



Adrian Stimson, *Aggressive Assimilation*, 2014, Framed photo, Archive print, 72" x 21", Collection of the Artist. Photo Credit: Adrian Stimson Sr..

**PAUL ZACHARIAS**

Born and raised in Manitoba, Paul Zacharias graduated from Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba in 1999. His work deals in the relations between artists and the states that they inhabit; those that they live and work in, and those they struggle against. Zacharias's work has exhibited across Canada and the United States.

**SCOTT BENESIINAABANDAN**

Scott Benesiinaabandan is an Anishinabe intermedia artist who works primarily in photography, video, audio and printmaking. Scott has completed international residencies in Australia and the North of Ireland, and has undertaken international collaborative projects in the U.K and Ireland. Benesiinaabandan has taken part in several notable group exhibitions across Canada and internationally.

**ADRIAN STIMSON**

Adrian Stimson is a member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation in southern Alberta. He is an interdisciplinary artist, curator and educator with a BFA with from the Alberta College of Art & Design and MFA from the University of Saskatchewan. His paintings performance and sculptural work has exhibited extensively in Canada and internationally.

**MICHAEL FARNAN**

Michael Farnan is a multidisciplinary artist currently living in Victoria Harbour, Ontario. He has exhibited nationally since 2000, has taught at the university level since 2009, and is a published author of critical theory and review. Currently he is a SSHRC funded, studio-based PhD candidate in Art and Visual Culture at Western University in London, Ontario.

**CHERYL L'HIRONDELLE**

Cheryl L'Hirondelle is an Alberta-born, mixed-blood, community-engaged artist, singer, songwriter and media art curator. Since the early 1980s, L'Hirondelle has created, performed and presented work in a variety of artistic disciplines, including music, performance art, theatre, storytelling, installation and new media. Her creative practice investigates a Cree worldview (nêhiyawin) in contemporary time-space.

**AYUMI GOTO**

Ayumi Goto is a performance artist and developing painter, currently based in Kelowna, Syilx Territory. Born in Canada, she draws upon her Japanese heritage to trouble sedimented notions of nation-building, cultural belonging, and activism. Her recent work has exhibited at the Shingwauk Residential School Centre at Algoma University. Goto is pursuing her Ph.D. in Communication Studies at Simon Fraser University.

**PETER MORIN**

Peter Morin is a Tahltan Nation performance artist who studied art at the Emily Carr Institute, completed his MFA at UBC Okanagan, and currently teaches at Brandon University. Morin's artistic practice and research investigates the impact between indigenous culturally-based practices and western settler colonialism. He has exhibited and performed widely in Canada and Internationally.

**JAIMIE ISAAC**

Jaimie Isaac is a freelance interdisciplinary artist and curator of Anishnabe/British heritage, member of the Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba. Isaac has BA in Art History, an Arts and Cultural Management Certificate from the University of Winnipeg and is an MA candidate from the University of British Columbia Okanagan focusing on Indigenous Curatorial Praxis.

**LEAH DECTER**

Based in Winnipeg, Treaty 1 territory, Leah Decter is an inter-media artist whose work contends with histories and contemporary conditions of settler colonialism and white dominance in Canada through a critical white settler lens. Decter has exhibited, presented and screened her work widely in Canada and internationally. She is currently a PhD Candidate in Cultural Studies at Queens University.



Peter Morin, *they are all somebody's daughter*, 2015, installation: traditional rattles made of hide, willow trees, corn, collection of the Artist(s). Photo Credit: Peter Morin.



Ayumi Goto, *geisha gyrl: salmon run*, 2015, Video: performance, running time: 18 min, credits, collection of the Artist. Photo Credit: Tannis Nielsen.



Michael Farnan, *Pierce Brosnan / Grey Owl Transformation Mask*, 2014, Wood, cardboard, hardware, h: 20" x w: 22" x depth: 11", collection of the Artist. Photo Credit: Taimaz Moslemian

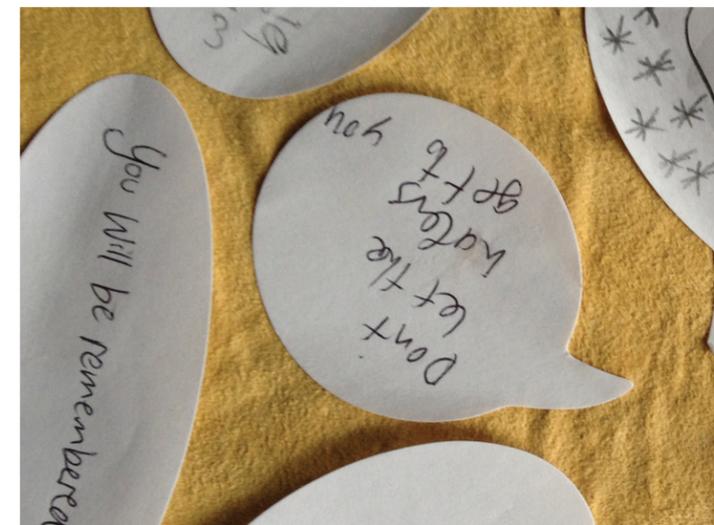


**MAMMO'WIIANG TO MAKE CHANGE**

**AYUMI GOTO, CHERYL L'HIRONDELLE, ADRIAN STIMSON, MICHAEL FARNAN, SCOTT BENESIINAABANDAN, PAUL ZACHARIAS, AND PETER MORIN**



Scott Benesiinaabandan and Paul Zacharias, *Sandbox*, 2015, Installation: wood, plexiglas, silicon sand, Video & Audio: 93' x 93' x 54", collection of the Artist(s). Photo Credit: Paul Zacharias.



Cheryl L'Hirondelle, *Wintercount: Can't Break Us*, 2015, installation: Deer hide, post-it notes, stones, audio: Can't Break Us, from the Why the Caged Bird Sings series, collection of the Artist(s). Photo Credit: Cheryl L'Hirondelle

**GUEST CURATED BY LEAH DECTER AND JAIMIE ISAAC  
MAY 21 - JULY 4, 2015**

**ART GALLERY OF SOUTHWESTERN MANITOBA**  
710 Rosser Avenue, Unit 2  
Brandon, Manitoba, R7A 0K9  
[agsm.ca](http://agsm.ca)

Mammo'wiiang is an Anishinaabemowin word meaning gathering. *Mammo'wiiang to make change* is an exhibition highlighting artworks that address social, cultural, economic, and political conditions arising from Canada's ongoing colonial project. Although persistent national narratives often serve to evade the realities of our colonial past and its contemporary guises, the colonial systems imposed in these territories are firmly embedded in the fabric of Canadian society as we know it today. Undeniably we all live under a 'dark cloud'<sup>i</sup> of the past that is ubiquitous in the inequitable conditions so often shaping our everyday lives and relations in the present.

Geographically situated in the place now known as Brandon, in Treaty 1<sup>ii</sup> territory, this exhibition brings attention to interrelated histories on this land, disparate experiences of colonial nation-building past and present, and sites of activation and resistance that aspire to non-colonial attitudes in the present and future.<sup>ii</sup> As we gather here, we are reminded that Brandon, like much of southern Canada, is predominantly populated by white settlers and their worldviews. Its institutions - a college, university, army base, correctional facilities, and former residential school - together with its large agricultural industry, are testament to the colonial logics of Indigenous dispossession and presumptions of European superiority that persist within the beliefs and ways of life that dominate Canadian society.

For over 500 years Indigenous peoples have enacted resistance to the structures and relationships of colonization. Increasingly it is understood that these decolonizing actions undertaken by Indigenous peoples must be met by a commitment for change from non-Indigenous people. Artists are among those at the leading edge of such efforts to unpack and confront colonial legacies. As Metis artist, curator and writer David Garneau suggests, "Cultural decolonization is the perpetual struggle to make both Indigenous and settler peoples aware of the complexity of our shared colonial condition, and how this legacy informs every person and institution in these territories."<sup>iii</sup> Bringing divergent yet interrelated perspectives into conversation, *Mammo'wiiang to make change* speaks to a spectrum of decolonizing imperatives mobilized by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists.

*Mammo'wiiang to make change* considers the urgency of working towards these goals, and acknowledges the significance of culturally responsive collaboration in this context. It has evolved from our four-year collaboration co-activating (*official denial*) *trade value in progress*, a project that has engaged participants from across the country. This project embodies layered collaborations that demonstrate a commitment to activating cross-cultural dialogue from multiple Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. Functioning amid unbalanced and unequal conditions consequent to colonization, it has been critical for our collaboration to contend with the systemic colonial presence within the land, relations, institutions, and government and the resulting effects on socio-political-economic-spiritual domains throughout this space now called Canada. This exhibition's foundational connection to collaboration, as manifested in long-term relationships, lends itself to an inclusive

model and a springboard for dialogue. In our selection we have considered the artists' individual practices as well as the collaborative practices that tie them together through relationships, which, like ours, extend over time and outside the work in this exhibition.

This exhibition alludes to dynamic spaces of unsettlement; spaces of engagement in "the liminal and intellectual borderlands where indigenous and non-indigenous scholars," and we would add artists, "encounter one another, working to remember, redefine, reverse the devastation of the original colonialist encounter."<sup>iv</sup> The artworks evoke relationships across cultures, generations, histories, species and experience, triggering resonant exchanges between individuals, collectives and the land. The artists envision and enact notions of transformation on multiple planes working with trans-disciplinary proficiency to reveal and interfere with colonial structures and their implications within and outside the borders of the Canadian state.

Adrian Stimson's work, *Aggressive Assimilation* introduces us to two framed photographs; one of Adrian as a young boy and one of his father. In between the photographs is a stark image of the Old Sun Residential School members of Stimson's family attended. By placing the residential school between their photographs, the viewer can at once draw a connection to their familial experience and also bear witness to the physical detachment of family that characterizes intergenerational affects of residential schools. The use of the archives compels the viewer to contend with the past in order to understand the present. This is a moving intergenerational collaboration between father and son and a poignant manifestation of working together to decolonize, understand, heal, and transcend the colonial present. Once again invoking Stimson's father's experiences, the installation *10* extends these enveavours referencing sports as a tool of both assimilation and achievement; a fraught site of 'winning at any cost.'<sup>v</sup>

Through interactions with a co-created song, Cheryl L'Hirondelle's *Wintercount: Can't Break Us* brings the audience into dialogue with Bannock Kid, Cruz, AWCP, Ryder, IWA, Redman, Biter, Lil Durk, Key Lo G and Lil Bear, Indigenous youth in detention at the Paul Dojack Youth Center. This work evokes the wintercount, a plains tradition of pictorial accounts painted on animal hides, to tell their stories of resilience and survivance. With this recalling, *Wintercount: Can't Break Us* examines narratives of the past and present using Indigenous frameworks in order to challenge colonial conditions. The lyrics are inspiring, hopeful, empowered and strong. Invoking "pre-contact radical inclusivity"<sup>vi</sup> this work invites the audience into conversation with the young men through post-it notes affixed to deer hide. Speaking to their song through messages that will make their way back to the songwriters this work becomes a dialogue that impinges on the confines of incarceration.

The installation *because they are all somebody's daughter*, Peter Morin's collaboration with Debbie Huntinghawk, Barbara Blind, Colleen Granger, Tyanna Bun, and Shannon Guimond, students from Brandon University's Advanced Aboriginal Art

<sup>i</sup> First Peoples who occupied these territories were dispossessed of large areas of land by the Crown in exchange for commitments to secure reserve land, payments, the rights to hunt/fish and other agreements which has been unevenly upheld.

<sup>ii</sup> David Garneau, 2012 *Imaginary spaces of conciliation and reconciliation*. In Dewer, J. & Goto, A. (Eds.). *Reconcile this! West Coast Line, 74* (46-2). 28-38

and Design class, presents the viewer with a circle of fifty two rattles, hanging still, beckoning sound. This work brings attention to the epidemic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as both a eulogizing gesture and activated memorial. As Barbara Blind suggests, "these rattles are intended to honour the spirits of all of these women, daughters of our nations."<sup>vii</sup> The rattles await activation to interrupt the dangerous silence that has for too long surrounded this issue. In both their still and sounding states, the rattles reverberate with the significance of these women's lives. As the audience is invited to sound the rattles, this work evokes agency, continuum, healing, and the critical role of engagement.

Paul Zacharias and Scott Benesiinaabandan's collaborative work, *Sandbox* contends with practices of resource extraction in the name of 'progress' on Indigenous territories in Canada and globally. This work transforms the familiar to spur personal and interactive acts of discovery. The viewer is invited to literally search for and uncover what lies underneath the surface; truths about imperial assaults undertaken by Canada's mining interests and their impacts on ways of life and the environment outside its borders. The audio voices the testimonies of Indigenous people from Guatemala conveying the affects of this reality on their community, while the video animates the environmental destruction and dispossession. As we toy with these discoveries, the playful embodied explorations implore us to consider our vulnerabilities and responsibilities to the land.

Michael Farnan takes a critical stance on the role of art and culture as conscripted within colonially embedded identities. Farnan's *Pierce Brosnan/Grey Owl and Kevin Costner/Wolf Transformation Masks* speak back to a long legacy of the appropriation of Indigenous identity and culture, revealing the mechanics of settler desire through the juxtaposition of contemporary Hollywood icons and deliberate references to Coast Salish masks. In Farnan's drawing, *Group of Seven with Wolf's Head and Study of Dead Hind*, the construction of the Canadian cultural landscape is framed through a masculine, idealistic, mythical perspective, one that includes an erasure of First Peoples. Farnan's work dismantles these colonial constructions by foregrounding what have become normalized acts that work to perpetuate dominant settler mythologies.

Ayumi Goto's decolonial actions of transformation in *Geisha Gyrl: Salmon Run* are soundly situated in knowledges rooted in the land, and critical reflections of generational experience. This performance honours the salmon's experience and critical role celebrating their homecoming after near erasure from the lands of Sylix territory (Kelowna, BC) where Goto now lives. Drawing on the salmon's cyclical and durational resilience in its upstream journey of regeneration, and in the face of the ongoing impacts from dams along the Columbia River systems, Goto contemplates responses to racialized and gendered discrimination. The gender/species transformations she embodies disturbs colonial binaries that work to isolate, define, limit, and reduce. Witnessing this performance appeals for deep understandings of the complexity of interpersonal and interspecial relations within a shared land.

<sup>vii</sup> Grande, Sandy, 2008 *Red Pedagogy: The Un-Methodology. Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Denzin, Norman K., Yvonna S. Lincoln and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, eds. Pp 236

<sup>viii</sup> Andrian Stimson, Artists Statement, 10, 2015

<sup>ix</sup> Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Artist Statement, *Wintercount: Can't Break Us*, 2015

Through gatherings such as this exhibition, new paradigms for relations in and to this land can be begin to be asserted. As Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux artist Dana Claxton maintains "the art community has helped lead the decolonization process in the exhibition space..." which "is the site where the most radical and polemic critiques of Canadian society have taken place."<sup>viii</sup> The artists in this exhibition reflect this assertion, activating sites of connectivity that resist and exceed colonial constructs. Through considered invocations of the everyday and the uncanny the works stimulate embodied and intellectual engagement, drawing the viewer in to candid, through-provoking encounters. Standing together across disciplines and cultures with a sense of both cohesion and tension, they bring awareness to the historical schisms between Canada and Indigenous Peoples within the larger complex political, cultural, social, and economic interests of colonialism and imperialism. The works in *Mammo'wiiang to make change* engender a dynamic provocation for audiences to enter into an ongoing dialogue that confronts colonial realities and considers how everyday lives, actions, and futures intersect with these overarching concerns.

- Leah Decter and Jaimie Isaac

Guest curators

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**LIST OF WORKS**

**ADRIAN STIMSON**

*Aggressive Assimilation*, 2014 Framed photo, Archive print 72" x 21", Collection of the Artist

*10*, 2015 Installation: Bison Robe, hockey equipment and trophy 7' x 4' x 1', Collection of the Artist

**PETER MORIN**

in collaboration with BARBARA BLIND, DEBBIE HUNTINGHAWK, COLLEEN GRANGER, SHANNON GUIMOND and TYANNA BUN *they are all somebody's daughter*, 2015, Installation: traditional rattles made of hide, willow trees, corn, Collection of the Artist(s)

**MICHAEL FARNAN**

*Pierce Brosnan / Grey Owl Transformation Mask*, 2014, Wood, cardboard, hardware, 20" x 22" x 11", Collection of the Artist

*Kevin Costner / Wolf Transformation Mask*, 2015, Wood, cardboard, hardware, h: 20" x w: 22" x depth: 11", Collection of the Artist.

*Group of Seven with Wolf's Head and Study of Dead Hind*, 2014, Ink, Charcoal, and Chalk on Paper, 50" x 75", Collection of the Artist.

**AYUMI GOTO**

*geisha gyrl: salmon run*, 2015, Video: performance, Running time: 18 min, Collection of the Artist.

**SCOTT BENESIINAABANDAN AND PAUL ZACHARIAS**  
*Sandbox*, 2015, Installation: wood, plexiglas, silicon sand, Video & Audio: 93' x 93' x 54", Collection of the Artist(s).

**CHERYL L'HIRONDELLE**

*Wintercount: Can't Break Us*, 2015, Installation: Deer hide, post-it notes, stones , Audio: *Can't Break Us*, from the *Why the Caged Bird Sings* series, Collection of the Artist(s). Lyrics by: Bannock Kid, Cruz, Ryder, IWA, Key Lo G, Lil Durk, Redman, AWCP, Lil Bear, Biter, E.Carrier; Music by: C. L'Hirondelle and M. Schmidt.



<sup>i</sup> Reference to the 1871 Treaty 1 signing in which the Indigenous leaders stated that a 'dark cloud' had to be removed before they could begin negotiations. Treaty Research Report Treaty One and Treaty Two (1871) www.gc.ca

<sup>ii</sup> Treaty 1, which encompasses much of Manitoba, was signed in 1871, although five Manitoba First Nations are not signatory to any Treaty with Canada (Birdtail Sioux, Sioux Valley, Canupawakpa, Dakota Tipi and Dakota Plains). Under the treaties, the

<sup>vii</sup> Barbara Biin, Artist Statement, *because they are all somebody's daughter*, 2015

<sup>viii</sup> Dana Claxton, RE:WIND: *Transference Tradition Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual and digital culture* (Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 2005) Pp. 17.