a temporary but complete construct. *Lalakenis* has destabilized such concepts, leaving us to grapple with how to define the activity and presences that inhabit the space. This publication offers visual documentation of what has been gathered in the Gallery, but does not include a comprehensive written catalogue or a conventional list of works: much like the journeys, the masks, blankets and carvings came about through the contributions of many people and present an alternative model of authorship to the individualistic attributions of contemporary art.

This volume is an opportunity to reflect further on the challenges posed by *Lalakenis* and includes contributions that explore diverse ways of thinking about the accumulated presence of the belongings, images and recordings in the Gallery — as a document of a political action or performance, as a spiritual and aesthetic act, and as part of a larger resurgence of ceremony and tradition within Indigenous communities. Wanda Nanibush considers *Lalakenis* in the context of the massive, decentralized and diverse movement of Idle No More, a convergence of Indigenous women acting in resistance to environmental devastation, the attempted genocide through Indian Residential Schools and the imposition of patriarchy on Indigenous cultures through the Indian Act. Organized through social media, the Round Dances that erupted in malls and civic intersections to reclaim the land as Indigenous are also examples of the political potency of reviving embodied ceremony. Charlotte Townsend-Gault takes on the meanings inflected

on the project by the context of the contemporary art gallery, its history and the practices ordinarily found here. Her essay addresses the syntactical and ontological disjuncture posed by the exhibition's aggregation of carvings and cell phone videos, ceremony and performance, document and enactment. Tarah Hogue and Shelly Rosenblum in "Cutting Copper: Indigenous Resurgent Practice" introduce a special program of performances and roundtables in which artists, scholars and theorists came together to respond to both the *Lalakenis* journeys and the complexities arising from the exhibition that aims to document them. In collaboration with grunt gallery, the program follows on the previous work of Hogue and Rosenblum in conjunction with the exhibition *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools*.

There are many people to thank for making this project possible. We are grateful for the inspirational words of Chief Robert Joseph that preface this publication, transcribed from his remarks at the opening of *Lalakenis*. Many, many people collaborated on this project: in particular, those who participated in the two *Awalaskenis* journeys, took photographs and videos, lent us their art and lent us their words. It has been a very joyous one to work on, but also one that is sobering and at times painful. It speaks to the reality that we cannot continue to live in this country and feel we belong to it until there is justice for Indigenous people. It calls for proper stewardship of this land and this planet, without which there will be no society, just or not. We are grateful to Beau Dick for orchestrating *Lalakenis*, for activating ceremony as a way to engage such urgent contemporary politics and for challenging our ways of making exhibitions and defining knowledge.

This book is possible in large measure due to a generous grant from the Audain Foundation. We are proud of our association with the Audain Foundation which has done so much to support the art of this region.

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Wanda Nanibush, Tannis Nielsen and other *Cutting Copper* participants for their thoughts regarding the limitations of contemporary art vocabularies and terminologies. We have substituted "belongings" for "objects" in these remarks; while not perfect, the term "belongings" reveals a connection to a people or place that "objects" fails to do.





THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY / Beau Dick

**It starts a long time ago.** My Uncle Jimmy Dawson was the mentor who shared so much knowledge and gave me guidance throughout my youth. Many of us learned from his teachings. As his youngest sister's boy, I was like his son. When my grandmother died leaving my mom at five years old, my great-grandfather Tom Hum K'it bestowed upon my mother the name Tla Kwa Skum, which could mean *Red Face*, but it could also mean *The Face of a Copper*. My Uncle Jimmy, the eldest, was the one who set me up and gave me the privilege to hold coppers and understand their history.

Once he asked, "Whatever happened to those Haidas?" I said, "What do you mean?" "Well, you know, what happened to them?" That's a funny question, I thought. He came back later at some point and said, "I'm still thinking about it. What happened to them?" "Who?" I asked. "The Haidas." "I don't know," I said. And he said, "I'll tell you."

And he unraveled a story about how our great-grandmother Anislakaw was connected to the Haida people, through her sister Emily who married Albert Edwards. They had a son named Albert Edwards Edenshaw, and that was the start of another lineal bloodline that is held in high regard amongst the Haida. Because of that connection every female that came out of Emily and Albert's bloodline married into another Haida family and eventually they covered every family, because of the population decline. I realized that they are all our family: there was a strong connection and mutual respect. He pointed out the history of one particular Chilkat blanket that ended up on another relative, Nagye Gee, a history that came from Kiusta, from the House of Simeon. Our oral history records how 360 Haida houses vanished overnight, through blankets that were inflicted on them. It hasn't been recorded in history books from our point of view, but it is still fresh in our memory: it's a well-known story amongst us. The number of survivors varied in different accounts, between 500 and 700. Prior to 1863 they were estimated to be over 14,000. They vanished overnight because of the smallpox that was inflicted on them.

My Uncle Jimmy and his sisters were put in residential school as children. He was slightly embittered by that, by the damage inflicted upon our people and he shared with me other things that bothered him. He said, "One day, we'll carve a canoe and we'll take our coppers down to Victoria. We'll paddle right into the harbour and bring them to the steps and I'll break one there." Thinking about it now, it was like an impossible dream, certainly for him. He felt it deep in his heart and never lived to see it. All the guidance that he put on my lap became so valuable throughout my life, going through all the changes that I did.

He said to me one time, "Don't go try to save the world because there's no hope for that, but there's hope for you." It took a while for me to really understand that there was hope for me on an individual level, that I could find some balance and peace of mind in life, some happiness and a sense of purpose. It was important to find that first. And he said, "You learn from people along the way. You'll learn more from people who will teach you how *not* to be, so have some appreciation for them!"

At one point, I gave up on people and said, "OK, it's all about me, just look after yourself, look after your family, do what you do and enjoy it." I had a group of friends who I hung around with in Alert Bay for a number of years. We just listened to our music and carved, did our work, looked forward to upcoming events that we could participate in and contribute our work to. That was my life for several years and it was a really fulfilling time for me. It was isolated — there was no TV, no radio, no computer, no telephone — and it was very comfortable without all of that. We even began to venture out more into the back yard of our territories, investigating where a good place might be to relocate and build a cultural centre for medicine, weaving, carving, survival skills and that sort of thing. I was going in different directions. I didn't bother thinking about the things that irritated me like the politics going on in the world and in our own administrative system.

But one day, I ended up in Victoria, visiting my girls who were then 19 and 20. They are remarkable women: they're high-spirited, very clear, very intelligent, very beautiful, caring and generous. I'm really proud of my girls. Geraldine and Linnea are really close, and they know me quite well, and know what my convictions and views are. This can't help but influence them, and I probably shared with them Uncle Jimmy's idea of going to Victoria a few times in their growing years. So as I woke up on their couch one morning my girls were all excited, I could sense something was in the air. They said, "Dad, come look at this!" And they dragged me off the couch over to the computer to see what was going on in the world. The Idle No More movement was erupting and without saying anything, we looked at each other and they said, "Is it time?" And I said, "Yeah, let's go."

So the girls were most instrumental in making that all happen, it was certainly worth going the distance with them and for them. It felt more like I was supporting them in their movement as activists, as young people on the move today. It felt good to be able to be there with them. Of course, being Beau Dick is an advantage sometimes! Being a well-known artist as well as Hereditary Chief meant that people might pay attention and hear our message. So that was the first journey, walking from the north end of Vancouver Island to Victoria. It was an incredible, amazing journey and there were so many things that happened along the way that were so humbling and so empowering.



THE COPPERS / Beau Dick

Sonny Wallas and Guujaaw holding broken coppers on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photo: Sue Heal.

A sheet of copper — always in this shape — is central to the economic and social system of potlatching. It is a symbol of wealth and power. The metal itself is associated with the wealth of the world beneath the sea. Each copper has its own name, its own history and a value that increases each time it is bought or given away. It carries with it the status of the chiefs who have owned it and stands as a symbol for all previous exchanges. It is spiritual and material. ... “The coppers are real and stay. We are fortunate, where we have come from is wealth.” From supernatural beings, from people who dance with supernatural forces, from the sea, from villages like this one.

Gloria Cranmer Webster<sup>1</sup>

The forms of governance that once worked for us were diminished and gave way to Christianity and to other forms of governance and to the enforcement of other laws. The barrage of change happened very fast here on the Coast. It wasn't very long ago when Alexander Mackenzie first reached the Coast and saw the Pacific Ocean. Our history goes back way longer than that. It is instilled in the oral tradition and entrenched in the deepest meaning of the copper. It becomes a form of identity because of everything that's attached to it, including territorial claims. This becomes very sensitive because, as you know, there were no treaties in British Columbia with this new form of government. Sadly, this governance was enforced on us.

We lived in harmony with nature and developed a sophisticated culture over a long time. We were able to do that because of the abundance that the Creator provided here on the Coast. The Creator gave us the food-gathering times in the spring, summer and autumn so that throughout the winter, we could engage in ceremony, feasting and potlatching.

Prior to contact, how did we keep order? The copper is a symbol of justice. You don't mess with justice: it is the law. We live by doctrines; we have codes of honour and systems of loyalty in our society, and in our secret societies. It is very complex. So all of this is part of the copper system. Even the simple act of putting a name on a child: where does the name come from? Is it valid? Did you just make it up or did you steal it? It has to be validated. And it's the copper that validates it, because there's history attached to the name, and it is protected by that copper.

It's hard to understand that in a sense, the copper is a living being. We're not talking about a sheet of metal, it's much more than that. The sheet of copper is a symbol of something that's much harder to really understand. It's a topic that opens an amazing conversation for those who are interested: the history of coppers and how they've been used in ancient times up until recent times.

I'm lucky that I caught what appeared to be the tail end of this culture that flourished for so long and almost got stomped out in the late 1800s into the 1920s. This oppression continued along, and then finally in the 1960s there came a new vibe in the air. In the meantime, all of the coppers had disappeared, and those old Indian things didn't mean anything anymore. There was the idea that “those days are gone, we have to move on to a modern way of life.” And that way of life didn't include the hierarchy that was created through potlatching, or the claims validated through

potlatching. That stuff didn't mean so much anymore. Passing on names, rites of passage for young men and young women when they come of age: those things were put aside and almost forgotten. A lot of the routines of daily life vanished with modernism and rock and roll and all this technology. It's amazing how consuming that all became for all of us.

I used to sit on my great-grandfather's lap as he pulled up the river in a dugout canoe. Later on he sawed off the end of the canoe and tacked a plywood transom onto it, and rigged up an outboard motor. Eventually, he went up the river on a helicopter. Man was landing on the moon at this time, but my great-grandfather maintained all of those values and understandings and teachings and yet was still excited about what was going on in the world. He lived through the First and Second World Wars, the Vietnam War. He knew what was going on in the world, but he was still really connected to the old ways.

And since his time, we've become less and less connected with all of that, even survival skills. If you took the cheques away from the band members who have been suppressed into submission and been so underprivileged, how are they going to survive? In many ways, the so-called promise of a better tomorrow that was supposed to be provided by this new form of governance didn't happen, in fact quite the opposite. It's hard not to feel victimized by all of that.

Yet I think First Nations people have a real cheerful and enduring spirit that gets them through, a great sense of humour. That all has to do with a way of living and how we interact with each other, the respect and loyalty we give, the trust that's created. Those are important values, and in the copper system they are paramount values. The threat of having a copper broken on you in the old days was terrifying to the point where it could kill you — just because you'd be so terrified by the mere threat. That's how much they believed in its power. It was very much like martyrs in other religions, they believed in it so much. So that's only scratching the surface, because it just gets deeper and deeper every time you scratch on the copper.

The sad thing is that they're all in museum collections, and in private collections scattered throughout the world, and that's not really where they belong. When our group approached the museum in Hull, Quebec, they wouldn't let us in to visit our coppers that were in there. They boast of how many pieces they have in their collection, a small fraction of which are on display for people to see. I don't think that's responsible to steal all that stuff and hide it away. I think it's criminal. And that's again the truth, but conveying the truth gently is challenging. As an artist, bringing the broken copper to go visit the old ones was a gesture that I felt strongly about. Our group was shut out and it was embarrassing — but not for us. I don't know how many coppers they have at that museum. I once saw a photograph of a whole pile of them — so many that you couldn't count them. It's an atrocious thing to have committed that under the guise of “sharing a culture,” of “protecting our heritage.” Protecting it for who? Certainly not for us. And we're busy trying to restore the culture, get that old vehicle running again. That's challenging too — because we're still under attack and it's hard to see, hard to really visualize what I mean by that statement. But we are under attack today: our way of life, our customs, our spirituality and in fact our identity.

22 1 From *Potlatch ... A strict law bids us dance*, 1975. A production of the U'mista Cultural Society; directed by Dennis Wheeler; written by Brian Shein and Dennis Wheeler; produced by Tom Shandel. Vancouver: Moving Images Distribution, 2005.

Overleaf: Beau Dick receiving Audrey Siegl's woven blanket at Parliament Hill, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photo: Franziska Heinze.



... THE COPPER /  
Guujaaw

More than a mystical geometric form  
or a challenging work of metallurgy  
Its function is central to a complex economic system  
whereby in the measure of wealth  
incorporeal properties are more valuable than material holdings  
Influence is attained through respect  
with prestige the return  
gained through the distribution  
rather than the accumulation of wealth  
The value measured in accordance with that given  
This is the weight of the copper.

T'AAGUU

T'aaguu is, in practice, the banking system of our people.  
The necessary potlatch and naming of the copper  
compounds the manufactured value.  
By way of the Copper,  
we invest in the people through the sharing of wealth,  
in turn, raising one's standing in society.  
A copper intentionally broken  
to provoke, obligate or shame another  
can realize a decrease or significant increase in value.  
A copper intentionally destroyed or thrown into the briny deep could trigger an  
intense outlay of property or even bankrupt another.  
T'aaguu provides a very certain medium of exchange  
and secure holdings for investment.



TAAW

At Parliament Hill we opened with prayers for the people and families suffering in  
the Middle East. We followed with these words...

On this day we invoke our culture  
bringing forward a copper ritual,  
seldom seen outside of our homelands  
We bring this copper from the great Pacific where it was washed  
and touched by people of the ocean  
In a journey across this land  
touched by elders and children,  
washed again in the rivers and lakes,  
blessed in Sundance and sacred ceremony  
carried by Powwow dancers  
and touched again by the people of the great plains  
It has been cleansed with prayer, smoke and water  
and brought here to be broken

We name the copper *Taaw*  
in respect for the great life-giving oolichan oil  
in stark contrast to the poison from the Tar Sands

This is our wealth of place, of culture  
and everything that is dear to us  
including life itself  
and all that the great nature provides

With this in mind we break this copper  
at the doorstep of the government of Canada  
with a great sense of celebration

We break this copper  
not as a slight to Canada  
or an insult to Canadians  
who have shown us  
nothing but support and encouragement

In breaking this copper we confront the tyranny and oppression  
of a government who has forsaken human rights  
and turned its back on nature  
in the interests of the almighty dollar  
we do this in accordance with our own laws  
that bid us to look after the earth

Though they have killed us ...we live  
They put us down ...yet we stand  
They deny ...but there is truth

The Sundance that we do lasts four days and four nights. The Sundance is like the mother of the pipe ceremony and all the other purification ceremonies. It's one of the many ways we use the connection of Mother Earth with all of creation.

There are up to 100 pipes laid down, and as Sundancers, we have been taking care of them pretty closely: just like our Hamatsa societies, just like our Painted Face societies take care of and protect entities. As Sundancers, we take care of all these ceremonies, and as men we track the sun all year round. When it comes to that point when it's all lined up again, we go and we break our skin and we make our offering and we have a whole new year again. I'm really grateful to be a Sundancer, because I've learned a lot about myself, about my responsibilities as a custodian of Mother Earth — not as a possession of an unlawful bankrupt corporation called Canada.

So the pipe — to break it down — is the male and the female coming together. The stone is the female and the wood shaft is the male, and when they come together and you put medicine in there (or tobacco if you want to call it that), it is lit with fire and you smoke it. You put that breath out — you don't inhale it unless you need some healing — and that breath connects to everything, all the directions. You have to make sure you know who, what, when, where, why, and then you lift up the pipe, and it is recognized by everything. That's where law is made. Not legalities and policies and procedures, but *law*, where we exercise what we're doing in the here and now, why we're doing it. So the pipe is the life force. There is the rock (the earth), the air, the fire to light it and at the bottom there is moisture from the medicine, like an oil, so the water is represented in the pipe. All together it's the breath of life of all creation — Mother Earth, Father Sky, the Animal Kingdom — the ones that crawl, the ones that walk on four legs, the ones that swim to the bottom of the ocean, and the winged ones that help carry the prayers.

I have the blessing and the privilege of receiving the guidance and direction to carry many responsibilities in ancient rituals and private ceremonies, along with the task of carrying and sharing the traditional songs.

There is so much hurt and pain that we hold on to that blocks us from being who we are meant to be. By taking care of our pipe, doing purification ceremonies, looking after our hollow reed, we maintain our connection with the Creator, who gave us this instrument. It's like a call out from a new vantage point. We're able to express what's happened to us, what we're not letting happen to us anymore, and where we want to go from here as a unified people. Unified with everything: all the life spirits, the animal spirits, the wind, everything. United with the different relatives that carry these ceremonies on around the world, united with them so that

we can all be one, to help take care of our problems, to be there as a support network for one another, peacefully.

These instruments are living forces that need to be taken care of while they are on display in the Gallery. They need to comprehend what is going on. The sacred staff came from the tree of life: it is a really powerful instrument that the Creator has given us. The feathers and fans are like my relatives. The whole continent is represented by these medicines and objects. These pipes and the tobacco come from all around the world, given by tribes for us to carry for them, and they were all there on Parliament Hill in bundles. On our journey, we did a pipe ceremony every morning, every noon and every evening. It had to be constant, because chaos was always trying to come in.





As a young Indigenous woman, I often felt a piece of my identity was missing. There was a calling I couldn't answer — an all-knowing voice telling me that life is much bigger than this. All the noise — the constant humming around us — makes it difficult to hear sometimes, but it's there and in certain moments becomes more clear to us: we are each born with a purpose.

In my childhood, I experienced a lot of anguish, leading me to victimize myself. The trauma made it easier to live in darkness. I allowed what had happened to me to dim my light, causing me to be quite self-destructive, especially in my teenage years. I realize now that much of what haunted me were pain patterns, first experienced by my ancestors and many of my elders during colonization. The abuse, the drug and alcohol use, the feelings of inferiority were all a trickle-effect of suffering carried from generation to generation, until all of a sudden I was in a position where I must overcome the tremendous accumulation of pain.

The *Awalaskenis* journey created an opportunity for me, and many others, to rise and find each other. We became leaders and matriarchs for our families. We became examples to our communities, particularly those on Vancouver Island. In fact, as we moved from town to town our numbers grew. The support we received was prodigious. We were sheltered and fed and gifted. We were creating magic. There was an enlightenment that was hard to fully understand at times, yet many stood behind us, and a lot of people beside us, knowing that the journey we embarked on was of such great importance that it may be hard to grasp its meaning in its entirety.

The final day of the journey, February 10, 2013, was quite possibly the most promising of all days. Hundreds of people joined us at Goldstream Park for our final walk to the Legislative Buildings. The buzz in the air was unimaginable as we marched down the highways, then the streets of Victoria. The people were in good spirits: laughing, drumming, singing, meeting and sharing. Every so often we could hear the cry of our warrior, my sister Geraldine, guiding us. There were representatives from so many different cultures, I'm sure if I tried to name them all I'd miss a few.

Arriving at the steps of the Legislative Buildings was more astounding still. There were a few thousand people waiting and celebrating our arrival and, more importantly, the stand against the Provincial Government we were about to make. We had to fight our way through the crowds as everyone moved in, enveloping us in gratitude. Some people were moved to tears, including myself. There were cameras everywhere, to record what would be an important moment for so many. A lot of people had a voice that day and each person something special to contribute. Every speech made and gift received propelled us, further uplifting us, leading us to the copper breaking.



When it finally came to the copper-cutting ceremony, there was stillness around us, a peacefulness in hearing the Hamatsa cries and stone hitting metal. Once completed we were all overwhelmed with many feelings, but the one that stands out to me the most is relief. An incredible weight had been lifted. Life, for me, was changing. There marked a new beginning.

Perhaps the journey had just begun. And so it was proven in the summer of 2014, when a Haida chief, Guujaaw, decided to embark on another journey with his family copper to take a stand against the Federal Government on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Inspired people inspire people. It's unfortunate that responsibilities in the conventional world prevented me from being there, but the true spirit of my being had been awakened once again. A fire has been started, burning brightly in all its glory, that cannot be put out. It is time that we cleanse ourselves of our dreary pasts so that we may move forward with a unity that had nearly been lost after contact.

It is then we realize the importance of culture and its ability to unite the people and restore our values. Two very important things in the Kwakwaka'wakw culture are respect and responsibility. There is a strong sense of community amongst our people, knowing that each person has their own abilities to contribute and that we must coexist in togetherness. Four poles connected by four beams hold up our big houses and if just one should be unsteady the entire framework might collapse. After having much of our culture stripped away from us, leaving us naked and vulnerable, some of these old ways and ideas have been forgotten. It is through our sacred ceremonies that we are reminded of the strength we come from — of the flourishing people we once were.

Therefore, the copper becomes a symbol of dignity, integrity and perseverance. The copper cutting signifies breaking away and elevating, and in this case the meeting of old ideas with new ones. The copper-cutting ceremonies convey a type of indescribable fulfillment that brought power back to the people of many nations, conceivably becoming pivotal moments in our history.



# Awalaskenis I

Quatsino to Victoria, BC  
February 2013

QUATSINO, BC  
Together with his daughters,  
Linnea and Geraldine, supporters,  
and Idle No More organizers, Beau  
Dick begins his journey to Victoria

February 2, 2013 ● Quatsino, BC

Campbell River, BC ●

Comox, BC ●

Qualicum, BC ●

Nanaimo, BC ●

Chemainus, BC ●

Duncan, BC ●

Victoria, BC ●

February 10, 2013

VICTORIA

The Kwakwaka'wakw copper  
Nunmgamala is broken on the  
steps of the BC Legislature

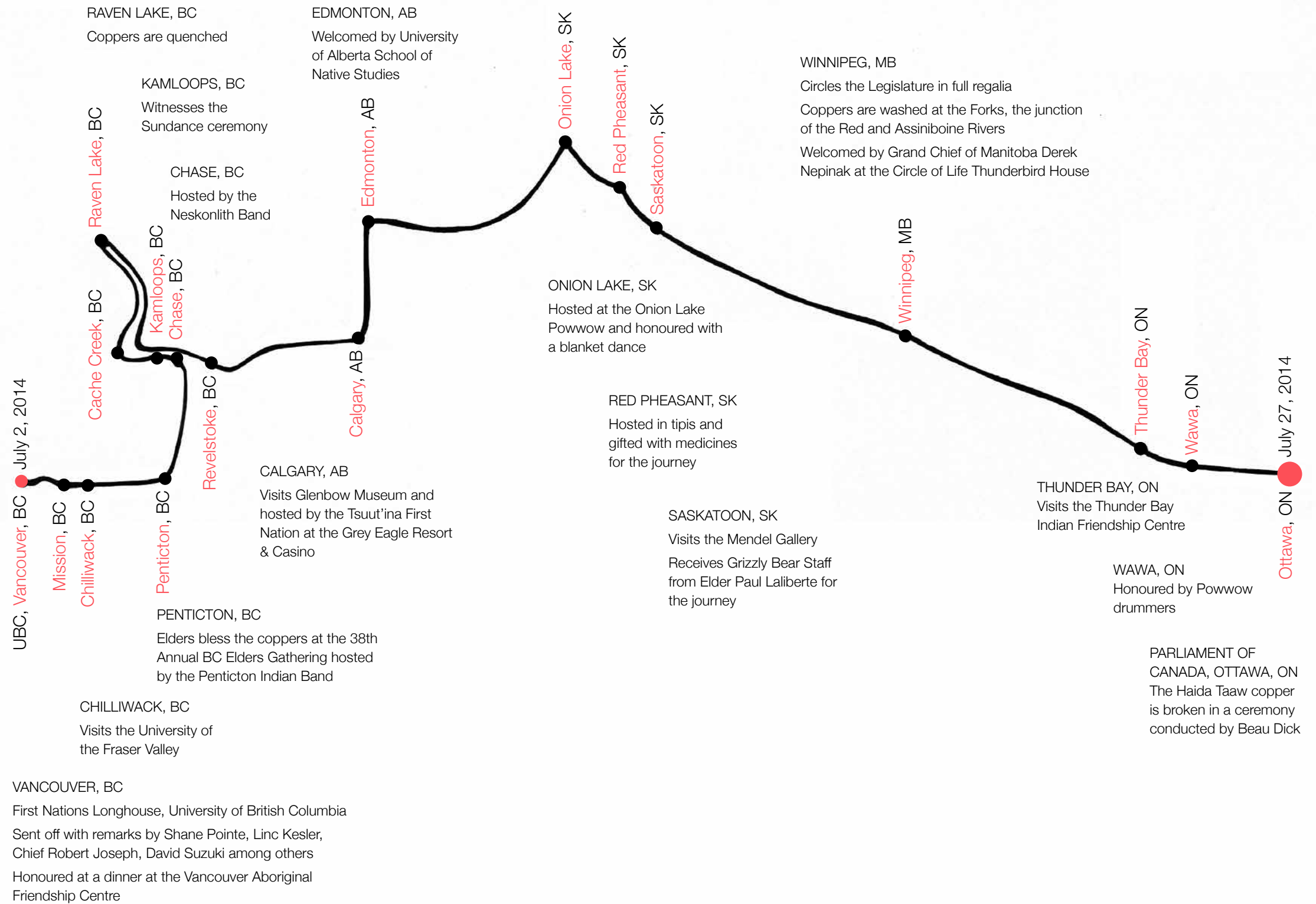






## Awalaskenis II

Vancouver, BC to Ottawa, ON  
July 2014





Opposite: Procession of coppers along West 10th Avenue following their sendoff at UBC, Vancouver, July 2, 2014. Photo: Sonny Wallas.

Above: En route from UBC to Ottawa, July 2014. Clockwise from top left: EJ Mack; Sonny Wallas; Doreen Fitch.

Photos: Sonny Wallas (top); Greg Fitch (bottom).





44 Washing the coppers at the fork of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, Winnipeg, July 23, 2014.  
Photos: Greg Fitch (top); Sonny Wallas (bottom).

Adiya Dawson (top left); Doreen Fitch (top right); at the Manitoba Legislative Building, Winnipeg, July 24, 2014.  
Photos: Adiya Dawson (top); Greg Fitch (bottom).



46 Audrey Siegl at the copper-breaking ceremony, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photo: Franziska Heinze.



47 Greg Fitch setting out thunder sticks for the copper-breaking ceremony on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photos: Franziska Heinze (top and bottom left); Sue Heal (bottom right).





Above, from top: Greg Fitch, EJ Mack and Audrey Siegl, Stan Humchitt at Parliament Hill, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photos: Franziska Heinze.

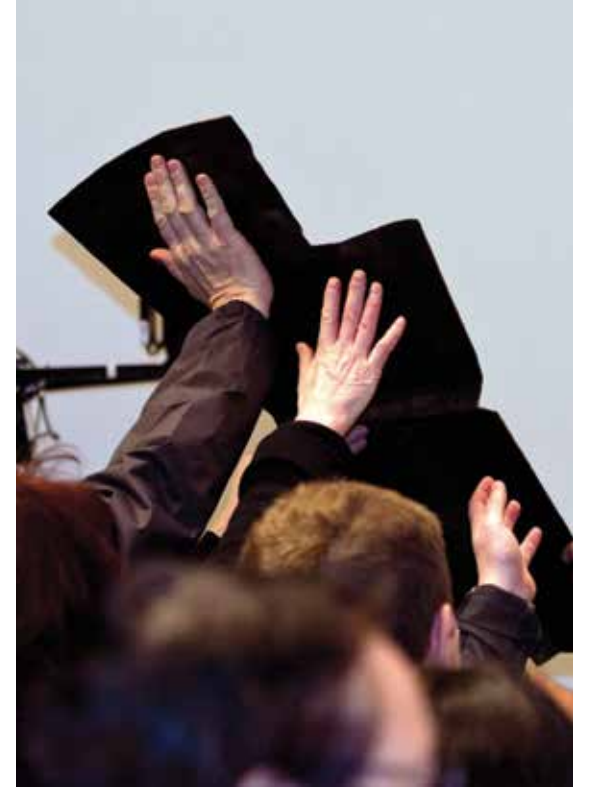
48 Opposite: Gwaii Edenshaw, Guujaaw and Chris Campbell breaking the *Taaw* copper, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photo: Sue Heal.



Opposite and above: Bringing the broken pieces of the *Taaw* copper to the foyer of the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, July 27, 2014. Photos: Franziska Heinze.

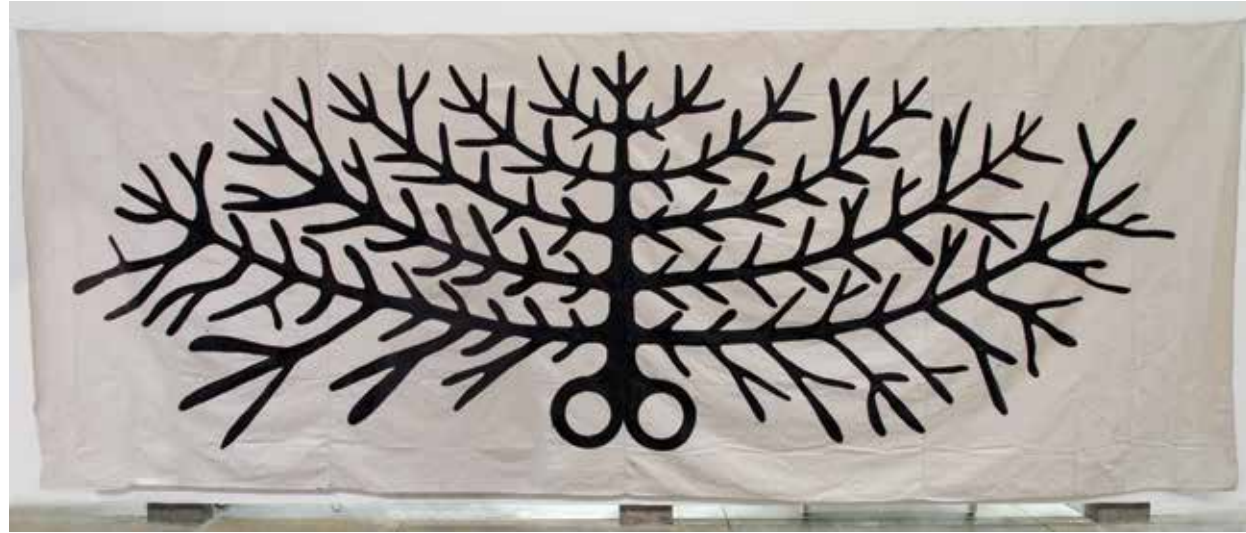












Above: Ceremonial curtains created by Kerri Dick, Gyaauusteess and community members first unveiled at the opening feast, University of British Columbia AMS Nest, January 15, 2016, now hanging in the *Lalakenis/All Directions* exhibition at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, January 16-April 17, 2016. Photos: Michael R. Barrick.

Right: Greg Fitch with Raven Mask at the opening reception of *Lalakenis/All Directions*, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, January 16, 2016. Photo: Sharon Eva Grainger, Dos Polacas.







**THE COPPERS CALLING:  
Awalaskenis II: Journey of Truth and Unity / Wanda Nanibush**

On July 27, 2014 Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Beau Dick's caravan of 22 First Nations activists, artists and spiritual leaders ended *Awalaskenis II: Journey of Truth and Unity* at Parliament Hill in Ottawa — exactly one year after massive national actions demanded the Government live up to promises made in its 2008 apology for Residential Schools. These actions revived ceremonies birthed from this land now called Canada, and involved tens of thousands of Indigenous peoples, settlers and newcomers, activated by the international movement #IdleNoMore. A massive, diverse and decentralized movement, #IdleNoMore's heart lay in the love of the land and waters that had sustained First Nations cultures from time immemorial. Linking the threats to the land we call our first mother — from resource extraction, development projects, climate change, greed and the destruction of traditional governance and ceremony — was central to #IdleNoMore.

Dick's journey to break the Haida *Taaw* copper continues this critical reawakening of Indigenous ceremony to protect the earth. It is significant that the copper breaking was performed on a huge banner printed with text from the apology for Residential Schools delivered by Stephen Harper on behalf of Canadians.<sup>1</sup> Residential Schools were central technologies of assimilation, or more correctly, cultural genocide, or just plain genocide. Assimilation is the process of becoming or forcing an individual or a group to become part of a country, society or culture. The word itself does not capture the violent nature of assimilation policies that targeted for extermination all Indigenous cultures born from this land. This centuries-long imprisonment calling itself education involved negligent homicide and in some cases the intentional murder of Indigenous peoples, as well as the continued burning shame we have internalized towards our traditions, ceremonies and languages. The copper-breaking ceremony gives this shame back to those who should rightly feel the shame: the Government of Canada and, by extension, the citizens who allow First Nations extermination policies to continue.

All those who participated in *Awalaskenis II* were touched by state violence and its continued traumatic effects. Musqueam First Nations activist Audrey Siegl explains her reasons for joining the caravan:

My mother was only 4 when they took her. They kept her for 12 years. The long reaching intergenerational effects have yet to be healed...they have yet to even be truthfully acknowledged. My mother is a strong, feisty, beautiful woman who has survived the unimaginable horrors of IRS. I am on this Caravan to use my voice to restore the dignity, value & respect to all First Nations women, including myself. I have felt worthless & invisible my whole life. I am not alone in feeling that way. I will be cutting one of my family's most valued possessions. A weaving my Auntie made in the 80's when the women in our community were reclaiming & reviving our ancestral weaving practices. I will cut that weaving to show the disgrace Harper & Canada has treated our women with. In several years, I will gather those who hold the pieces of the weaving and we will sew it back together. It will always be obvious where it was broken, but it will also be obvious where it was mended. I am on this journey to find healing for my Maman, so she can feel peace in this lifetime.<sup>2</sup>



The devaluation of First Nations women is rooted in the devaluation of our cultures and the destruction of the land. To make a long story short: the making of Canada involved dispossessing our peoples of their traditional governance systems in which women had power. Our governance structures had to be broken in order for the land to be stolen. Poverty was instituted through the elimination of our food sources and the removal of our people to reservations, and maintained through segregation, incarceration and more land theft through the breaking of treaties. Patriarchy was instituted in our communities through the paternalistic Indian Act, through which generations of our children were incarcerated in Residential Schools. The schools traumatized generations, teaching the violence that we now do to ourselves. Segregation, land theft, removal of our children, incarceration, patriarchy: these all still continue. Destruction of the land is the destruction of our cultures, cultures that honour women through egalitarian, matrilineal or matriarchal societies. The colonial wheel turns and yet we still find the strength to fight — to fight with our ceremonies.

Dick reminds us that Harper lied when he said “we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.”<sup>3</sup> After 2008, the Government continued to enact further harmful policies by cutting funding to First Nations organizations, scapegoating First Nations governments with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act,

deregulating our waterways, increasing resource extraction in our territories, giving multinational companies permission to ignore our constitutional rights, extinguishing Aboriginal title in land claims negotiation, furthering patriarchy, ignoring treaties, conducting secret trade negotiations and refusing an inquiry into the shameful number of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. Collectively these policies continue the legacy of “assimilation” or genocide.

This matter of life and death is held in our bodies. The beauty of our governance systems is the way in which the body is accessed through ceremony: we do not speak it, we perform it. The copper-breaking ceremony, revived by Beau Dick in 2013, releases the pain and trauma held in the body through the intense physicality of breaking the copper shields, a very difficult task. The sound of the men’s roaring lamentation as they smash the rock cutter against the copper is filled with anger and the grief just beneath it. My body connects to theirs, and all of ours to the ancestors, in a long line of actions that we conduct so that future generations do not experience what we have endured. When the broken piece of copper was laid at the Government’s door, it was a political act of creative sovereignty, enacting our responsibility to protect our first mother from fracking, tailing ponds, pipelines and clear cutting.

Dick along with Guujaaw, the former president of the Haida Nation and the spiritual leader who made the *Taaw* copper, help us to recognize the coppers as a form of governance, as a symbol of justice. Breaking these coppers, these living beings, is a drastic act that responds to the breaking of our laws. As a riposte to Canada, breaking the coppers highlights the nation’s absolute failure to act justly where Indigenous people are concerned. Dick and Guujaaw assert the validity of our laws, which, as history teaches us, may be the only laws that will secure a future for us here on earth. Breaking our political power in the early 1800s began the erosion of our ways, cultural practices that guarantee the safety and prosperity of our two-spirited people, women, children and men. Residential Schools dispossessed us of our families, separating children from everyone and everything that would secure for them any measure of success: love, colour, touch, family, language, self-esteem, security, knowledge, spiritual integrity, individual expression and a life without constant fear. Against these odds our people’s absolute refusal to give up being who we are shows a truly heroic strength, and feeds the celebratory aspect of the copper-breaking ceremony. We never grieve without also revelling.

#IdleNoMore Round Dances also had this quality. Between the winter of 2012 and 2014 one of the largest Indigenous-led social and political movements broke out across Canada under the hashtags #IdleNoMore and #RoundDanceRevolution. This movement captured the growing discontent with the anti-environment, pro-resource extraction policies of the Conservative Government. Four women in Saskatoon organized a teach-in on the omnibus budget Bill C-45 under the name Idle No More.<sup>4</sup> Those three words resonated with many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who turned it into one of the most tweeted terms in 2013 and immediately connected it with other social media driven revolutions like #ArabSpring. Tanya Kappo, who first used the hashtag, movingly articulates this:

I remember going to the round dance at the West Edmonton Mall — it was massive — the amount of people who showed up to drum, the people that came to sing and dance or just be there was incredible. The power and energy that was there, it was like we were glowing, our people were glowing. For the first time, I saw a genuine sense of love for each other and for ourselves. Even if it was only momentary it was powerful enough to awaken in them what needed to be woken up — a remembering of who we were, who we are. ... the non-Native people at the mall that day ... had no choice but to ... really see us.<sup>5</sup>

As one of those who organized Round Dances in Toronto, I second this characterization. The movement quickly spread worldwide with groups posting videos of their Round Dances. While the original Round Dance is a ceremony often performed to move from mourning to celebration, as a flash mob it became a way for people to connect with each other and bring their hearts into a political movement. The drum is at the centre of the Round Dance and represents the heartbeat of our mother, the earth. This universal heartbeat is connected to each person because it is the first sound that each child hears in their mother’s womb. People gathered in shopping malls and streets to dance together in protest against the destruction of our first mother, the earth, and our lifeblood, the water. Acting without permission, we reclaimed Canada as Indigenous land. With or without permission or recognition, Indigenous people are moving forward. Our lands, and our act of claiming them by placing our bodies on the line to protect them, are precisely where and why capitalism is having its last stand. Flash mob Round Dances make this claim very visible and bring to life a temporary unity in the circle that is formed from the clasped hands of all the dancers.

In order for our struggle to be a less painful one, Canadians must give things up. One of the most basic actions Beau Dick calls for is the return of our coppers, drums and other spirits held hostage in museums worldwide. Most often gained through the banning of governance systems, especially the potlatch and Sundance, their return would aid the resurgence of ceremony in our communities. That would be partial justice. The land — that will be the larger justice.

1 The banner referred to is by artist Cathy Busby (*WE ARE SORRY* [2008/2013/2015], vinyl billboard). For more information on this artwork, refer to Note 1 on Page 10.

2 Accessed January 2, 2016, <http://www.timlouis.ca/2014/07/24/please-support-aurdrey-siegls-awalaskenis-ii-journey-of-truth-unity-caravan-to-ottawa/>.

3 Accessed January 10, 2016, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649>.

4 The Idle No More movement began as a thread of emails between four women from Saskatchewan - Jessica Gordon, Sylvia McAdam, Nina Wilson and Sheelah McLean, who decided to make a “sincere effort to make some change,” <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/being-idle-no-more-women-behind-movement>, accessed February 9, 2016.

5 Tanya Kappo with Hayden King, “‘Our People Were Glowing’: An Interview with Tanya Kappo,” in *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement*, ed. Kino-nda-niimi Collective (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2014), 70.



**LALAKENIS: MODE AND SITUATION**

**Charlotte Townsend-Gault**

Nuu-chah-nulth people participated in the Dominion Day Parade at Port Alberni in 1929. Chief Dan Watts (far right) carries a sign saying, "We Are The Real Native Sons." This was in response to another float belonging to non-Indigenous people that was titled, "The Native Sons of Canada." James Rush is on the roof of the truck's cab wearing a bird headdress. Also pictured (left to right) are: Rochester Peter, Porter Ned, Mrs. Seymour Callick, Mrs. Doctor Ned, unidentified people, Mrs. James Rush. Photo: Joseph Clegg. Courtesy of the Alberni Valley Museum.

*Lalakenis/All Directions: A Journey of Truth and Unity* has made it possible to assemble the culturally not-quite-congruent in an art gallery, and in the assembly to take risks which are not the risks-as-usual of contemporary art. If *Lalakenis* is thought of as a mode as well as a title, it is one that situates actions and objects specific to Indigenous cultures in the space of western culture at a moment in Canada's history when the extent to which power relations between Native and non-Native have been abused is unmissable. *Lalakenis* brings together the tangible and intangible consequences of a journey: looping videos reiterate the ceremonial but very public breaking of coppers, and in doing so record that not everything about them was publicly knowable. It includes memories of public performances, which bear some comparison with performance art. As a mode it involves joining — if tacitly — anxious current debates as to whether Indigenous masks, rattles, talking sticks, drums, bundles, feathers, are belongings, possessions, treasures, gifts or something else altogether; whether the meanings of such things can or should be named, or whether they *mean* what they *are*. *Lalakenis*, the mode, the project, also asks whether, given the conventional permissiveness of an art gallery, its modernist credentials and allowance for contestation, the need for protocols specific to a culture or a ceremony has been suspended.

#### **Freedom of assemblage**

Where the terms of one culture's language struggle to interlace with the ontologies of another, a description of the *Lalakenis* assemblage in the Belkin Art Gallery requires, at least in English, a free melding of nouns and verbs. The carefully arranged conglomeration running through the centre of the Gallery brings together the long-held treasures of lineages, both Kwakwaka'wakw and Haida, their power to act and the traces of their action. *Lalakenis* arrays coppers with their capacity to challenge and shame, along with masks whose purposes have been adjusted. Here, because they welcomed the coppers as they passed through their territories, are possessions associated with the Sundance of the Plains peoples, Lakota and Sioux, and the Native American Church of Canada. It brings together evidence of ceremonies and performances, of invocation, dancing and exhortation, of political gauntlet-throwing, actual and metaphorical. Various gifts are here with the reciprocity that they embody. The broken coppers imply their absent fragments, a way of shaming the political system that once banned them. The treasures, the possessions, the belongings, aura unevenly distributed, are made to belong together to make common cause. They have been repurposed, allowed the agency that they are believed to have, or that one might learn that they have, if willing. Disjunct ideas about the animate and inanimate are at work. If, from some quarters, permissions and translations have been withheld, the capacity of the contemporary art gallery to be permissive, to encompass contestation, to allow meaning experiments, swings into action. Such a gallery's remit has been likened to a form of allegory with its "appropriation and depletion of meaning, fragmentation and dialectical juxtaposition of the remnants: and emphatic separation of signifier and signified."<sup>1</sup>

The power that has accrued to the modern art gallery to allow "anything" to happen within its walls, including taking the walls down, here allows other powers to take over with an excess of meaning which the gallery cannot corral. Beau Dick and Guujaaw use this situation strategically, advancing their culturally specific political goals by asserting the power of their own culturally specific devices. As these objects and representations circulate through widening spheres, what they mean, how they mean and to whom passes out of supervision, beyond control. This can cause disquiet. *Lalakenis* occurs at a moment when essentializing Indigenous cultures, an insistence on cultural exactitude and protectionism, a "purification discourse" as Bruno Latour might say, is making itself felt.<sup>2</sup> This, as Audra Simpson might say in turn, is exactly what is needed to reconnect the "interruptus" that colonialism drove through Indigenous lives and cultures.<sup>3</sup>

The history of coppers for the Kwakwaka'wakw, the Haida, the Tsimshian — of their origin, ownership, display, transmission and sometimes their breaking — is a long one. Marking the apogee of a hierarchy, the status of a chiefly copper is such that its very display is a powerful action. It can honour, it can shame, it can settle a dispute. Unsurprisingly, the history of cutting coppers, and their frequently cutting consequences, has not been without internal controversy.

The audience may not know all or any of the histories and protocols through which a copper acquires its power. Some in the audience will know that they do not know. But in any case the rules, Kwakwaka'wakw and Haida, are being contravened, knowingly. That is, they are being bent, if not broken. In one sense this is risky, transgressive. It is here that there are provocative and productive links not just with performance art but with a manoeuvre that the mid-century Situationists called *détournement* — a "situation" devised to overturn a different kind of situation. The oppositional politics that subtend *Lalakenis* confront one power with another. Coppers are used to disgrace the Canadian Government's disgraceful abuse of its powers. Yet even in showing up the catastrophic effects of misunderstanding, *Lalakenis* acknowledges the risk of being misunderstood as yet another Native spectacle.

The copper, with the potlatch, acquired wider currency through the writing of Franz Boas, subsequently influencing Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Georges Bataille who interpreted the potlatch as a countervail to capitalist accumulation. By some counts this take-up transformed the procedure beyond recognition. Yet in the recorded actions and accumulations displayed before our eyes the transformation continues, as Indigenous individuals deploy the copper's value to shame and to provoke and to activate, taking a risk in extending its reach.

The great bird masks associated with the *Hamatsa* went on the journey. Their fearsome appearance, the distinctive whooping cries, and the clatter and clack of their beaks as they swoop around have the power to tame and recover. Assembled here, their beaks have now been bound, restrained as they should be when not in action. Does their place in the Gallery's assemblage neutralize their potential, clip the wings of the imaginative flight, limit their renowned power to contain and control the disruptive power of the *Hamatsa*?

Knowing that there is a protocol — and that it should remain unknowable to some, to most — contributes to the frisson, the possibility of transgression even, that connects a tradition of performance, bound by pre-existing rules, with a western performative tradition that imagines itself as bound by none. To the uninformed spectator it makes no difference. Beau Dick is making a conciliatory offer to level the uneven field of knowing and not-knowing. But it may be objected that the kind of taxonomies and rules that are being tampered with here — being culturally specific — are of a different *kind*. Is it the case that, even so, the modernist art gallery protects and proclaims rule-breaking, absorbing it into its own elastic protocols?

The Belkin Art Gallery has its own history, specific to British Columbia, of accommodating traces of *détournement*. Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's *Born to Live and Die on Your Colonialist Reservations* (1995); *The Named and the Unnamed* (2002), resonant remains of works performed and un-performed by Rebecca Belmore; *Backstory* (2010) where the *thliitsapilthim* of the Nuu-chah-nulth were allowed into the Gallery by their owners, for a period of time, making an exception to the protective strictures which keep them hidden from sight when a ceremony/performance is over. *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools* (2013) worked in a different vein, bringing together work by diverse hands all of them exposing the transgressions of church and state.

### Ceremonial

These words form the epigraph to Leslie Marmon Silko's 1977 novel *Ceremony*:

What She Said:  
The only cure  
I know  
is a good ceremony,  
that's what she said.

Arjun Appadurai, theorist of the post-colonial, said we inhabit “a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios.”<sup>4</sup> But he also thinks that the “imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order.”<sup>5</sup> Supposing he is right gets us away from appropriation anxiety and the persistent thrall of noble savage(ism). “Beau Dick is going to break a copper.” The idea as it hit social media in early 2013 emitted shock waves: breaking a copper in public would either break a taboo or set a new precedent, or both. Questions arose about status, rights and correct protocols around this unprecedented public enactment of a chiefly move centred on a ceremonial object, that doubles as the objective of the ceremony. The presence, the implication of an audience, has always been an endorsement. But would *any* audience do? The performance/ceremony — rather than being central to a potlatch — was to be the culmination of a walk from Alert Bay, the home of Dick's Namgis people, to

an Idle No More rally in Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. Part of the intent was to draw attention to the plight of the West Coast salmon and to protest fish farming. On a YouTube video Dick described the plan, and the historically prescribed gestures, but contended that the event would not be filmed. Nevertheless, a video was posted almost instantly, showing the ceremonial cutting taking place in the midst of a group of people in regalia. Some of the participants were making the moves and the sounds associated with the *Hamatsa*. Once amongst the closely guarded rituals of the Kwakwaka'wakw, performed only by those with inherited rights to do so, the *Hamatsa* “dance,” its masks and regalia, becomes the public face of the culture. Similarly, by going public through the auspices of a respected Native artist, the copper breaking opens up long withheld, and long protected ceremony, arguably expanding the idea of Native performance art.

### Performance

“Performance” involves, at minimum, a performer and a spectator. The relationship between the active (performer) and the passive (audience) is seldom simple. Performance art puts the emphasis on being there, on embodied presence, rather than just looking. The spectator, a person with a perspective, is part of the action, is implicated, and becomes a participant. The point is that the artist makes this move as an invitation of sorts that means something in social and political terms. James Luna's *Artifact Piece* (1987) confounded the distinction between looking and being there — it has acquired iconic status precisely because this icon, this particular “museum Indian,” could eventually get up and walk away. It was the audience who were trapped by their presumptions and prejudices. An invitation to participate in the process may also be a rebuke: Luna's invitation ridiculed the trope of the safely “dead” Indian.



Native performance artists often play with “signs” of Native-ness: but equally they play with their audiences’ readings and misreadings of these signs. They are playing to the “issues,” social, political, economic, embedded in the signs, and so to the ontological disjuncture, the essential difference inherent in Native/non-Native relations. Often their performances are about the tormented process of defining “Native” and “art,” and the blur between performing self and performing culture, a blurring that the internet has only accelerated. Now, using the terms “performance” or “interaction” seems easier than the disagreed-upon term “art.” Inventive energy, unforgotten history, wit and art world savvy (but not too much) distinguish Native performance art. It is a paradoxical form: life is a performance; history is a public secret; audiences may be Native or naive, neither or both. Did Beau Dick’s initial and unprecedented public copper breaking outside the Legislature in Victoria, during an Idle No More demonstration in February 2013 — historically a high stakes status move for the Kwakwaka’wakw — qualify as performance art?

To get at some of the contradictions: ask whether one needed to be there in order to respond or to have anything to say about it; ask whether distinction between performance of self and performance art was blurred; take into account the material traces left after the performance; and ask who the spectators were expected to be, and what was expected of them. To whose edicts do you turn to frame such provocations: Gerald Vizenor, Jolene Rickard, Jimmie Durham, Paul Chaat Smith, Amelia Jones, Taiaiake Alfred, or those of the copper cutters?

Most people will not have actually attended performances for which they are the intended audience, although they might wish that they had. In “Performance, Live or Dead” Jones suggests that it might be better if you were not there, since if presence is required then performance has a very limited sort of afterlife.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, through endless online looping, you may have acquired a memory of it anyway. Jones connects this with a renewed interest in Henri Bergson’s definition of memory not as a carbon copy of “what happened” but rather as an “accumulation” that builds up after the fact.<sup>7</sup> It is entirely possible to remember something only heard about from those who were present, or “seen” by observing a trace, a record or an archive. Like most people, I was not on the journey, and yet, in Bergsonian memory, the recollections shared at Beau Dick’s January 15<sup>th</sup> feast and the traces assembled within *Lalakenis* reinstate its precarious moments, press on historical flash points, expose social taboos and reformat cultural protocols. Given what is at stake in relations across cultures, they were, and remain, moments of heightened alert. And there are many precedents. The Nuu-chah-nulth protest in Port Alberni in 1929 is but one instance among hundreds where Native people have taunted white power with its own hypocrisy. On that occasion, headdresses and masks were also worn as assertions and corrections. The protesters, crowded into a truck in the Dominion Day Parade, carried a banner declaring “We are the true Native Sons of Canada.”

So is a copper breaking ceremony or performance? Perhaps the sophistry required to make the distinction proves that trying to separate performing Native from Native performance is not worth the effort. And anyway to answer the question does one turn to Kwakwaka’wakw definitions of ceremony, to Hal Foster who identified “ritual” as one of the principal categories

of modernist performance art, or to definitions of performance current in contemporary art? Since these versions do not exactly mesh, does one turn to the idea of the Two Row Wampum, as worked through by Alan Michelson for instance, or to Slavoj Žižek’s “parallax,” to Freudian double vision, to Mieke Bal’s “double exposures,” to postmodern contradiction, or just paradox?<sup>8</sup> The heirs of Western modernism — just as likely to be the problem here as the solution — have nevertheless provided apparently irresistible framing devices: Situationist détournement, modernist plinth, photographic tableau, performative reenactment, archival reprise. Such art historical tropes have been taken up by these performance artists as metaphors and as modes of translation, across cultures and across time. The terms are either massively, if not culturally, misleading or they are allowing performance artists to lead the thoroughly implicated audience to new understandings — a modern idea if ever there was one. And so, in a bravura “artwork” (his term), Jimmie Durham reframes “the world Indigenous problem.” Indigenous people are not the problem, even though this is how they are perceived, he writes. The real problem is the nation, the way in which the nations of the world are built on ownership of the earth. In one incisive performative gesture the frame dissolves.<sup>9</sup>

### Material in Place

The *Lalakenis* journey shared with other recent endeavours an insistence that “place” comes first. The events of *Stronger than Stone* in Alberta, and of *Indigenous Acts: Art and Public Space* in Vancouver, both in 2014, drew attention to the repressive zoning of Canada’s Indian Act. In the southern US, Postcommodity’s *Repellent Fence* (2015) floated 26 enormous scare-eye balloons across the US-Mexico border in a spectacularized display of the irrelevance of national boundaries to Native space. The copper breakings took place first on the steps of the BC Legislature, and subsequently in front of the Canadian Parliament. These buildings, Neo-Baroque and Neo-Gothic respectively, administered the laws that defined and controlled Native lives, that outlawed potlatching and confiscated coppers. There is no law against breaking a copper today, but other laws persist. It is no incidental irony that today’s imperious provocations attached themselves to these imperious places. The binary between “Native” and “non-Native” space as designated by a distorted justice system is arguably overcome in this “common” space that confronts the sites of legislation. When rights can include the right to exclude, the distortion is revealed: injustice for some is injustice for all, and the commons is defiled.

I am a moon made of copper:  
Made of glass  
I will know your dreams  
I will eat your memories  
I will devour your love  
I will tear down the night  
Drive down your roads

Chris Bose, *Moon Made of Copper* (2013)



The shape of the beaten copper is not easy to describe nor, apparently, to account for historically but the material gleams like the ruddy scales of a salmon. Touching a copper helps to sustain its sheen, a tangible aspect of its materiality and a hands-on expression of approval. This hands-on power has worn down rocks, shrines, icons and places of devotion in many parts of the world. The fleeting burnish of copper is drawn upon in other recent works such as Gerald Ferguson's *1,000,000 Pennies* (first exhibited in 1974), and Sonny Assu's *1884/1951* (2009). Danh Vo's *We the People* (2010-14) considered the former brightness of the copper Statue of Liberty, understood it as surface, and demolished it. When prized away these curved copper casings, the opposite of armatures, reveal what? The absence of liberty? Material properties of copper, its materiality, are actual and metaphorical in all these works.

*Lalakenis* depends on a transcultural dynamic. When such specific cultural capital is thrown into shared temporal space, and where its agency derives in part from primordial claims and in part from broken outsider laws, broken treaties, broken promises, the potency of the action cuts across its untranslatability. The copper cutting is an act of creative destruction. In as much as the copper cutting enhances its value it is a paradox — breaking to mend. What remains is a lingering aura of assertion *and* interrogation: this is what a copper does / what can these coppers do? The copper breakings marked the end of the journeys, but as components of an assemblage, of the mode of operations named *Lalakenis*, they are not terminal objects. Under colonial regimes much Native “art” has been made for an audience of “others.” Where history, on any grounds, has set up borders that distinguish between groups of people, calculations of benefit and the protection of those borders have been accompanying strategies. The spectacle and the provocation of the staged and restaged performances of Beau Dick, Guujaaw and their companions, “interactive” performances in as much as their mixed audiences are implicated, are poised somewhere between border control and ontological predicament.

- 1 Benjamin Buchloh, “Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art,” *Artforum* 21 (September 1982): 46.
- 2 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- 3 Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
- 4 Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” *Public Culture* 2 (1990).
- 5 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- 6 Amelia Jones, “Performance Live or Dead,” *Art Journal* 70:3 (Fall 2011).
- 7 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1988, first published in French in 1896).
- 8 For more information, see: Kate Morris, “Running the Medicine Line: Images of the Border in Contemporary Native Art,” *American Indian Quarterly* 35:4 (Fall 2011); Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Mieke Bal, *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
- 9 Jimmie Durham, “Against Internationalism,” *Third Text* 27:1 (2013): 29-32.



Gerald Ferguson, *1,000,000 Canadian Pennies* (1979). Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Photo: Steve Farmer Photography.

Sonny Assu, *1884/1951* (2009). 67 spun copper cups with lids, Hudson Bay blanket, dimensions variable. Promised gift, Audain Collection. Photo: Chris Meier. Image courtesy of the artist and Equinox Gallery.



**CUTTING COPPER:**  
Indigenous Resurgent Practice / Tarah Hogue and Shelly Rosenblum



## The backstory

*Cutting Copper: Indigenous Resurgent Practice* follows from our previous collaboration on the symposium *Traumatic Histories, Artistic Practice, and Working From the Margins* developed in conjunction with the exhibition *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools* (2013) held at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. The symposium was aimed at examining the relation between artistic practice and reconciliation, situated within a broader theoretical discussion around modernity and Indigeneity.<sup>1</sup> A fundamental questioning of the very concept of reconciliation was operative throughout. Presenters were tasked with responding to questions of methodology and terminology involved in curating the work of Indigenous artists or of difficult or traumatic histories; whether art has the capacity to be reconciliatory or healing; and how literature about and by Indigenous people affects the way we view modernity. At the core of our investigation then, as it is now, are the productive intersections of theory and praxis, specifically in how artistic practice can inform discourse across disciplines in the humanities as well as within civic or national forums.

## Theory as embodied practice

*Cutting Copper* is a collaborative project between grunt gallery and the Belkin Art Gallery. The two-day event (taking place at the Belkin March 4-5, 2016) includes a performance series featuring new works by Dana Claxton, Maria Hupfield and Charlene Vickers, and Tanya Lukin Linklater with dancers Mique'l Dangeli, Ziyian Kwan, and cellist/composer Peggy Lee. Each of the three performances precedes a workshop discussion that engages the conceptual framework and enactment of Indigenous resurgence, in particular its relation to contemporary artistic practice as well as its transformative potential for art and academic institutions. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg writer, academic and activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson describes resurgence as “the rebuilding of Indigenous nations according to our own political, intellectual and cultural traditions.”<sup>2</sup> Simpson's expanded discussion of theory is especially useful in this context as it denies the separation of the mind and the body, grounded instead within interaction and responsiveness:

“Theory” is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community and generation of people. “Theory” isn't just an intellectual pursuit — it is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion, it is contextual and relational. It is intimate and personal, with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives.<sup>3</sup>

In light of this, each workshop discussion in *Cutting Copper* begins with a performance in the Gallery. Those in attendance occupy various positions as spectator, witness or participant, creating a visceral, physical experience from which dialogue is generated. The commissioned

performances from Claxton, Hupfield and Vickers, and Lukin Linklater respond to the thematic of the workshops as well as to the exhibition *Lalakenis/All Directions: A Journey of Truth and Unity* by incorporating cultural belongings, traditional knowledge, movement and interpersonal interaction into the work. The work of these artists provides the opportunity to consider the activation of Indigenous knowledge through the various strategies they employ in performance, creating points of connection and provocation.

The discussions themselves bring a cross-disciplinary group of artists, curators, writers, educators, scholars, students and activists together with a public audience to explore the embodied theory of Indigenous resurgence and cultural representation — both from the perspectives of their own disciplines and one another's in order to build collective dialogue. The program focuses specifically on the role that contemporary Indigenous artistic practice can play in redefining cultural tradition, representation and the relations between settler, immigrant and Indigenous peoples in North America at sites of creativity, community and dissent.

## Acts of ceremony, politics, performance

In the weeks following the opening of *Lalakenis*, as we prepared for *Cutting Copper*, it became apparent that some of these intersections were generative in ways we had not anticipated. In commissioning new performances, we asked the artists to respond to Beau Dick's journey to Ottawa to enact the spiritual, political and aesthetic ceremony of copper cutting, as well as to the broader context of Indigenous resurgence (including, for example, a discussion of the Idle No More movement) as it is variously interpreted. Some felt that the spiritual and ceremonial belongings had been decontextualized to their detriment by being in situ at a gallery. By siting these performances within the Gallery, which has been designated as an active ceremonial space, these modes of practice enter into dialogue with one another, though the language they speak may issue from different registers. We do not wish to reduce the embodied theory of these practices to language, however, as both ceremony and performance art inhabit, draw from and elicit affective realms.

In responding to Âhasiw Maskêgon-Iskwêw's seminal performance *White Shame* (1992), Marcia Crosby quotes John Freeman, suggesting that:

...if we consider the performance action as that which is: “...not about ‘truth’: [but as] ...one event that is written across the palimpsest of the performer's self... [in which the] performer becomes a manuscript that has been written on repeatedly, with the previous lines incompletely erased and often still legible...” Ahasiw's body, his performance is the collective loss of colonization. He both represents and is the cultural and intellectual void left in the wake of this history. His performative “facsimile of a sacred ceremony” is, itself, an aspect of the irreplaceable loss of culture and knowledge, his body a part of the void. At the same time, he writes a



public history across his body, which becomes entangled with his own name and history; all possible meanings or experience of the performance break through any existing rational historiography of 1492-1992. Through the self-consciousness of performance, spectators grasp that a particular history is being told and remembered by someone in a particular time and place for a reason.<sup>4</sup>

Crosby posits the body as central to the production and evolution of cultural knowledge and practice. In the merging of the personal and the public through performance, the slippage between these registers becomes evident as the performance is experienced differently by different viewers. Similarly, within the context of and relationship between *Lalakenis* and *Cutting Copper*, terms we commonly use within contemporary art such as “exhibition” or “performance” begin to shift as differing worldviews, beliefs and practices (lived, artistic, spiritual, ideological, political) come to push against one another. Some may work symbiotically, while others may operate in exclusive regimes. The question becomes how to mediate this situation from our positions within largely non-Indigenous academic and cultural institutions.

There are other significant examples of the overlap and contestation between ceremony, ritual and performance art in both the Belkin and grunt galleries’ respective histories. In 2010, grunt gallery began its *Activating the Archives* project ([grunt.ca/activating-the-archives/](http://grunt.ca/activating-the-archives/)): the creation of six websites from material in the gallery’s archive, including *INDIANacts: Aboriginal Performance Art*, a conference held at grunt in 2002. In their introductory text on the site, curators Dana Claxton and Tania Willard outline how:

Some Aboriginal performance practices are closely aligned to traditional practices and, in some cases, this is what creates such beautiful work — but there are considerations and negotiations artists have to make when dealing with spiritual practices and artists make these negotiations in different ways. ... The production of art and culture making are two different ways of doing, and within the realm of contemporary art, these two ways of doing, which are aligned to ways of being, collapse and collide.<sup>5</sup>

Claxton and Willard suggest that, despite the differing modalities of making either “art” or “culture,” both can exist within the discourse and practice of contemporary art. At the conclusion of the text artist Rebecca Belmore is quoted as stating that:

Performance, no matter how it is mixed with contemporary and traditional references and meanings, makes more sense as a way for me to feel useful to my community in my role as a maker of things.

My official statement “I have with me the influence of my Cocum (grandmother) and my mother. I look at my hands and I am aware of their hands. That is how I wish to work.”<sup>6</sup>

The mediation of these realms is ultimately the responsibility of the individual artist and how they are situated within the web of relations that constitutes the “theory” of practice as described above by Simpson. Rather than emphasizing dichotomies between art and culture or contemporary and tradition, perhaps this is a more useful way to think of these signifiers as they variously influence or conflict with one another.

In the same year, the Belkin Art Gallery showed *Rebecca Belmore: The Named and the Unnamed* (2002), an exhibition of new works by the artist that together staged a relationship between bodily performance and installation. David Garneau describes Belmore’s *Vigil* (2002), based on a street performance commemorating the women who went missing from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, as “making that space sacred or acknowledging that everyplace is already sacred and just needs to be brought to notice, attention, attended to.”<sup>7</sup> Belmore’s series of performative actions included scrubbing the sidewalk with soapy water; speaking or shouting the names of missing women that were written on her arm; tearing the petals and leaves from roses by running them through her clenched teeth; donning a red dress, which she nailed to a utility pole before tearing herself away from the pole; and lighting candles. These meditative, futile, frantic and violent movements take on the form of a ritual as she reenacts and inhabits the violence and trauma of disappeared bodies, the lit candles reminiscent of public Christian vigils.

In “Have We Ever Been Good” Charlotte Townsend-Gault states that for Belmore in *Vigil*:

The repeated references to the pain of the traumatised body link closely to her interest in embodied knowledge, in memory and story telling and, as many of her performances attest, in working out who the stories were for. The work is not so much social text as sensory tableau — palpably critical. In an undidactic way the colours, directions, elements, make themselves felt. The long distraction from the sensory loops back to bodily knowledge; makes the floating signifier not so much final irresolution as active principle.<sup>8</sup>

The possibility of palpably critical sensory tableau is the desire and guiding principle for *Cutting Copper* — or perhaps performance that is palpably engaged if not “critical.” The admixture of ritual and performance produces a space of radical possibility, a site where performance and what it represents in our bodies (blood memory) allows for a more immediate, visceral understanding of the topic at hand.

## Intentions

*Lalakenis* pushes at the boundaries of our conceptual and affective experiences of performance art, ceremony and exhibition. A few weeks before *Cutting Copper*, Dory Nason and Johnny Mack, UBC professors in the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program, participated in

a *Conversations Series* program at the Belkin. Nason, in her presentation entitled “It was like a secret being released,” queried: “When art is activism and ceremony at the same time, how do we respond to it? What is our responsibility to the voices speaking and the story or stories being told? What is necessary for respectful engagement and is that ceremony meant for us? Indeed, who is ‘us’?” The political and, arguably, aesthetic act of copper cutting that performs Indigenous sovereignty, as well as its inclusion in the setting of the university art gallery, raises questions that are integral to contemporary discourse around Indigeneity, including the need to decolonize these institutions and to examine the intersections of colonialism, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class and other signifiers in the way that these shape and affect Indigenous lives globally. How can a theoretical understanding of decolonization and resurgence lead to changes in the way that settler and Indigenous populations relate as well as how these relations can alter the way in which academic and government institutions operate?

With *Cutting Copper* we hope to enable productive dialogue on Indigenous resurgence as a transdisciplinary area of study and to spark new approaches for research that will further the place of Indigenous peoples within the University and beyond. We hope to shed new light on what the role of the gallery is in the context of Indigenous resurgence with its emphasis, for example, on the restitution of land and land-based knowledge systems. Does the traditional exhibition format do enough to support the changing needs of artists and, if not, what might other models look like? With the growing concern and increased practice of artists working in a social engagement/performative capacity, the program works to explore what the implications of this might be for both artists and cultural institutions when developing new models of practice. In a broader sense, it is also why it is important for artist-run centres and academic institutions to collaborate in pushing at the boundaries of one another’s areas of influence.

1 For the full symposium proceedings, visit: <http://belkin.ubc.ca/events-witnesses-traumatic-histories-artistic-practice-and-working-from-the-margins>.

2 Leanne Simpson, “Land as Pedagogy,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3:3 (2014): 13.

3 Ibid., 7.

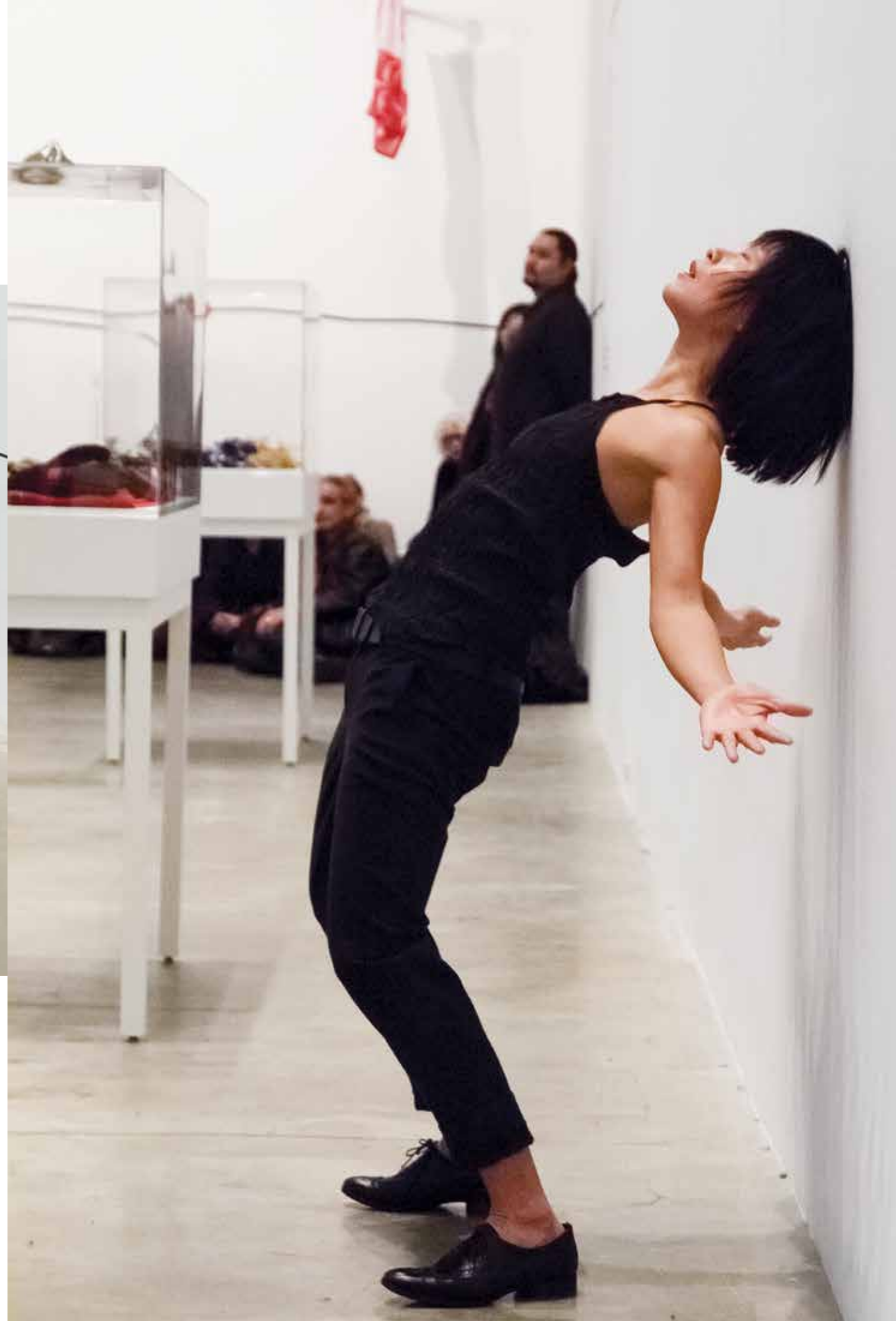
4 Marcia Crosby, “Ahasiw K. Maskegon-Iskew: White Shame 1992,” *Ghostkeeper*, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://ghostkeeper.gruntarchives.org/essay-ahasiw-k-maskegon-iskew-white-shame-marcia-crosby.html>.

5 Dana Claxton and Tania Willard, “NDN AXE/IONS—a collaborative essay,” *INDIANacts: Aboriginal Performance Art*, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://indianacts.gruntarchives.org/essay-ndn-axe-ions-claxton-and-willard.html>.

6 Ibid., quoted in A. Richard & C. Robertson (eds.), *Performance au/in Canada: 1970-1990* (Quebec and Toronto: éditions Intervention and Coach House Press, 1991), 308.

7 David Garneau, “Migration as Territory: Performing Domain with a Non-colonial Aesthetic Attitude,” *VOZ-À-VOZ*, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://www.vozavoz.ca/feature/david-garneau>.

8 Charlotte Townsend-Gault, “Have We Ever Been Good,” *Rebecca Belmore: The Named and the Unnamed* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 2003).



## CUTTING COPPER WORKSHOPS /

### RECOGNITION, REFUSAL AND RESURGENCE

This panel addresses some of the theoretical interventions at play when considering the ways in which Indigenous peoples have sought to overcome the contemporary life of settler-colonization and achieve self-determination through cultural production and critique.

Performance	Dana Claxton, <i>Follow the Red Sinew</i>
Panelists	Taiaiake Alfred, Linc Kesler, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
Moderator	Shelly Rosenblum

### CREATIONS, INSERTIONS AND REBUFFS: CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE

This panel addresses the role of performative, educational, curatorial or programming models to investigate how they might challenge or alter institutions' interactions with Indigenous peoples.

Performance	Maria Hupfield and Charlene Vickers, <i>Resurgent Gallery Happening</i>
Panelists	Wanda Nanibush, Tannis Nielsen
Moderator	Lorna Brown

### SOVEREIGNTY ACROSS DISCIPLINES

This panel explores intersecting fields of literature, film, media and cultural studies and dance as modalities of resurgent cultural expression.

Performance	Tanya Lukin Linklater with Peggy Lee, Mique'l Dangeli and Ziyian Kwan, <i>An accumulation - A relief</i>
Panelists	Julie Nagam, Dylan Robinson
Moderator	Tarah Hogue

## CONTRIBUTORS' BIOGRAPHIES /

**LORNA BROWN** is Associate Director/Curator at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and a visual artist, writer, educator and editor. She has exhibited her work internationally since 1984. Brown was the Director/Curator of Artspeak Gallery from 1999 to 2004 and is a founding member of Other Sights for Artists' Projects, a collective of artists, architects and curators presenting projects that consider the varying conditions of public places and public life. She has taught at Emily Carr University of Art and Design and Simon Fraser University. Her recent curatorial projects include *Digital Natives* and *Institutions by Artists*. Brown received an honorary doctorate of letters from Emily Carr University of Art and Design in 2015, the Vancouver Institute for the Visual Arts Award (1996) and the Canada Council Paris Studio Award (2000). Her work is in the collections of the Belkin, the National Gallery of Canada, the BC Arts Council, the Surrey Art Gallery and the Canada Council Art Bank.

**BEAU DICK**, acclaimed as one of the Northwest Coast's most versatile and talented carvers, was born in Alert Bay where he lives and works. Reaching out beyond the confines of his own Kwakwaka'wakw culture, Dick has explored new formats and techniques in his work, including painting and drawing. His work can be found in private collections as well as museums, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau, QC), the Heard Museum (Phoenix, AZ), the Burke Museum (Seattle, WA), the UBC Museum of Anthropology and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Dick's work has been exhibited in *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools* (2013) at the Belkin Art Gallery, *Sakahan: International Indigenous Art* (2013) at the National Gallery of Canada, *75 Years of Collecting: First Nations: Myths and Realities* (2006) at the Vancouver Art Gallery and *Supernatural* with Neil Campbell (2004) at the Contemporary Art Gallery (Vancouver). In 2012, Dick received the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation's VIVA Award for Visual Arts. Since the fall of 2013, Dick has been the Artist in Residence at the UBC Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, with his studio in the Audain Art Centre.

**LINNEA DICK** was born December 9, 1991 to Pamela Bevan and Beau Dick. She carries the Kwakwaka'wakw name Malidi, meaning *To always find a purpose and path in life*. She is of Kwakwaka'wakw, Nisga'a and Tsimshian heritage. She spent her early childhood in Alert Bay, later relocating to Vancouver along with her sister Geraldine. Between 2004 and 2005, Linnea spent time experiencing Haida culture and tradition in Haida Gwaii, where her two older sisters live. Her ambitions in life are to help people and she aims to one day establish a wellness centre for women and children. Her creative abilities include writing and painting.

Born in Masset, BC as Gary Edenshaw, **GUUJAAW** is a traditional Haida singer, carver, environmentalist, activist and leader from the Raven Clan of Skedans. Guujaaw has worked throughout his life for the protection of Haida land, the establishment of the rights of the Haida people and their economic stability and freedom, taking part in the blockades on Lyell Island in the 1980s to protect it from logging. As President of the Haida Nation from 2000 to 2012, he fought to protect Haida Gwaii from logging and offshore drilling, and was instrumental in establishing Gwaii Hanaas National Park Reserve. Guujaaw oversaw the return of the Haida Gwaii forestry into the hands of his people, helped end the black bear hunt on the Misty Isles and successfully got the BC government to legally recognize the Queen Charlotte Islands as Haida Gwaii, the area's traditional Haida name. Guujaaw means *Drum*, a name given to him at a potlatch at the northern village of Kiusta.

**GYAUUSTEES**, whose name means *The one who gets things done*, is a member of the tribal people of the Nuu-chah-nulth Snuneymuxw Skokomish Kwakwaka'wakw with strong family ties to Secwepemc. His people are alive and well on the Pacific Northwest Coast of what is now called North America. Gyauusteess, through his connection to the Spirit of Unity, Peace and Dignity, has been on an incredible journey of acceptance, forgiveness and personal redemption from what he can only describe as the attempted genocide of his people. Only through peace of heart was he able to overcome adversity and be united – one heart, one mind – and then able to lift others up with dignity and reenter the sacred circle of life.

**TARAH HOGUE** is a curator and writer of Dutch, French and Métis ancestry originally from the Prairies. She holds an MA in Critical and Curatorial Studies (UBC). Since 2014 Hogue has been the Aboriginal Curatorial Resident at grunt gallery, and is lead curator on *#callresponse*, a series of site-specific and socially engaged works that will be followed by an exhibition at grunt gallery in October 2016. Current projects include *Unsettled Sites* at SFU Gallery (May 2016), Audain Aboriginal Curatorial Fellow with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and writer-in-residence with VIVO Media Arts. In 2009 she co-founded the Gam Gallery, a Vancouver exhibition space, studio and boutique.

**CHIEF ROBERT JOSEPH** is Hereditary Chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation and Ambassador for Reconciliation Canada and a member of the National Assembly of First Nations Elders Council. He was formerly the Executive Director of the Indian Residential School Survivors Society and is an honorary witness to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As Chairman of the Native American Leadership Alliance for Peace and Reconciliation and Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation with the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IFWP), Chief Joseph has sat with the leaders of South Africa, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and USA to learn from and share his understanding of faith, hope, healing and reconciliation.

**WANDA NANIBUSH** is an Anishinabe-kwe image and word warrior, teacher, curator, community animator and organizer and arts consultant from Beausoleil First Nation. She is currently Guest Curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Recently, Nanibush was Curator in Residence at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery where she curated *KWE: The Work of Rebecca Belmore* (2014), and the 2013 Dame Nita Barrow Distinguished Visitor at University of Toronto. She has published extensively, including essays in *The Winter we Danced* (2014) and *Women in a Globalizing World: Equality, Development, Diversity and Peace* (2013), as well as catalogue essays on artists Jeff Thomas, Adrian Stimson and Rebecca Belmore.

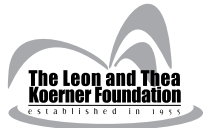
**SHELLY ROSENBLUM** is Curator of Academic Programs at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery where she develops programs that increase outreach and integration of the Gallery both within the University community and the Vancouver community at large. She is a Peter Wall Institute of Advanced Studies Associate and sits on the Board of Directors at the Western Front. She received her PhD from the Department of English at Brown University and has taught at Brown, Wesleyan and UBC. Her research interests include discourses of the Black Atlantic, critical theory, narrative, performativity and issues in contemporary art and museum theory.

**CHARLOTTE TOWNSEND-GAULT** is a Professor in the Department of Art History and a Faculty Associate in the Department of Anthropology at UBC. She has published widely on the history and politics of response to Indigenous arts and culture in North America since the early 1980s. Her recent book *Native Art of the Northwest Coast: A History of Changing Ideas*, co-edited with Jennifer Kramer and Ƙi-ƙe-in (UBC Press, 2014), is the winner of the 2015 Canada Prize in the Humanities, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Exhibitions curated include: *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* (with Diana Nemiroff and Robert Houle) (1992) and, at the Belkin Art Gallery, *Yuxweluptun: Born to Live and Die on your Colonialist Reservations* (1995); *Rebecca Belmore: The Named and the Unnamed* (2002); and *Backstory: Nuu-chah-nulth Ceremonial Curtains and the Work of Ƙi-ƙe-in* (2010).

**SCOTT WATSON** is Director of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and Head of the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at UBC. Recent distinctions include the Hnatyshyn Award for Curatorial Excellence (2010) and the Alvin Balkind Award for Creative Curatorship in British Columbia Arts (2008). Watson has published extensively in the areas of contemporary Canadian and international art. His 1990 monograph on Jack Shadbolt earned the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize (1991). He has enacted numerous exhibitions including *Mark Boulos* (2010); *Jack Shadbolt: Underpinnings* (2009); *Intertidal: Vancouver art & artists* (2005/06) at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp; and *Rebecca Belmore: Fountain* (2005) for the Venice Biennale Canadian Pavilion.

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**LALAKENIS /**

**ALL DIRECTIONS**

**A JOURNEY OF TRUTH AND UNITY**