

Rethinking property in c/a/n/a/d/a

Adrian Blackwell
David Fortin
Bonnie Devine
Tiffany Kaewen Dang
luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

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Introduction

In this volume, Indigenous and settler architects and urbanists reimagine Canadian cities and discuss property division as the hinge between settler colonialism and architecture/urban form. The conversation is informed by the issue 12-13 of the journal *Scapegoat: Architecture / Landscape / Political Economy* titled *Canada: delineating nation state capitalism* edited by David Fortin and Adrian Blackwell.

Rethinking property in Canada transcribes a virtual round table conversation co-hosted by the Research Centre in Interdisciplinary

Arts and Creative Culture (Centre for Studies in Arts and Culture, Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University) and the Salon für Kunstbuch (Vienna, Austria) on 10 November 2021.

Contributors

Adrian Blackwell

Spanning photography, video, sculpture, urban theory, and design, Adrian Blackwell's practice responds to the political and economic forces inscribed in physical spaces. Operating between art, architecture, and urbanism, his projects unfold

alongside research focused on the local and global effects of neoliberal urbanization and the inherent paradoxes of public space and private property. Blackwell's work has been exhibited at artist-run centres and public institutions across Canada, in the United States and at the 2005 Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism / Architecture, the 2011 Chengdu Biennial, the 2019 Toronto Biennial of Art and Chicago Biennial of Architecture. He has taught architecture and urbanism at Universities in Chongqing, Michigan, Harvard, and Toronto and is now an Associate Professor at the University of Waterloo. He is an editor and founder of the Journal *Scapegoat: Architecture / Landscape / Political Economy*. With David Fortin, he co-edited issue 12-13: *c|a|n|a|d|a: delineating nation state capitalism*.

Bonnie Devine

Bonnie Devine is an installation artist, video maker, curator, and writer. Her work emerges from the storytelling and image-making traditions that are central to Anishinaabe culture. Though formally educated in sculpture and installation art at OCAD and York Universities, Devine's most enduring learning came from her grandparents, who were trappers at Genaabaajing (Serpent River) First

Nation, on the north shore of Lake Huron. Using cross-disciplinary approaches and iterations of written, visual, and performative practice, Devine explores issues of land, environment, treaty, history, and narrative. Her installation, video and curatorial projects have been shown in solo and group exhibitions and film festivals across Canada and abroad. She is an Associate Professor Emerita and the Founding Chair of the Indigenous Visual Culture program at OCAD University. She lives and works in Toronto. She won the Governor General Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2021.

Tiffany Kaewen Dang

Tiffany Kaewen Dang is a landscape architect and territorial scholar from Treaty 6 Territory in Edmonton, Alberta. Her research lies at the intersections of landscape, native studies, ecology, political theory, history, and geography. Her core approach embraces alternate – often non-western, or non-patriarchal – knowledge systems as grounded methods for subverting dominant power structures and infrastructural networks shaping territory today. She received her MLA from the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University (2014 – 2017) and is currently a PhD student in the Department of

Geography, University of Cambridge. Among other publications is “A Glacial Pace: Delineating the Contours of Colonization in Canada’s National Parks System,” in *Extraction Empire: Undermining the Systems, States, and Scales of Canada’s Global Resource Empire* edited by Pierre Belanger (MIT Press, 2018). Her professional experience includes work as landscape researcher, designer, project architect from 2015 to 2018 at the OPSYS Landscape Infrastructure Lab, Cambridge, MA, USA, and a 2014 position as landscape designer at Topotek 1 Landscape Architects, Berlin, Germany.

David Fortin

Born and raised throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan, David Fortin is a Member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, a LEED accredited professional, and a registered architect in the province of Ontario. He previously worked with firms such as GEC Architects and McKinley Burkart Architects in Calgary. At the McEwen School of Architecture, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Fortin has taught various studios, including the graduate Indigenous Design studio, and developed an introductory building science course emphasizing the impact of climate change on architectural

thinking. In 2018, he completed a study of Red River Métis contributions to architectural thinking in Canada as part of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant. Fortin is a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario and the RAIC Indigenous Task Force that seeks “ways to foster and promote indigenous design in Canada.” He was co-curator of *UNCEDED: Voices of the Land*, a team of Indigenous architects under the leadership of Douglas Cardinal, who represented Canada at the 2018 Venice Biennale in Italy. Since January 2018, he has worked with the National Research Council of Canada to coordinate community input for housing in remote northern locations for an upcoming Technical Standards publication. He has also advised Indigenous Services Canada on the Indigenous Housing Innovation Initiative and will continue to participate in this program as a mentor. In 2019, David T Fortin Architect Inc., in joint venture with Smoke Architecture and Wanda Dalla Costa Architect, worked for the Assembly of First Nations to provide an Indigenous vision for the new Indigenous People’s Space in Ottawa. Fortin was the inaugural Associate Director of the Maamwizing Indigenous Research Institute and is the current Director of the McEwen School of Architecture.

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

patrick stewart is a Nisga'a architect with many firsts. The first Aboriginal president of an Architectural Association in Canada, Stewart was the first Aboriginal architect to become the President of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia and the first Aboriginal person in BC to own and operate an architectural firm. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia in 2015. The title of his dissertation is "Indigenous Architecture through Indigenous Knowledge – dion sagalt'apkw nisim (Together we will build a Village)." He received his Master of Architecture from McGill University in 1989. A former chair of the Provincial Aboriginal Homelessness Committee for British Columbia, as well as of the Indigenous Task Force for the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Stewart publishes in *Architecture BC*, *Canadian Architect*, *City Magazine*, *Context*, and *The Peak*.

A Round Table

Adrian Blackwell,
David Fortin,
Bonnie Devine,
Tiffany Kaewen Dang,
and luugigyoo patrick reid
stewart

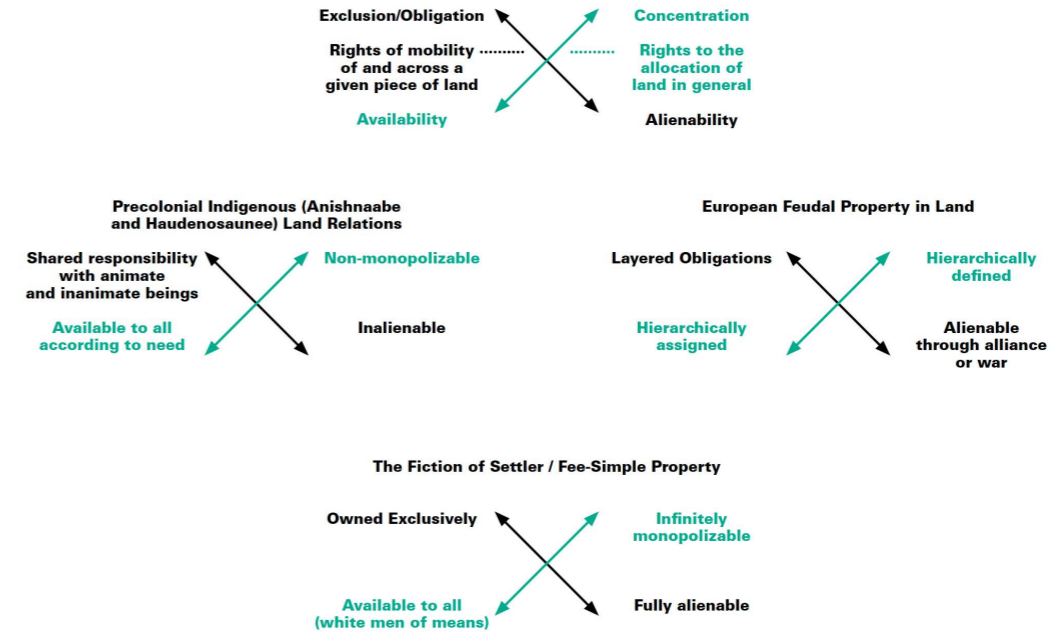
Adrian Blackwell

My father's grandparents immigrated to Canada from England and Massachusetts where our ancestors were early colonists. My mother was born in Austria, where she grew up during first German, and then Soviet, occupations. She immigrated to Canada as an adult. Both my parents and I completed graduate degrees. Now I teach at the University of Waterloo, within the Haldimand track, land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River and I live in Toronto, on lands

negotiated per Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. This region is traditional territory for the Anishinaabe, Odawa, Huron-Wendat, Chippewa, and Haudenosaunee peoples, and many other Indigenous people live here today. I feel very fortunate to live here. By engaging in work about property in Canada from a settler/immigrant perspective, I am working to unsettle the relative comfort of my inheritance.

A few years ago, I organized a lecture at Waterloo by Mohawk land-claims researcher Phil Monture. He presented his research for over forty years with the Six Nations Land Resources Office and his own firm, Native Lands, on the historical division of land in the Haldimand tract, which was granted to the Six Nations in 1784. I was struck by this work trying to understand the history of Indigenous land dispossession down to individual lots within cities such as Brantford and Caledonia, which strangely resonated with architectural studies that began in the 1970s by people like George Baird at the University of Toronto and Melvin Charney at the Université de Montréal into the relationships between property division and architectural typology and urban morphology. Settler land delineation, homesteading, and dispossession are processes that underlie modern forms of property and land, as well as the forms of urbanization and settlement in Canada and the pathologies that haunt the spaces of Canada.

Issue 12-13 of the journal *Scapegoat: Architecture / Landscape / Political Economy* that David Fortin and I edited, initiated a common research project that tries to connect architectural thinking about urban and architectural form to processes of colonization in order to address the continuities between past and present, and to think about how this practice of city making can be rethought in order to design space in a different way. We thought about this through a couple of lenses; one was the question of delineation. As architects, both David and I are interested in the problem of drawing and the way that architects draw things in advance of construction. We were struck by the idea that Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Nielsen raised about the modern world being produced through three kinds of delineations, or lines: the lines of nation



A comparison of four generic characteristics of property – exclusion, transferability, concentration, and availability – in Indigenous land relations, European feudal property, and settler/fee simple property. Diagram Adrian Blackwell. Adrian Blackwell and David Fortin, “c\an\ad\da: delineating nation state capitalism” in David Fortin and Adrian Blackwell, eds. *Scapegoat: Architecture / Landscape / Political Economy* 12-13 (2020-2021): 4.

states in Europe, the lines of colonial conquest outside of Europe, and what are named “the enclosures”, namely the turning back of these lines onto European land in order to redraw private property.¹ We are interested in the way these three kinds of lines are imbricated and co-constitutive, the way it is hard to say which of them comes first. The title of the journal issue is taken from luugigyoo patrick reid stewart’s work — c\an\ad\da – in order to illustrate the violence of division that has marked Canada as a settlement area (at least that’s one of the ways how David and I understand it). Its subtitle is ‘delineating nation state capitalism’. We are interested in the nation, the state, and capitalism, and the way in which they all cause problems; these lines in some ways are foundations for these different structures, or what Kojin Karatani calls different forms of exchange: nation exchanges, state exchanges, and capitalist exchanges. He thinks that nation exchanges are about fraternity in some way, and I think he thinks

in that way about even and especially First Nations, having exchanges of reciprocity. States, at least the first monarchical states, exchanged through plundering and redistribution, and capitalist exchanges are made through apparently non-coercive commodity exchange. For Karatani, these three historical modes of exchange are layered on top of one another and bound together. Following Karatani, we understand this delineation as a kind of composite that combines these different forms of exchange into one system, that needs to be changed and dismantled to create a new form of exchange that's again based on reciprocity. We thought a little bit about the way colonialism is important in world history because property was not something that was made in Europe or invented in Europe; this modern idea of property was constructed through the colonial process. It was constructed through Europeans meeting Indigenous people and developing new magical ideas about land, which were in part founded on misguided interpretations of Indigenous land practices. Brenna Bhandar's *The Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Radical Regimes of Ownership* (2018), and Allan Greer's *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires and Land in Early Modern North America* (2018) are quite interesting in thinking about the Indigenous and settler co-creation of property as a modern, exchangeable form in different colonial contexts.

We are interested in the way the fiction of settler property with its exclusive ownership, its full alienability, its infinitely monopolization, and its open availability to specific people, originally only white men of means, comes out of this encounter between feudal property and pre-colonial Indigenous peoples.

Note 1.

Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Nielson, "Fabrica Mundi: Producing the World by Drawing Borders," *Scapegoat: Architecture / Landscape / Political Economy* 4, special issue on "Currency," ed. Adrian Blackwell and Chris Lee (Winter/Spring 2013): 8.



Adrian Blackwell, *Isonomia in Toronto? (Harbour)*, locally harvested ash, 2 x 10 x 11 m, 2019. Toronto Biennial of Art

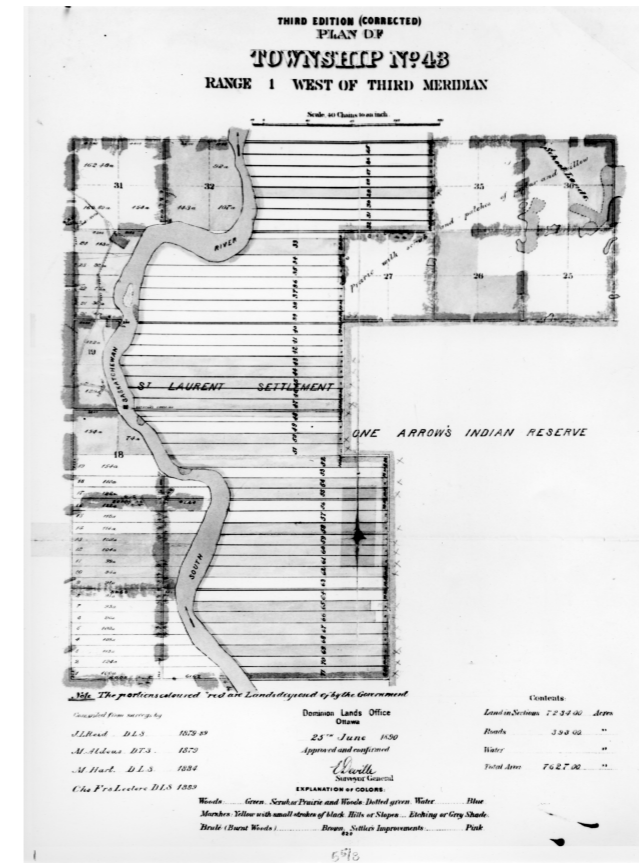
David Fortin

I realized at some point that almost all my academic interests really come down to the issue of boundaries. Going back to Heidegger, and thinking about building, there are these two conditions associated with the root word of boundary, 'bound', which is quite fascinating to me. The first one is like being fastened and tied down to something – you bind someone to restrain them – and the other one is linked to the way Heidegger talks about dwelling – you're bound to go, you're bound to succeed – and they're interrelated so there's this interesting relationship between this concept of needing to be delineated in order to bound forward. I believe there is something about this notion of boundary that is essential to the human condition, and not just our human boundaries. How one perceives their own boundary depends on one's subjective experience of it, and its relationship

to the world. As Leroy Little Bear has explained, “the earth cannot be separated from the actual being of Indians.” On the other side, there is this strange non-Indigenous concept of dividing up the land to define what one owns, our private property, and our identity gets tied directly to this. An Elder whom I worked with on another project, Winnie Pitawanakwat, said she could never really understand how anyone could think they own anything. Do they think they own the trees, the birds, or the insects as well? There is a strange schism between these two ways of thinking about the land, boundaries, and identity.

I was born in Calgary, and this has always been an interesting map for me. The Tsuut’ina Nation is on the southwest corner of Calgary, and the city has continually encroached on its boundary. This is a city that has primarily generated its wealth from resource extraction, and its relationship with the land itself is very different than the reserve beside it. So you have this kind of urbanizing, resource-extraction city meeting a line that defines a First Nation, and it is quite remarkable when you can see the difference in land relations from the satellite imagery.

In my research as a citizen of the Métis nation, I’ve been doing a lot of thinking about Métis architecture over the years. The plan of Township no 48 is quite fascinating because it is the site of the 1885 Batoche resistance by the Métis people, and one of the last armed conflicts in Canadian history. There are three different strategies of land division here; on the bottom right, there is no land division, it’s the One Arrow’s reserve; in the centre is the Métis River lot system, which was inherited from the French and valued for its egalitarian framework, with equal access for all families to water and roads; then the dominion grid. The three of them converge at this moment where there was armed conflict over property and land, and I feel it tells an important story about the history of our nations.



Township Plan 43-1 W3. St Laurent settlement and Batoche Ferry (Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, 5-B6500)

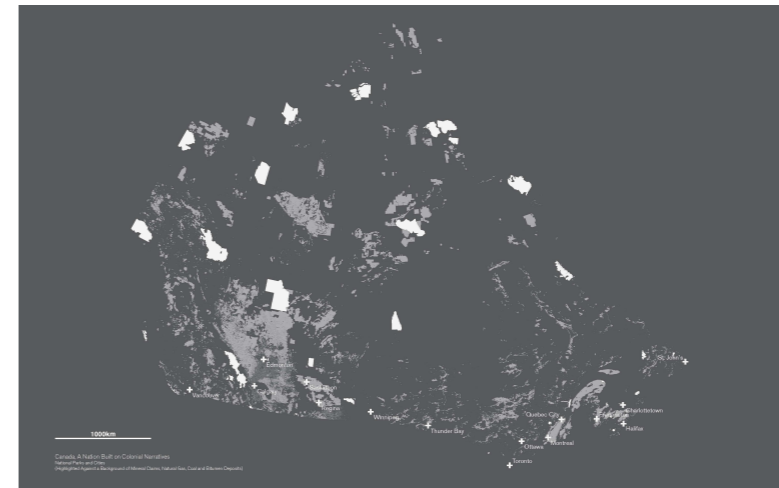
Related to a few professional projects, at Whitefish Lake First Nation in Alberta, the division of the land was already there when we were introduced to this project as the subdivision had been planned out in a typical suburban form. Informed by our research, I had been questioning the boundary of the lots at the time. In a sense, our design of the houses intentionally ignores the lots; they all face south so we can get as much passive solar as possible into each house. We looked at the property line as an opportunity for shared driveways, and we had the idea of planting berries along them to bring community members together along the property line, instead of it dividing them. This project really helped us consider how the property line has impacted our assumptions in design thinking.

I also wanted to share a project that I was involved with a few years ago on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The former US Embassy across from Centre Block had been gifted to the Indigenous peoples by the government of Canada for a new Indigenous Peoples Space. We formed an all-Indigenous team with Eladia Smoke and Wanda Dalla Costa, that included Jason Surkan, Larissa Roque, our Elder Winnie Pitawanakwat, Nicole Luke, and others. I won't go into the details, but when we arrived on the project, there was this hard line drawn around our scope. We found it quite interesting that we were being told what we could and couldn't do based on the property lines drawn on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation, for probably the most important pan-Indigenous project in Canadian history. So we were given this context where the task is to indigenize a heritage building but you're not allowed to touch it. Someone on our team had sketched a drawing at some point that noted we get to 'indigenize this', pointing to the extrusion of the loading dock in the back alley. This was what was left to express the collective voice of Indigenous people for the first time in Ottawa, all because of property lines and planned development. We obviously pushed back and ignored all of it in the end. Knowing the project would not be built anyways, we chose to go beyond our scope and asked ourselves how we could instead prioritize the celebration of Indigenous peoples, without being contained by the boundaries and various property lines presented to us.

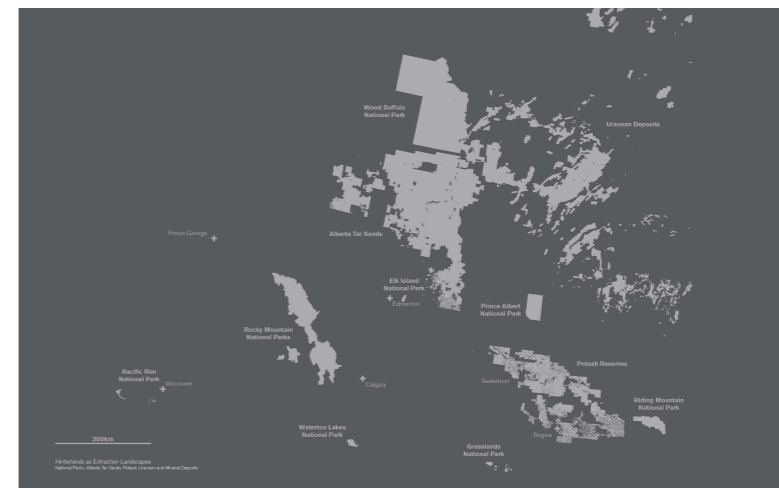
Tiffany Kaewen Dang

The first Superintendent of the first national park of Canada – Banff, close to Calgary – was a Dominion Land Surveyor named George Stewart. He was sent there to survey the land and delineate the borders for the park after Canadian Pacific Railway workers discovered hot springs in the area. In his first annual report, he significantly stated that the local Stoney First Nations people needed to be excluded from the park because they were damaging the landscape through hunting.

Fast forward to 1970: the Parks Development Department under the purview of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development led by then Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien initiated a planning document called the National Parks System Plan. This document divided the nation into thirty-nine natural regions; the goal was to establish at least one in each region. In my view, this plan is an explicit declaration that the parks are used to colonize every corner of the nation. The national parks system now becomes an infrastructure of territorial delineation and control.



Tiffany Kaewen Dang, *Canada, A Nation Built on Colonial Narratives*, national parks and cities, highlighted against a background of mineral claims, natural gas, coal and bitumen deposits



Tiffany Kaewen Dang, *Hinterlands as Extraction Landscapes*, national parks, Alberta tar sands, potash, uranium and mineral deposits

The delineation of the first national park in Banff in 1886 was preceded by the Dominion Land Survey, which was initiated to prepare a pre-map of Canadian prairies and, therefore, prepare the land for settlement. As the land survey request was to settle the land, the settlers started arriving by train. In parallel with the Dominion Land Survey was the construction of the transcontinental railway, and also the felling of large numbers of trees which followed closely the progression of the railway in order to clear land to build the railway. The result was the displacement of Indigenous peoples to reserves and the concentration of settlers into towns and cities. These systems – the survey, the railways, the trees – formed a triad of regulatory infrastructures which established a spatialized settler hegemony, which persists today and pitches settlers versus Indigenous spaces, and also urban spaces against non-urban spaces.

The spatial logic of colonialism prioritizes settler cities at the expense of hinterlands. I argue that this relationship can be applied to the landscape of the national parks, which can be seen as extending the settler occupation of land into non-urban spaces, thereby perpetuating Indigenous erasure and dispossession, which we can trace back to the establishments of the first park in 1886. Interestingly, George Stewart, in a House of Commons debate where they announced that they were going to hire him, was actually referred to as a landscape architect. As far as I can tell, this is one of the earliest uses of the term 'landscape architect'. I think it is telling that a professional landscape architect actually stands directly for this dispossessive practices of land delineation.

Resource exploitation and the construction of wilderness and national parks are two sides of the same worldview. One of the most visible ways that we see this today is to be found in the formation of a so-called national identity. There's no doubt that Canada is a resource empire, especially out West. At the same time, settler Canadians also place extremely high value on the preservation of spaces of untouched nature in the national parks and take great pride in that as well. So there is this seeming paradox of loving natural spaces, meanwhile promoting resource extraction.

Actually, if you dig into the root of it, they stem from the exact same colonial ideology.

Bonnie Devine

I am an Anishinaabe woman from Serpent River First Nation on the North shore of Lake Huron, but I grew up mostly in Toronto, my education was in Toronto, and I live and work in Toronto now. I made *Battle for the Woodlands* in two sessions in 2014 and 2015; it was exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario. I was responding to a colonial map depicting Upper and Lower Canada; it was made in 1832. This particular map had dominated this area of the gallery for a decade or so; my intention was to reimagine and remap the Great Lakes as Indigenous glyphs in red paint and delineate with a beaded belt surrounding the Great Lakes the boundaries of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 by which the king of England George III had designated a gigantic swath of North America as an Indian territory by the stroke of a pen.

Three years later, in 2018, I was again considering the land and notions of ownership, which the British call 'title', and came across a facsimile reproduction of the indenture to the Toronto purchase, dated 1805, by which the British crown purchased 250,838 acres of land on the north shore of Lake Ontario, the principal site of modern-day Toronto. For this piece of land, they paid 10 shillings. The Mississaugas, obviously misunderstanding the meaning of the word 'title', reserved for themselves the right to exclusively fish on Etobicoke Creek. The treaty is now known as Treaty 13. As a member not of the Mississauga but of the Anishinaabe Nation I feel compelled to acknowledge the signatories of this treaty by name. They were: Chechalk, Quenepenon, Wabukanyne, Okemapenesse, Wabenose, Kebonecence, Osenego, Acheton.



Bonnie Devine, *Hydrographia*, triptych, mixed media on three boards, 46 x 14 inches, 116.84 x 35.6 cm (total dimensions), 2018. (Photo credit: Bonnie Devine)

I've explored this misunderstanding of the word 'title' in a number of projects over the years. One of them was a project at the Art Gallery of Mississauga in 2018 called *Circles and Lines: Michi Saagiig*. 'Michi Saagiig' is the Anishinaabe word for 'Mississauga'. *Titled / Untitled* (diptych, mixed media and acrylic on board, 2018) was the starting point of the exhibition. My thought was to observe European and Anishinaabe representations of land. The left panel is a map of urban Mississauga, Ontario including the shoreline. I was particularly interested in the way the land has been abstracted, gridded off and divided into parcels or lots. The right panel is my memory of Indigenous marks called petroglyphs that are carved into the rock at Burleigh Falls, Ontario on Mississauga territory at the southern verge of the pre-Cambrian shield. These marks on the rock are mnemonic symbols to stimulate teaching.

In the diptych titled *Harbour*, the left panel is a depth chart of the Toronto harbour surveyed in July and August of 1881 by cartographer Joseph Charles Taché. The intention was to calculate the commercial shipping viability of the Toronto harbour. On the right, my glyph of the Toronto Island pictured as a recumbent being. *North Shore Line* (mixed media and acrylic on board), again, is a diptych. On the left is a reproduction of a property line map from 1805 drawn by Surveyor General Charles Burton Wyatt. It is a sketch of a further tract of land purchased from the Mississauga Indians, now known as Treaty 22. On February 8th, 1820, according to the terms of Treaty 22, the Mississaugas acquiesced to the

Crown and ceded their lands at Twelve and Sixteenth Mile Creek along with northern and southern portions of the Credit River reserve. Treaty 23 negotiated later that same day saw the central portion of the Credit River reserve ceded to the Crown for fifty pounds. On the right, my depiction of a small river and lake-bound homeland; the horizontal lines represent zones of habitation for plants, animals, and human beings.

In the diptych called *Impassable*, the left panel is an 1867 reconnaissance map of the country between the rivers Humber and Etobicoke from the shore of Lake Ontario to Dundas Street in the north. Cartographer H. J. W. Gehle indicates areas of military vulnerability to a potential land attack. His chart shows stretches that are heavily wooded and areas of marshy lowlands that could be easily defended in the event of an attack on the city of Toronto. The right panel shows a stand of trees, in this case maples interlacing themselves in kinship patterns at the level of their roots.

In the same exhibition I installed a series of objects at the entrance to the gallery. One piece is called *Border Line / Border Braid* and consists of an antique surveyor's transit and tripod and a length of braided red cotton cloth. The appearance on their land of a team of surveyors was often the first sign of threat to Indigenous people. Notice how the transit resembles a weapon. In fact, it is a weapon whose aim is to precisely and implacably demarcate and ultimately possess the land. The object *Circle of Enquiry for a Dish with One Spoon* is sixteen feet in diameter and is made of reeds I gathered in an area of low-lying land at the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation some thirty kilometers from the city of Toronto. I carried these reeds to the art gallery at Mississauga City Center on August 31st, 2018 and braided them there. The circle of reeds recalls the agreement between the Indigenous Nations in the woodlands surrounding the Great Lakes to share the land and its bounty in peace among themselves. In a stroke of irony or fortune unknown to myself at the time, the gallery where this work was placed lies directly below the Mississauga City Hall council chambers.



Bonnie Devine, *Circle of Enquiry for a Dish with One Spoon*, reeds and cardboard, 2018. Reeds gathered at Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Ontario, braided into a circle sixteen feet in diameter at the Art Gallery of Mississauga, one floor below City of Mississauga Municipal Council Chambers (Photo credit: David Devine)

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

'i refer to this country in which i live as c\|a\n\|a\|d\|a the backward slashes considered wrong grammatically it is analogous to the wrongness of this country in its treatment of indigenous peoples and is a daily reminder to me of the injustices in the country in which i live reminding me that i can never stop resisting protesting working' this is from my dissertation my family is from the nass river in northwestern b\|c right near a\|l\|a\|s\|k\|a so the international boundary between the u\|s and c\|a\n\|a\|d\|a runs through our territory and so we have family on both sides of the border alaska is where my mom grew up and she was raised there after she came back from residential school she was sent from her village as a five year old down to where i currently live which is kind of ironic near c\|h\|i\|l\|l\|i\|w\|a\|c\|k coqualeetza residential school was located on the grounds of a traditional gathering place at the confluence of two waterways the school was church based a methodist missionary was up in the nass and the school at coqualeetza was a methodist school and that's where kids from ours our village were sent the surveyors showed up in the nass in 1885 and started to survey the land at which time the nisga'a took

great exception and tried to prevent it but to no avail and we were dispossessed of our land

i am a member of wilp daaxan which is a killer whale house in the nisga'a village of gingolx and daaxan is our chief gingolx is the ango oskw (land that belongs to his name) i see my work as trauma-informed architecture as a catalyst for change in my lectures i often show a photograph of a group of villagers that are about to be sent away they are standing in front of their house posts and longhouses which were about to be burned down one of the myths the colonizers used to justify their genocide was that we prayed to our totems which was not the case the next step in their genocide was to transport us to residential school the total devastation to our ango oskws is the genocide that we've been subjected to for the last hundred and fifty-seven years it is the onslaught of colonization but in reality when i am working this is where i take my inspiration

it is now over forty years since i entered a school of architecture to see what we as indigenous peoples lost i am still handicapped by that same system designed to ensure we forever remain captive dispossessed of lands we inhabited since time immemorial this is our reality remember it when you see us fight for our rights you might take for granted as a birthright

in one of the first nations i am currently working in we are focusing on a spiritual site we're looking at the historical development of the land that the nation has inhabited for 9000 years this site predates the egyptian pyramids by 4500 years and when the colonizers came to our shores they dispossessed by force they took the land and it's still happening there are currently 700 youth in foster care in the province of b\|c that age out every year and there are no resources for them half of them are homeless one of the projects we worked on was the dave pranteau aboriginal children's village it was a project for kids in care the difference here if you're familiar with foster care is that the units were assigned to the children not to the adults so if a foster family broke down it wasn't the child who

was removed as is typical it was the parents who were moved out the child got to age in place and that is one small way of resisting continued genocide



Dave Pranteau Aboriginal Children's Village, 2980 Nanaimo Street, Vancouver, BC, Patrick Stewart, architect

we are now standing up and saying no more! not for us without us!

we have put international architectural publications together with participation from Canada the USA New Zealand and Australia these are all indigenous authors in our books of which I am a co-editor along with Kevin O'Brien (Torres Strait Islander) and Rebecca Kiddle (Maori) we thought now is the time to be doing it for ourselves our *Voices 1* was published in 2018 our *Voices 2* was published in 2021 and we are now working on our *Voices 3* in our architecture may we acknowledge the sacred acknowledge the process the ceremony as architecture and see architecture as ceremony as process as sacred.

David Fortin

In 1955 the French philosopher Guy Debord defined what he called psychogeography, which is the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals. He famously cut up a map of Paris and reorganized the bits and

pieces of the map to make a difference between standard cartography and the everyday experience of people. It seems to me that both the grid in Tiffany's case and Bonnie's paintings are ultimately about the abstract expression of relationships to land but the flow is reversed. When Bonnie is painting the land, she's using her creative mind to reinterpret and communicate that land in one direction. And in the other direction it is a political ideology that goes to the creative mind and is then applied on the land.

Bonnie Devine

Both sides of the diptychs that I'm working with are abstractions. Part of what I was very interested in was the fact that Indigenous people are often considered to lack the ability to think abstractly. At least, when I was growing up, that's what I was taught – we were too stupid to be able to extrapolate from the real and I wanted to counter that with a series of my own abstractions. So in some ways it was a rebuttal of a colonial myth about the picture-making abilities of Indigenous people and the ability of Indigenous people to think theoretically about land and so on. But I think there is something more utilitarian than that and this is what we would call in Anishinaabemowin the purpose of art. The purpose of art ultimately is not to create decorative objects, not to create some monetizable commodities or collectibles. The purpose of art is much more intrinsic to society. One of the key roles of art to Anishinaabe people is to teach, to pass on knowledge, and to inscribe a certain knowledge so that it can be remembered, re-enacted, or re-performed. Maybe maps do that too, maybe maps have a similar role in the construction of western culture – or how just to teach, perhaps school, a way of thinking inscribed in a certain ideology within a population; and that ideology in western culture, I would argue, is obsession, in the same way that George III of England just drew a line on a map and said 'This will belong to this person and that will belong to that person'. The weight he thought that the power of that inscription on a piece of paper gave him is, I think, colossally psychotic. I want to underline that, yes,

there is a psycho-geography and, yes, it can be decoded in the marks that we make about the land – and how do we try to define and discern for ourselves within our own practices healthier ways, more sane ways perhaps, if the term ‘sane’ isn’t too constructed or addictive, possibly a more humane way of describing place.

Tiffany Kaewen Dang

Representation and representing land as a way of conveying power is really important so, if abstracting land as a property grid conveys some sort of colonial power, then abstracting land in other ways, such as what Bonnie has done in her art, conveys a different kind of power. I think that, art-historically speaking, if representation can colonize, maybe representation can decolonize.

David Fortin

Like patrick, something that I’m interested in in my own work right now is the notion of sacredness. I think that, at the core, there might be a difference in how we think of things from a sacred perspective or as commodities.

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

when you talk about psycho-geography i am thinking of the surveying of the reserves and the effect that that had on people it was a demarked location that you weren’t allowed to leave initially you had to have a pass to go to come back it was very much a guarded place and that has an effect on people often the reserves were not the best property in montreal lake cree nation 75% of the people in the community have trucked water because the water where the reserve is is lousy it continues to affect us

David Fortin

An Elder named Hilda Nadjiwan told my first-year students a creation story about Sudbury and the serpent that goes underneath the city between the two lakes, and she told us all about the star woman. Returning to Bonnie’s idea of the power of art and to how powerful her art is, I can’t look at this city, I can’t understand this place the same anymore after I heard those stories. There’s a filter of stories in the land that teach about the place where you are if you are listening to them, which is very different from the grid condition.

patrick, you’ve written in your interview for *c\an\ad*: delineating nation state capitalism in *Scapegoat: Architecture / Landscape / Political Economy* that the architect and the city dwellers or the reserve dwellers are forced to navigate between these lines. Some of your work, I think, is a resistance against those lines. Can you talk about the hegemony of property and how it impacts Indigenous agency? Art is a powerful way to retell that story. You also do this in your work around homelessness but where is the Indigenous agency that can work within these boundaries?

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

the ango oskw is our traditional territory it is held for everyone in our wilp in our house there aren’t per se individual lots the colonizers when they came did survey the ango oskw that is their layer but we look beyond it and say well okay that’s them that’s what they got there but we think that our own land in our nation is mountaintop to mountaintop headwaters to the ocean that’s our land not these individual little lots when we’re talking and doing our own business in the nation we’re talking at that level it’s not at that commodified little 25 foot by 50 foot layer or whatever that they surveyed out so when you come to the city you’re crunching up against that the children’s village was a bit of a struggle because the city didn’t want it and i was bound to do it

because in my thinking when they burned down villages they cut our totem poles down they put them in museums around the world gave us a colonial settlement what i did with the children's village was okay well you guys took it all away from us i'm putting it on the street i'm putting it in your faces you took away our religion with violence i want to violently put it back.

Adrian Blackwell

patrick, as you know, David and I have found your intervention – c\an\ad\ – into the word 'Canada' to be a beautifully concise statement about the logic of spatial production in this land over the past five hundred years. Tiffany, your examination of the violence not only of extraction industries but also so-called natural conservation in the form of parks illustrates the precise spatial grammar of patrick's linguistic move. Bonnie, your juxtaposition of paintings of whole and undivided land, next to the segmentation of colonial maps of southern Ontario, allows you to use your paintings to critique maps – in some ways using these juxtapositions as visual analogues of the grammatical operation that patrick performed in his Ph.D. dissertation which eschewed punctuation to privilege the unbroken flow of speech, except when grappling with explicitly colonial concepts like c\an\ad\.

The central question we're interested in exploring within the journal issue is how the violence of colonial dispossession, initiated through architecturally imagined exercises of spatial delineation in advance of the landscape architectural and infrastructural construction that followed, is the fundamental spatial framework of our contemporary urban and rural spaces. Because of this, each of our urban and rural spaces is haunted by this original dispossession, and the pathologies of contemporary urban space are all problems that can be traced back to it. I'm wondering if each of you could speak to the ways in which you see the fragmentation of land that we inhabit together as the foundation not only of serious problems for Indigenous peoples but also as the ground of trauma and unhappiness for people who settled here, came as

refugees, or were brought here against their will.

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

the example i have is some work that I'm doing in the downtown eastside of v\an\c\o\u\v\er we're trying to respect the squamish nation, tsleil-waututh and musqueam peoples whose lands v\an\c\o\u\v\er is founded on it is a constant reminder to the people of those nations what they're faced with every day they wake up on that land that traditionally was where they lived they created a part called s\t\an\l\ey park in v\an\c\o\u\v\er and they kicked all the indigenous people off sure they made some concessions and said well you know if you were living there we'll let you die there but nobody else can move you know they have those kind of ideas then they created reserves across the water where they relocated the community what they can do is they can look back at the land that they used to live on there was armed relocation so you know they were violently relocated to that new property you can see it in the city downtown eastside is what would they say the poorest zip code in the country poverty is rampant homelessness is rampant there're two thousand people homeless at any one time in v\an\c\o\u\v\er and you think of a rich country like c\an\ad\ why do we have homelessness this is a big issue people are dispossessed all the time.

Bonnie Devine

I'm interested, Adrian, when you say that some of the images that I was juxtaposing with maps and grid marks on the maps was unbroken and I guess I would say it's more complicated than that because the land that I imagine – and I think that Indigenous people recognize – is not only unbroken; it is interwoven, it is braided, it is enmeshed with powers, forces, beings you have spoken about, the spiritual value of these images, David, as well.

And, of course, those forces are interwoven in the land, so it's not only unbroken, it's more powerful and potent than can possibly be imagined. I love the image that you raise, David, of the serpent in the Sudbury region. This is close to where I come from originally. I come from Serpent River; this is a hugely powerful image for us, and it speaks not of fantasy but of knowing. I think this is really one of the difficulties that we have with Canada. patrick, you speak of a kind of terrorism that has occurred on the land and that continues to harm us in our ability to collect ourselves as nations and to actually assert the healing that we want in the reconstitution of our nations that we require. But the reality is that the terror that is coming has already happened to us. We are post-apocalyptic survivors; we are ready for what's coming, but I don't think that the rest of Canada actually is. I think that this is the unsettling prospect that animates most of my work – the idea that the land will ultimately prevail here whether you or I survive it. This is deep, deep knowledge in my people, and I would suspect in yours too, patrick. We are not fearful of that. The living conditions that we enjoy right now are predations, eventually we will be meaningless in the face of what is coming, I think. I just believe that art is an attempt to teach about that.



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Adrian Blackwell, David Fortin, Bonnie Devine, Tiffany Kaewen Dang, luugigyoo patrick reid stewart

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