

In Dialogue
Sep 5–Oct 7, 2017

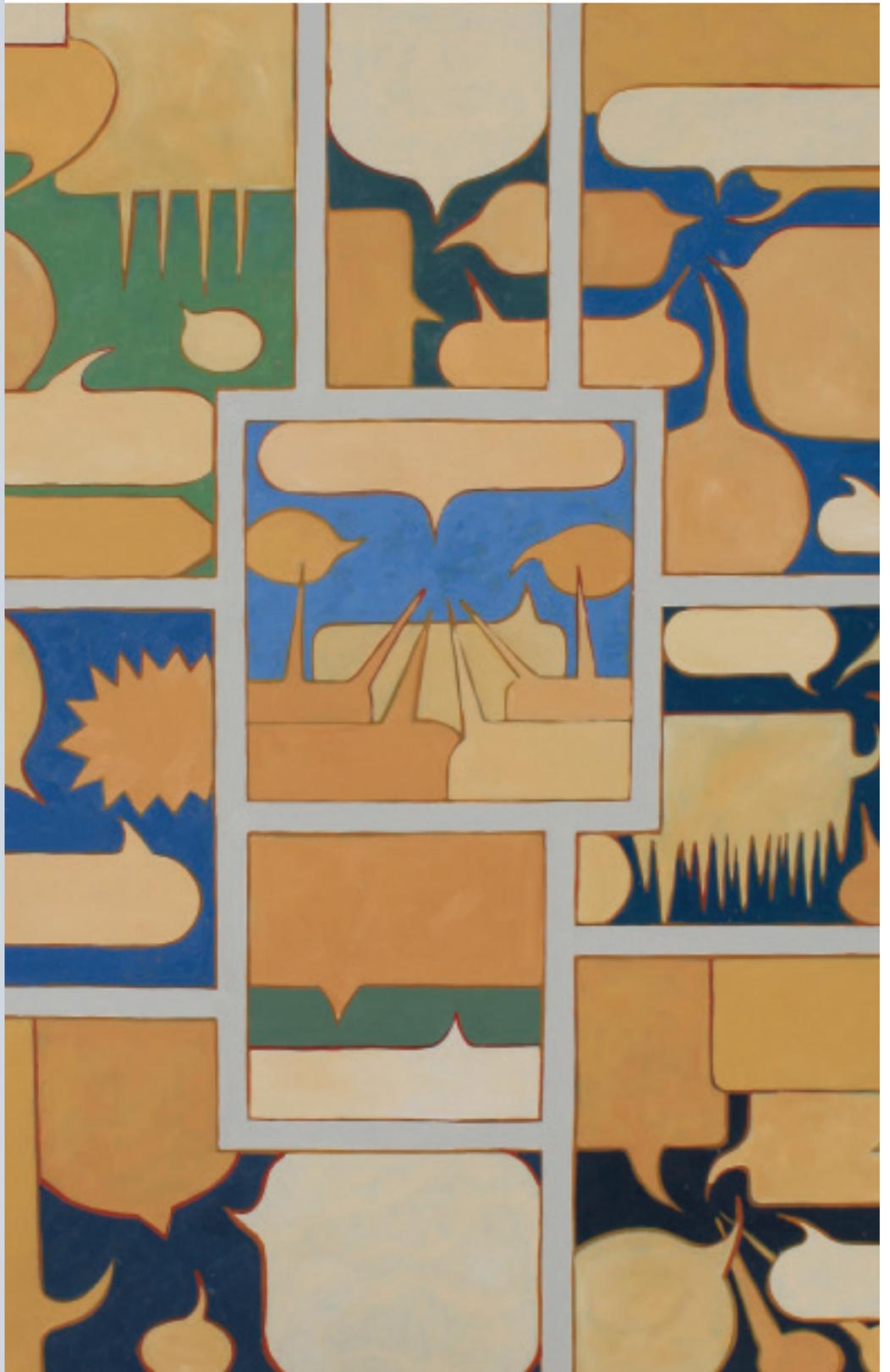
Art
Museum

Works by

Raven Davis, Raymond Boisjoly,
David Garneau, Carola Grahn, Native Art
Department International (Maria Hupfield
and Jason Lujan), Nicole Kelly Westman,
Duane Linklater, Tanya Lukin Linklater,
Amy Malbeuf, Nadia Myre, Peter Morin,
Krista Belle Stewart

Organized by John G. Hampton

Presented in partnership with the Art
Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba and
Carleton University Art Gallery.



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In Dialogue



Cover: David Garneau,
*Aboriginal Curatorial
Collective Meeting*, 2011. Oil
on canvas, 152 x 122cm.

Right: Krista Belle Stewart,
*Vancouver Special:
Ambivalent Pleasures*,
2016. Installation view at
the Vancouver Art Gallery.
Photo: Maegan Hill-Carroll,
Vancouver Art Gallery

Conversations in contemporary Indigeneity

In Dialogue is an exhibition structured as a conversation. It invites viewers into intimate discussions that work through new ways of understanding and being Indigenous in contemporary contexts. Moving from spaces of contemplation and reception to moments of excitement and animation, the artists blur borders drawn with invented notions of authenticity and guide us through negotiations between the specificity of personhood and its abstraction into larger groups of belonging. This gathering of work

embraces the wildly individualistic tumble of connections and contradictions that constitute contemporary Indigenous identities, opening a dialogue between artists, audiences, and the interconnected mesh-works woven between all our relations.



Tanya Lukin Linklater, *you are judged to be going against the flow because you are insistent*, 2017.
Video. Courtesy of the artist.



Amy Malbeuf, *Jimmie Durham 1974*, 2014.
Tarp, beading.
Courtesy of the Artist.
Photo: M N Hutchinson



Native Art Department
International, *Untitled*, 2017.
Neon and Carl Beam artwork.
Courtesy of the artist.

In Dialogue



Nadia Myre,
A Casual Reconstruction,
2015. Video Installation.
Courtesy of the artist.

Over the past two years I have been carrying out conversations with the artists of *In Dialogue*, trying to address the complexities of contemporary Indigenous identity. These discussions were really just a continuation of the ones that we were all already having, which have built up through a lifetime of being. These private exchanges became the fundamental driving force of this exhibition, guiding each element and decision through reciprocal exchange and development.

In our early meetings, the artists and I talked about the difficulty of navigating contemporary Indigeneity against the backdrop of social, legal, and unspoken rules about what constitutes nativeness. We discussed anxieties about self-identification, blood quantum, mixed cultures, migration and diaspora, whiteness, assimilation, internalized and externalized colonialism, legacies of self-erasure, enrollment, disenfranchisement, false spokespeople, blood myths, and the diverse and ambiguous spectrums of Indigenous authenticity. There was an understanding that eventually these conversations would spawn an exhibition, book, or some other material output, but the artworks that ultimately emerged were primarily the artists' organic responses to our discussions. Some works directly incorporate verbal communication, some abstract it to activate its potentiality, and others look at discourse more broadly; such as how history, citation, and authority work together, to construct community.

Each of the resulting works is rooted in a specific position, which is influenced by multiple intersecting factors of identity (of which the artist's Indigeneity represents only a small component). My involvement inevitably guided some of the conversations according to my personal position—one of relative comfort as a white academic NDN male divorced from my traditional territory—as well as my struggle to come to terms with a discomfort felt at my privilege

and the amount of opportunities I am given to speak on behalf of others. While organizing an exhibition on identity (or even while one is simply living life), there can be a value to discomfort. I *should* feel uncomfortable with my disproportionate privilege, when being asked to speak about/for those with different experiences than my own. Rather than being justified away, such discomfort should be nurtured. This discomfort is what reminds us when to listen instead of speaking, to honour the specificity of others, and to learn from them. Tribes, nations, and cultures emerge when individuals gather to speak and something larger begins to form. This process is not always tidy and it is never complete; it involves varying degrees of self-articulation, imposition, allowance, enforcement, disenfranchisement, agreement, and policing.

Through discussions about this interplay between the individual and its abstraction into larger cultural masses, an exhibition began to emerge as its own abstract mass. Made up of a myriad of contradictions and kinship amongst its individual participants, communication between these works unfolds in rhythmic movement between concealment and revelation, abstraction and specificity. In navigating this tumble of contradictions, new understandings of contemporary Indigeneities can emerge, specific to the space created between the somewhat interconnected histories of viewers, artists, organizers, and environment.



Carola Grahn,
Horizon of Me(aning),
2015. Firewood
installation. Variable
dimensions.

Honest and open dialogue about contemporary Indigenous identity and experience can hopefully function as an antidote to a new age of romanticization while also avoiding playing the role of the native informant in a colonial script. Throughout the space of this exhibition, one will hear—sometimes loudly and sometimes in a whisper—about skin and blood, intergenerational citation, institutional violence and kinship, encircling histories, the simultaneous decentering and recentering of body, corrupted traditionalism, politics of refusal, and strategies for communication.

Identity is not decolonized by re-inscribing the settler/Indigenous dichotomy, but by restructuring the concept of identity formation to centre one's Self and Relations rather than one's difference from an Other. This exhibition grew out of intimate discussions between Indigenous artists, but in its presentation, it becomes an invitation for the viewer to enter the conversation as well. The viewer, whoever they may be, is encouraged to embrace their own specific position—their class, gender, sexuality, nation, culture, skin, and everything else we cobble together to make our selves—as they partake in this discussion of who we are individually and who we are when we come together as a people.

John G. Hampton

Opening Events

Outdoor Reception

Wednesday, September 6, 6-8pm
Hart House Courtyard

In-Gallery Performance by Nicole Kelly Westman

Ongoing during opening
University of Toronto Art Centre

Public Programs

In-Gallery Performance with Peter Morin

Saturday, September 16, 11am-12pm
University of Toronto Art Centre

Opening the Dialogue

Saturday, September 16, 4:30-6pm
Room 140, University College
Public discussion featuring Raven Davis,
John Hampton, Duane Linklater, Tanya Lukin
Linklater and Peter Morin

Staff

Barbara Fischer, Executive Director/
Chief Curator
Sarah Robayo Sheridan, Curator
John G. Hampton, Adjunct Curator
Yan Wu, Curator-in-Residence
Rebecca Gimmi, Program Coordinator
Maureen Smith, Business & Programs
Coordinator
Heather Darling Pigat, Collections Manager
Chiara Cavaliere, Gallery Attendant
Marsya Maharani, Exhibition Coordinator
Brittany Brooks, Communications Assistant
Nina Bakan, Curatorial Assistant
Calla McInnes, Exhibitions Assistant
Andilib Sajid, Collections Assistant
Sydney Stewart Rose, Community Engagement
Assistant

Exhibition Technicians: John Abrams,
Dax Morrison, Phil Skot

Underline Studio, Brand Design
Flash Reproductions, Printing

Acknowledgments

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also like to acknowledge all those whose
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Walter Kaherton Scott, Lisa Myers, and
cheyanne turions.

Visiting the Art Museum

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H3
416.978.8398

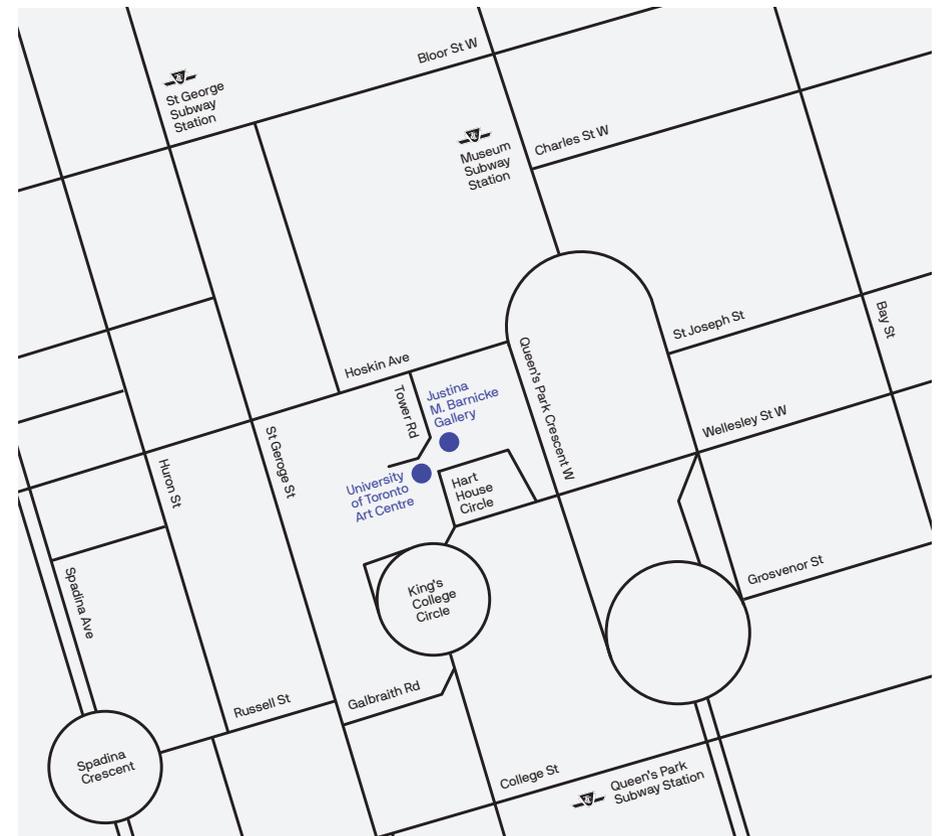
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| Tuesday | Noon–5:00 PM |
| Wednesday | Noon–8:00 PM |
| Thursday | Noon–5:00 PM |
| Friday | Noon–5:00 PM |
| Saturday | Noon–5:00 PM |
| Sunday | Closed |
| Monday | Closed |

Closed on statutory holidays. Class tours and
group bookings by appointment.
Admission is FREE.

 The Galleries are wheelchair accessible.



Art Museum
University of Toronto

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University of Toronto Art Centre

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