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Kent Monkman, Still from *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.
Photo: Jody Shapiro, courtesy: the artist.

Kent Monkman's Postindian Diva Warrior: From Simulacral Historian to Embodied Liberator

by David McIntosh

The teller of stories is an artist who relumes the diverse memories of the visual past into the expressions and metaphors of the present.

Gerald Vizenor¹

Over the last few years, Kent Monkman, a Toronto-based artist of Cree ancestry, has undergone a series of personal and artistic transformations that have merged and emerged in an ever-expanding body of work that engages history, desire, identity and freedom. From his reworking of iconic Hudson School and Group of Seven landscape paintings, newly populated with porno-kitsch “cowboy-and-indian” couplings, to his incarnation as Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle, an extreme-rez makeover of the artist as pop diva Cher, Monkman surfs our collective cultural pasts, repeating, inverting, queering and reluming them. At first glance, Monkman might appear only as a highly accomplished mimic of bygone painterly and personal styles, as a fashionista of everything faux in the most vulgar sense of post-modern pastiche, parody and pun. And that he is. But mimicry is simply the fragile, familiar surface of Monkman’s work. While he assumes the position of master in the colonial gaze, asserting his postindian diva warrior self as a determining presence, he exceeds simple role-reversal and simulation by constructing eloquently disjunctive palimpsests that break open to reveal new seams of meaning. Monkman’s uncanny eruptions inevitably exceed themselves, releasing a

flood of postindian histories and becomings to pour out of the simulacral carcass, proliferating out like waves on a troubled pond.

Monkman’s recent art works activate extended webs of meaning, each work standing as a vibrating intersection point that oscillates between illusion and reality, between the artificiality of virtual simulations and the actuality of embodied desires. Presenting a seductive surface, Monkman proceeds to reveal its underlying mechanics by reaching deep inside history to rearrange its genetic code and retroprojecting his postindian warrior self to alter the balance between actuality and virtuality in the past. Monkman operates as a historian of the simulacral, constructing a narrative of liberation that invokes past simulations of colonial dominance while exceeding historical factitiousness. As “androgynous, comic healer and liberator,”² Monkman’s postindian diva warrior is a mutable, recombinant, distributed self, embodied in an expanding and constantly shifting network of artifacts — from pillows, puzzles, performances and paintings, to book works and films. This text is an associatively intertextual and transtemporal project that begins to trace the paths of Monkman’s multiform

transformative and proliferative becomings, as well as the complex extended network of simulated histories, narratives and images that his work simultaneously mimes and mines.

Superior: The Rise of the Artist as Postindian Warrior

I set out with the determination of reaching, ultimately, every tribe of Indians on the Continent of North America, and of bringing home faithful portraits of their principal personages...Armed, equipped, and supplied, I started out and penetrated the vast and pathless wilds which are the great "Far West," to devote myself to describing the living manners, customs, and character of a people who were rapidly passing away from the face of the earth — a dying nation who had no historians or biographers of their own.

— George Catlin³

The simulation of the *indian* is the absence of real natives — the contrivance of the other in the course of dominance. Truly, natives are the stori-

of an imagic presence, and *indians* are the actual absence — the simulations of the tragic primitive...The postindian absolves by irony the nominal simulations of the *indian*, waives centuries of translation and dominance, and resumes the ontic significance of native modernity. Postindians are the new storiors of conversions and survivance; the tricky observance of native stories in the associated context of postmodernity.

— Gerald Vizenor⁴

The evolutionary historicism of George Catlin's nineteenth-century colonial gaze, designed to dominate and exterminate through simulated textual and image misrepresentations served up as factual documentation, along with Gerald Vizenor's theorization of present-day postindian storiors of survivance, offer a conceptual frame for approaching Monkman's transformative personal and artistic trajectory. *Superior* (2001) is perhaps the most eloquent articulation of Monkman's nascent postindian warrior. A direct quotation of Lawren Harris' iconic and endlessly reproduced *North Shore, Lake Superior* (1926), this work displays

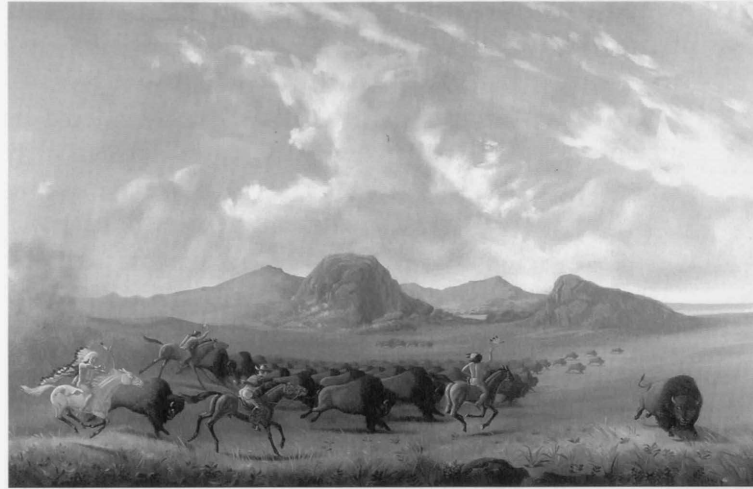


Kent Monkman, *Superior*, 2001. Courtesy: the artist.

Monkman's now-characteristic layering of simulated histories and mimetic image presences in uncannily disjunctive palimpsests. Harris's quoted image initially dominates Monkman's painting, demanding its due as a condensed cipher of both Canadian art and nature. A single dead and decaying tree trunk rises proudly above the rocky landscape, asserting the spirit of nature and the endless cycle of life, as a radiant sun strokes the phallic tree. But Harris' work cannot be brought into sharp focus — the crystal clarity of his original vitalist work is obscured by a scrim of text and the human figures that resolve into an image of two men fucking doggy-style at the base of the tree. Peering through the overlay of lettering, a copper-coloured man wearing nothing but a feathered headdress mounts a bluish-coloured man wearing nothing but a Stetson, hanging onto the enormous tree stump for support. As the shock of the collision between Harris and the "cowboy-and-indian" porn subsides, the lettered overlay begins to resolve into words — "swallowed," "tribal secret," "crotch hair" — and then into an entire text:

His dick moved freely throughout my wet mouth, pushing back as far as possible, then withdrawing. Licking its tip really turned me on. This was exciting. I liked this. I got erect. His prick suddenly became extra hard, his warm cum filling my mouth. I tongued it together and swallowed, receiving a feeling of fulfillment. I rose to my feet. We embraced again. The feathered headband was placed on my head. "You are now man tribal member and Indian blood brother. I name you coyote..." "I'll show my headband to everyone at school. And in the gym shower, display my crotch hair shaped to an arrowhead. My initiation will remain a tribal secret."

The painted letters of the porn text overlay are vaguely camouflaged as part of the landscape, but turn bright red over the warrior's body, then turn blue as they scroll over the cowboy's body. As the competing layers of the painting interact and coalesce into meaning, the work opens up into a realm beyond repetition. As



Kent Monkman, *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter*, 2002. Courtesy: the artist.

Zizek describes it: "What repetition repeats is not the way the past 'effectively was' but the virtuality inherent to the past and betrayed by its past actualization. In this precise sense, the emergence of the new changes the past itself..."⁵

The shimmering waves of histories and narratives that proliferate out around this queer postindian warrior work are provocative and entangled. The fact that Monkman has chosen Harris to quote and relume opens up an enormous network of people, events and imaginings that can only begin to be traced and unpacked here. Harris's obsession with Theosophy, an anti-materialist, esoteric and occultist evolutionary concept of the universe as "an immense sea of vibrations and insubstantial forces,"⁶ where mind mattered more than body and the North was a "source of Spiritual flow,"⁷ eventually lead him to abandon his renderings of uninhabited land as he "evolved" into painting pure abstractions and mathematical equations. This concern with purity was echoed in the work of his contemporary and colleague Duncan Campbell Scott, a Confederation poet and commissioner of the Department of Indian Affairs from the late 1880s through to his retirement in 1932. Widely regarded as a primary force behind racial purification through the

Treaty removal of First Nations from traditional lands and the brutal assimilation of Christian residential schools, Scott traveled extensively in the same lands as Harris, rendering in words what Harris rendered in paints. Scott's racist view is eminently visible in such poems as *The Half-Breed Girl* (1906) and *The Onondaga Madonna* (1898), the latter containing some of his most notorious rhymes:

She stands full-throated and with careless pose,
This woman of a weird and waning race,
The tragic savage lurking in her face,
Where all her pagan passion burns and glows;
Her blood is mingled with her ancient foes,
And thrills with war and wildness in her veins;
Her rebel lips are dabbled with the stains
Of feuds and forays and her father's woes.

And closer in the shawl about her breast,
The latest promise of her nation's doom,
Paler than she her baby clings and lies,
The primal warrior gleaming from his eyes;
He sulks, and burdened with his infant gloom,
He draws his heavy brows and will not rest.

Rounding out this group of simulators of the "tragic primitive"⁸ was Edmund Morris, a Toronto artist first contracted by the Ontario government to document D.C. Scott's Treaty signings by painting portraits of the First Nations leaders who took part. Drowned in the St. Lawrence River at Ile d'Orleans in 1913, Morris left the many First Nations artifacts he collected between 1907 and 1911 to the Royal Ontario Museum. Morris's "tragic archive"⁹ is now on display, embedded in a thick layer of institutional resimulations of the past in the recently opened First Peoples gallery at the ROM. Excerpts from his diary are also displayed as part of this collection, as the simulacral interpretive history of the collector that replays the simultaneous production and disappearance of the subjects of his portraits. Strangle Wolf, who Morris describes as "gorgeous in buckskin and beadwork," gave Morris his buckskins in exchange for being painted, but his portrait is nowhere to be seen

in the ROM exhibit, just his buckskins. Echoing George Catlin's racist and melancholy memorializing of the First Nations people he wrote and painted out of Manifest Destiny's history, Lawren Harris praised Morris, suggesting that, "in years to come, the western work of Morris will stand for much in our memories of the vanished red man."¹⁰

The emergence of the postindian warrior as queer in *Superior* provokes another tangle of history and narratives that resonate with centuries-old accounts of European conquest, where simulated generalizations of homosexual activity underpinned hatred for and repression of all aboriginal peoples. As Hernán Cortés reports in accounts of his exploits in Mexico in 1519: "In addition to children and men and women being killed and offered in sacrifice, we have learned and have been informed that they are doubtless all sodomites and engage in that abominable sin. Punishment might serve as a further occasion of warning and dread to those who still rebel, and thus dissuade them from such great evils as those which they work in the service of the devil."¹¹ In *Sex and Conquest*, a detailed unpacking of European accounts of sexualities and genders encountered in the 16th century in the Americas, historian Richard Trexler confirms that his work to recuperate sexual differences is entirely dependent on racist, exterminatory simulations of the *indian* that vary only slightly in vituperative detail according to the motivations of the source, from priest as saviour, to bureaucrat as collaborator.¹² The actuality of past sexualities that Trexler attempts to decode from biased accounts is mimetically restaged by Monkman and produced as new meaning that reshapes this past in *Superior*. The strategic hemispheric hatred and punishment of homosexuality that was implanted in the Americas in the 1500s flourished until the 1950s, when a range of liberatory practices began to undermine that deeply sedimented simulated history. This period of change offers yet another crucial layer of meaning just beneath the surface of *Superior*, Richard Amory's literary simulation of the *indian* in the wildly popular 1966 novel *The Song of the Loon*, which Monkman recalls mimetically in both

the image of the “cowboy-and-indian” fucking and the text overlay. A short quote from *The Song of the Loon* underscores this transhistorical resonance:

Singing Heron’s vibrant, pulsating cock rose straight from his crotch, Ephraim stared in wonder at its dark strength, at the testicles hanging loosely between strong thighs. He leaned over and touched the head of the Indian’s cock with his tongue; it glistened in the sunlight, smooth as a flower petal, soft on his lips. Singing Heron thrust gently upward; his belly hair touched Ephraim’s lips...He burst with overpowering urgency, quivering tensely, in aching gasps. They lay embraced in the sun until the shadows of the Douglas Firs fell across their brown and white interlocking bodies.¹³

Amory, whose real name was Richard Love, wrote the first positive post-Stonewall gay pulp novel of explicit man-to-man love. A utopian tale of the sexual healing of the Brotherhood of the Loon set in the Pacific Northwest, *The Song of the Loon* announces itself as a self-aware simulation; as stated in the preface, Amory “wishes it clearly understood that he has, unfortunately, never known or heard of a single Indian even remotely resembling, for instance, Singing Heron or Bear-who-dreams. He has taken certain very European characters from the novels of Jorge De Montemayor and Gaspar Gil Polo, painted them a gay aesthetic red, and transplanted them to the American wilderness.” Despite similarities between Amory and Monkman’s mimetic processes and liberatory intents, the queer postindian warrior that emerges in *Superior* teases out the simulated absences in Amory’s porn and recombines historical tropes and narrative patterns to assert a new actual presence that reconfigures pleasure, representation and power. In *Superior* and related works of the period, Monkman’s artistic and personal transformation activated an emergent postindian queer warrior self who exists in the seams of temporal disruptions and imagic disjunctions, and who mimes the simulacral ruins of the past to create liberatory “*pictomyths* without closure”¹⁴ that reconfigure both past and present.

Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle: Becoming Postindian Diva Warrior

History amounts only to the set of preconditions that one leaves behind in order to “become,” that is, to create something new.

— Gilles Deleuze¹⁵

The transformative, liberatory project of the queer postindian warrior that Monkman launched in 2001 in works like *Superior* developed in different directions in subsequent works where the artist stepped into the frame. Monkman embodied the warrior, and in so doing remade him. He clarified his vision of the queer postindian warrior in a series of paintings produced in 2001 and 2002, where the “cowboy-and-indian” couplings of earlier works were transposed, with minor variations, into carefully quoted works of nineteenth century painters George Catlin and Paul Kane. Works like *Heaven and Earth* (2001),¹⁶ *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (2001) and *Cree Master* (2001) repeat the motif of white cowboy buttocks spread for the queer postindian warrior to mount, this time under the roiling cloudy skies of Paul Kane’s romantic landscapes. Once again inserting his own imagined evidence of the past into art works that falsely claimed factuality, Monkman reaches deeper into the palimpsest play of representational histories, into the dusty image core of the tropes of power. The queer postindian warrior project reached a peak with *Fort Edmonton* (2003), a quotation of the eponymous work by Paul Kane that reframes the original by stepping back to give it an extended foreground where Monkman’s simulated ironic narrative of sexual domination is staged. *Fort Edmonton* is visible on the misty horizon, while the foreground is a magical, erection-inducing clearing in the woods. In the lower left foreground, a wild pinto stallion mounts a saddled and bridled stallion, pulling the reins of the bottom horse tight in its teeth. In the lower right foreground, the queer postindian warrior pulls tight on the ropes that hold a half naked and entirely erect white man’s arms behind his back. In the centre foreground, rocks carved with petroglyphs of prehistoric homosexual fellatio complete



Kent Monkman as Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle, 2005. Photo: Tony Charnock, courtesy: the artist.

Monkman's simulated transtemporal narrative of queer postindian warrior domination.

In 2002, a dramatic shift in Monkman's transformative project appears as he begins to reshape the relationship between actual being and virtual becoming. He continues time-shifting, retroprojecting his contemporary image constructs into simulacral histories, but he also begins to shape-shift or, perhaps more accurately, gender-shift. His revisioning and retrofitting of history assumes subjective agency by invoking simulacral histories, then invading, inhabiting and embodying them fully. The signal of this dramatic personal and artistic transformation is the appearance of the artist in his paintings, and the presentation of self as Miss Chief

Share Eagle Testickle. Miss Chief is in many ways the queer postindian warrior's double, a repetition of the copper-coloured warrior in *Superior*, with the same square jaw, the same muscled chest and the same enormous genitalia. However, Miss Chief is not "gorgeous in buckskin and beadwork," but gorgeous in a Bob Mackie-inspired floor-length feathered headdress, 12 inch platform moccasins and a flowing diaphanous breechcloth. In *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter* (2002), Miss Chief rides a white stallion bareback in a buffalo hunt, bow poised to shoot an arrow into the naked buttocks of the cowboy on horseback just in front of her. A delicious repetition of Paul Kane's *Half-Breeds Running Buffalo*, *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter* cuts across simulated histories and the subject/object differences that construct the colonial gaze's

fetish facticity by displaying the artist — in this case, Miss Chief and Paul Kane — as subjective hunters that are always already constructed in the frame.

Miss Chief continues her denunciations of linear temporal succession and unitary subjectivity in *Artist and Model* (2003), where the simulacral stakes grew even higher. Quoting himself quoting Paul Kane, Monkman repeats the background landscape and foreground clearing of his version of *Fort Edmonton*, reversed from left to right.¹⁷ The simulacral visual narrative in *Artist and Model* appears simpler than that of *Fort Edmonton* at first, given there are only two figures in the foreground. But the two figures in *Artist and Model* are supercharged presences that constitute perhaps the most disjunctive and excessive repetition and retroprojection in Monkman's work to date. The artist is of course Monkman as Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle, posed in the lower right foreground with her back to the viewer. Standing in front of a tipi-style artist's easel, bow and arrow in one hand and brush in the other, she paints a glyph of her

model on a piece of birch bark. Her model is the cowboy, naked except for Stetson and boots, tied to a tree, pierced by arrows but erect in sublime pain. At the cowboy's feet, a view camera lies toppled on the ground, hacked into with a hatchet.

In addition to miming and inverting the fetish mechanics of the colonial gaze as metaphor for the hunt, this new "pictomyth" pulses explosively with the simulacral historical traces that transect and sustain it. Monkman's repetition of Paul Kane's romantic landscapes to the point of banality underscores Kane's continued domination of simulacral histories of the "tragic primitive" in Canada. Even the new First Peoples Gallery at the ROM has been organized around a central passage, painted a colorectal pink, that has been covered with Paul Kane paintings and pages from his diaries.¹⁸ Included in the ROM display is *Medicine Mask Dance* (1848-1856), one of Kane's most reproduced paintings, which is an acknowledged work of fantasy and a mimetic quotation of Catlin's *Dance to the Berdash*, which is in turn the



Kent Monkman,
Artist and Model, 2003.
Courtesy: the artist.



Kent Monkman, *Fort Edmonton*, 2003. Courtesy: the artist.

only image of sexual and gender difference produced by the colonial gaze that Kane then elided in his version. Kane's diaries are equally simulacral, having most likely been written by someone else. *Artist and Model* also reactivates a range of simulated histories of sexual and gender difference, perhaps most obviously, the martyrdom of the cowboy model cast as the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, the most notoriously kitsch icon of closeted, sadomasochistic, homoerotic ecstasy. Not surprisingly, the widely accepted representation of the lithe Christian convert Sebastian's death by arrows for refusing the advances of the lecherous pagan Emperor Diocletian is a simulation. Surviving the arrows and continuing to proselytize, Sebastian actually came to a much less elegant end; he was clubbed to death and his body dumped

in a Roman sewer. Monkman's incarnation as Miss Chief further invokes the 16th century Spanish conquest strategy of gendering male enemies as female, as well as the words of Bernardo de Sahagun, a key chronicler of the conquest: "He shows himself womanly and effeminate in everything, in walking or in talking. For all of this he deserves to be burned."¹⁹ That murderous sentiment was echoed in accounts of first Spanish contact with Native drag in 1513 when "in his trek across Panama, Balboa found the brother of the cacique of Quaraca and some of his men dressed as women and practicing sodomy. The conquistador quickly threw some forty of these transvestites to the dogs, the first record of Spanish punishment of sodomy on the American continent."²⁰

Artist and Model clearly belies Catlin's willfully erroneous claim that First Nations "had no historians or biographers of their own," (p. 89) but it also revisits Catlin's refusal to portray gender differences and his strategic deployment of the magic of representation to dominate. In his diaries, Catlin acknowledges having encountered a range of First Nations men who exceeded gender codes:

Indian beaux or dandies may be seen on every pleasant day, strutting and parading around the village in the most beautiful and unsoiled dresses... They are called "faint hearts" or "old women" by the whole tribe, and... acquire celebrity among the women and children for the beauty and elegance of their personal appearance, although they are looked upon as drones in society. These gay bucks may be seen astride of their pied or dappled ponies, with a fan in the right hand, made of a turkey's tail, with whip and a fly-brush attached to the wrist of the same hand... The fops stand about my door from day to day in their best dresses and best attitudes, as if in hopes I will select them as models. (p.159)

However, despite his stated commitment to "bringing home faithful portraits of their principal personages" (p.89) and despite his obvious fascination with these "gay bucks," Catlin never once selected them as his models. This fetish absence that Catlin constructs in his diaries is fully articulated and the fetish roles inverted in Monkman's *Artist and Model*. In staging the becoming of Monkman the artist as Miss Chief the artist as the invert of Catlin the artist, this painting asserts a mutable, recombinant, collective self that transcends simple doubled subject/object relations and assumes control of the representational magic that emerges from the oscillation between the artificiality of virtual simulations and the actuality of embodied power. Both Catlin and the people he was painting were well aware of this oscillatory representational magic, as evidenced once again in his diaries:

These people are astonished by the operations of my brush. The art of portrait-painting was a subject entirely new to them, and of course unthought of. My appearance here has commenced a new era in medicine or mystery... They pronounced me the greatest medicine-man in the world. They said I had made living beings. They said they could see their chiefs alive, in two places... The squaws generally agreed they had discovered life enough in my pictures to render my medicine too great for the Mandans. They said such an operation could not be performed without taking away from the original something of his existence... They commenced a mournful and doleful chant against me, crying and weeping bitterly through the village, proclaiming me a most dangerous man, one who could make living persons by looking at them, and at the same time could, as a matter of course, destroy life in the same way, if I chose. (p.157)

Given Catlin's preeminent role in extending and asserting colonial domination through his racist simulations of the tragic primitive, of a "simple race of beings... whose term of national existence is nearly expired," (p.89) the women, the gendered enemy, quite rightly perceived his destructive intent. Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle extends her multiform, networked self further into Catlin's web of representational magic, occupying and displacing him in her 2005 bookwork *The Moral Landscape: Hunting Scenes and Other Amusements of the Great Wild West*, where Monkman retro-projects his emergent postindian diva warrior self into the nineteenth century to undermine and reconfigure the simulacral history of dominance through representational sleight of hand:

On my return to North America from the continent of Europe, where I passed considerable time in studying the customs and manners of the European male in his native habitat, I determined to devote whatever talents and proficiency I possessed to the painting of a series of pictures illustrative of the North American White Male and scenery. The sub-

ject was one in which I felt a deep interest since boyhood, having become intimately familiar in my native land with the hundreds of trappers, coureurs du bois, priests and farmers who were representative of the noblest races of Europe. But alas, the face of the white man is changing, all traces of his former self is being altered through contact with the red man. It has become my undertaking to record all manner of his customs and practices as I trust these pictures will possess not only an interest for the curious, but also an intrinsic value to the historian. (preface)

Subtitled “Wanderings of a two-spirited Cree half-breed artist among the white men of North America, from the Kentucky Valley to the Western Plains and the Rocky Mountains,” this bookwork deploys the mimetic power of doubled representation to assert the postindian diva warrior as alive and occupying multiple times, spaces and bodies simultaneously.

In April 2005, Monkman staged a performance at the Drake Hotel, curated by Robert Houle, in which he completed the virtual process of becoming to assume the paradoxically simulacral embodied reality of Miss Chief. Existing to that point as the artist’s other, as a constructed cipher that stood in for the artist in his self-referential paintings, Miss Chief’s Drake performance allowed her to exit pure representation to occupy the same space, time and body as Monkman. Billed as a series of *tableaux vivants* featuring Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle, the performance actually played out more like the current hit reality TV show Project Runway. From a carefully guarded dressing room on the second floor of the hotel, Miss Chief emerged with considerable fanfare, descending the staircase into the Drake’s main dining room to model a series of simulacral fashion creations. Of the four outfits modeled by the artist, two merited special attention. The Warrior Princess gown, designed by Monkman, consisted of a floor-length sheath skirt in grey and black camouflage, slit to the hip and topped with a scarlet-sequined stretch tank emblazoned with the Mohawk Warrior

flag. The outfit was accessorized with heavy duty shit-kicking boots and mirrored aviator sunglasses. Monkman’s Warrior Princess simultaneously recalls Xena, lesbian pop culture icon of the 1990s, and the 1990 Oka Crisis, when the people of Kanasatake fought the governments of Oka, Quebec and Canada to protect their traditional lands.

Miss Tippy Canoe, the other noteworthy simulacral fashion creation in the performance, also invoked a key battle between colonial powers and First Nations. Designed by artists Bonnie Devine and Paul Gardner, Miss Tippy Canoe’s gown was in fact a wedding dress, constructed from dun-coloured bug screen embroidered with tiny wooden canoes, then mounded into poofy headdress and bustle. The allure of this gown was sealed by a fur jockstrap, fashioned from deceased Globe and Mail film and art critic Jay Scott’s coonskin



Kent Monkman as Miss Tippy Canoe, performance at Drake Hotel, 2005. Photo: Lisa Klapstock, courtesy: the artist.

cap. Miss Tippy is a paradoxical embodied simulation that relumes the 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe, so-called as it took place at the confluence of the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers in present-day Indiana. In this battle, US General William Henry Harrison, charged with securing and governing the newly acquired Indiana territories, defeated Tecumseh, who was building a First Nations confederation on the basis of Joseph Brant's concept that the land was owned in common by all First Nations and ownership couldn't be transferred without agreement by all.²¹

Miss Chief and Monkman merged into one magically paradoxical virtual and actual self in the Drake fashion *tableaux*. As they continue to develop their distributed, recombinant self into an extended network of proliferating postindian diva warrior incarnations that shift time, space and body, their personal, artistic and liberatory transformations will undoubtedly continue and their genetic re-engineering of simulacral histories of dominance will surely extend out into exciting new fields. Already, the transformations in Monkman's postindian project over the past five years have been dramatic. The postindian warrior has shifted from queer to diva, from vaguely perceived to flamboyant, from pictomyth to performance, from a dualist vision of artist and model to a singular but paradoxical embodiment of the simulacral. In so doing, Monkman's postindian diva warrior has revealed herself as a crucial artist-storier of our time whose revisions of memory and re-embodiments of simulated absences transform both historical being and new becomings.

Notes

1. Gerald Vizenor. *The People Named the Chippewa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.113.
2. Vizenor. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) p.89.
3. George Catlin. *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians In Two Volumes* (London: Author, 1841) p.89.
4. *Manifest Manners*, p.2.
5. Slavoj Zizek. *Organs without Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p.12.
6. Erik Davis. *Techgnosis* (New York: Three River Press, 1998), p. 50.

7. Roald Nasgaard. *The Mystic North: Symbolist Landscape Painting in Northern Europe and North America 1890-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984), p.167.
8. *Manifest Manners*, p. 1.
9. *ibid.*, p. 2.
10. Margaret McBurney. "Looking Back." *The Newsletter of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto* 65:3 (March 2006), p. 3.
11. Hernán Cortés. *Cartas y documentos* (Mexico City: 1963), p.25.
12. Richard Trexler. *Sex and conquest: gendered violence, political order, and the European conquest of the Americas* (London: Polity Press, 1995), p. 3.
13. Richard Amory. *The Song of the Loon* (San Diego: Greenleaf Classics, 1966), p.14.
14. *Manifest Manners*, p.100.
15. Gilles Deleuze. *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.170.
16. This Monkman work is a quotation of Paul Kane's *Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo* (c. 1851–1856), a work that in turn borrowed heavily from European romantic renderings of landscape and quoted the composition of an 1816 Italian engraving depicting two Romans hunting a bull.
17. Monkman also quotes himself quoting Kane in *Pilgrim's Progress* (2003), where the stallions are replaced by a dappled lawn, and the queer postindian warrior and the tied-up cowboy are replaced by a leering, erect queer postindian warrior pushing an arrow into the fleshy pink stomach of a half naked and erect altar boy.
18. Acclaimed Anishinaabe artist and curator Robert Houle's reaction to the Kane presence in the First Peoples Gallery was unequivocal and prominently quoted in Sarah Milroy's 21 January 2006 *Globe and Mail* review of the new gallery: "What's a dead white guy doing in the middle of our gallery?"
19. Bernardino de Sahagún. *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva Espana* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1956), p.170.
20. Trexler, p.82.
21. Harrison's victory over Tecumseh became part of his successful 1840 presidential election campaign, in the form of the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," a phrase that is most commonly used to name pairs of house cats. The "Tyler" portion of the slogan referred to Harrison's younger, more handsome runningmate who became U.S. President when Harrison died in office in 1841 after serving for only thirty days.

This text is excerpted from an extended critical analysis of Monkman's body of work, including his recent film and video works. Many thanks to Kent Monkman, Miss Chief, Robert Houle, Paul Gardner, Dustin Peters and Noam Gonick for their generous assistance in the development of this article.

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