

Inclusivity or Sovereignty?:

Native American Arts in the Gallery and the Museum Since 1992

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***Art Journal* - Recent Native American Art**

Writing in the pages of this journal in 1992, Kay WalkingStick decried “the lack of serious critical discussion of Native American art outside of its relationship to ethnographic or tribal art and artifacts.”¹ Almost twenty-five years later, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) opened the first retrospective exhibition of her own work to favorable reviews from the art critics of major American newspapers (Figure 1).² Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* called *Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist* “an overdue career survey,” while the *Washington Post*'s Philip Kennicott wrote sensitively of the artist's successful exploitation of the diptych format to express her dual heritages and pointed to the comprehensive scope of the exhibition: “When the issues are complex,” he wrote, “depth is essential.”³ Both the exhibition's venue and the attention paid by prominent reviewers are indicative of the distance travelled by public museums since 1992 as well as of the paradoxes that continue to riddle the institutional infrastructure of Native American art. While the retrospective exhibition of a senior Native American artist's work in a large national museum signalled the maturing of a field which had, a quarter of a century earlier, still manifested itself primarily through group shows, it remains true that the show was organized by an ethnically specific museum committed to promoting the work

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of artists historically marginalized by mainstream American art worlds. It thus left unresolved central tensions between the desire for inclusion in major art institutions which has powered momentous changes in recent decades, and the equally compelling desire to claim and control exclusive spaces for the representation of Native North American arts and cultures.

Twenty-five years is, in many ways, a blink in history. Yet this quarter century, marked by a growing consciousness of globalization and the strengthening of movements of decolonization in many settler nations, has seen significant repositionings of contemporary Native North American arts in museums and related institutions. This essay will trace some of these changes from the perspectives of two witnesses and participants in this history: an Indigenous curator of Navajo descent working in an American national museum who specializes in contemporary Native American art, and a non-Indigenous art historian of Ashkenazi Jewish descent teaching in a Canadian university who specializes in Native North American art and critical museology. In 1992 a multitude of voices justifiably protested the exclusion of Native artists from mainstream art venues. The historical consciousness-raising of that year demonstrably sharpened awareness of the more comprehensive restitutions required by histories of disenfranchisement and displacement and led to more recent discourses of visual sovereignty-- as evidenced by the creation and achievements of the NMAI itself.⁴ A comparison between 1992 and 2017 reveals dramatic growth in the numbers of practicing artists, the quality of their work, the frequency of exhibitions, and the sizes and locations of exhibition venues. That numerous artists have since found a purchase in museums and galleries across North America has been the work of many arts professionals, both Native and non-Indigenous. At the same time, however, the changes remain uneven. In some regional institutions contemporary Native American art is prominently displayed in dedicated galleries and/or integrated into permanent installations of

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American, Canadian and contemporary art, while in many others-- including some of the most influential-- it remains conspicuously absent. The timing of special exhibitions tends to be sporadic and is often tied to a moment of historical commemoration. With a few notable exceptions, furthermore, collecting programs are often similarly opportunistic and reliant on private donations.⁵

As we will argue in this essay, these somewhat quantitative measures of improvement can mask even more difficult conceptual issues. In the twenty-first century, a cultural discourse of postcolonialism, which came to the fore in the late-twentieth century as external colonies in Africa, Asia and elsewhere fought for and gained independence, has been supplanted by a renewed insistence on the unfinished project of decolonization, especially in settler-colonial societies. The assertion of 'visual sovereignty' in and through Indigenous practices of art-making, pedagogy and curation is complemented by a more recently formulated critical interrogation of settler-colonial art history on the part of non-Native scholars.⁶ New Zealand *pakeha* (white settler) art historian Damian Skinner, for example, has urged the need to "write a new kind of art history that will actively grapple with the impact of settler colonialism on both artistic practice and art historical narratives."⁷ This discursive politics has resulted in new theorizations countering liberal values of 'recognition' and 'inclusion' which, it is argued, have failed to disturb ongoing colonial power relations.

While these arguments are not new, they have been more fully articulated in recent years. In 1994, for example, Mohawk curator and historian Deborah Doxtator—an early and acute critic of the Western museum—wrote that "the tasteful lighting of objects, which for Western society is culture—beautiful baskets, spoons, and clothing items, for example—illuminates far more about Euro-Canadian aesthetics and values than they do about the cultural views of the

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people who made the objects. Such an exhibition within an aboriginal world view completely ignores the basic values and culture principles that the object represents."⁸ Two decades later, Dene political scientist Glen Coulthard made this case more comprehensively in a rigorously theorized response to philosopher Charles Taylor's influential affirmation of the "politics of recognition." Coulthard argues that "when delegated exchanges of recognition occur in real world contexts of domination the terms of accommodation usually end up being determined by and in the interests of the hegemonic partner in the relationship."⁹ Applying such arguments to the art gallery leads us to ask as yet unanswered questions: On whose terms should inclusion take place? What does sovereignty look like in terms of institutional practice?

The Columbus quincentennial gave new impetus to pressures for inclusion and the creation of dedicated institutional spaces for Native arts in both the United States and Canada. In both countries, Native North American artists commemorated five centuries of colonization, loss, and survivance with groundbreaking exhibitions of contemporary art, some of which we discuss later in this essay. Arguably, however, this moment of commemoration was merely the outward sign of a deeper process of contestation and activism which had been gathering momentum for some years. In late 1989, after years of advocacy and lobbying, the National Museum of the American Indian was created as a new museum in the Smithsonian Institution by an act of Congress.¹⁰ In the summer of 1990, Canadians had witnessed the unfolding of the Oka crisis, begun as a protest against a proposal to extend a golf course onto a Mohawk burial ground and leading to a seventy-eight day armed stand-off between the protestors and Quebec police and the Canadian military.¹¹ In the same year the United States Congress passed NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which required a comprehensive process of museum disclosure and the return of certain categories of Indigenous cultural property, and

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which would also usher in a new era of collaboration between Native Americans-- including contemporary artists-- and museums. Congress also passed the Indian Arts and Crafts Act, which regulates the identification of art by Native Americans for sale, limiting the legal definition to artists enrolled in federally recognized tribes.¹² 1992 also coincided with the release of the report of Canada's federally appointed Task Force on Museums and First Peoples. It established guidelines for repatriation and also formulated specific recommendations for capacity building in Indigenous institutions, professional training for Indigenous curators, and support for contemporary artists.¹³

This history of contestation and negotiation created a context for change in Indigenous and settler art worlds which, beginning slowly through a range of local initiatives, has continued to build during the past decade.¹⁴ Even so brief a summary indicates the different histories of resistance, activism and change in the U.S. and Canada, but it also suggests the permeability of the border—often programmatically ignored by artists and activists who recognize the unities of Indigenous histories in the Americas. In the discussion that follows we account both for contrasts in the pace and patterns of change between Canada, where Indigenous peoples constitute the significant 'other' of the settler-colonial nation, and the U.S., where African-Americans have occupied that position during the last half century. In an essay of limited length such a review can, inevitably, provide only the outline of a complex story of interaction among artists and institutions. Aware of this limitation, our goal is to provide an armature for further studies which can illuminate the ways in which the exhibitions and events we mention have actively intervened in our understandings of Native American histories and contemporary realities.¹⁵

Trajectories of Change: The Decade after 1992

As reflected in the 1992 *Art Journal* issue, during the early 1990s contemporary Native art could most often be seen in large group exhibitions and projects, many of which were tied to the Columbus quincentenary. This historic moment created an opening which Native artists could use both to voice political critique and to draw attention to the agency of artists in Native American survivance-- the resilient retention of identities and traditions in the face of enormous obstacles defined by Gerald Vizenor as the "active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion."¹⁶ Looking back, it is evident that many artists were conscious that such opportunities were rare and, in fact, might not be repeated. The group exhibition format reflected the organizers' desire to promote and expose as many artists as possible to the larger art world as quickly as they could. James Luna expressed the general fear that the sudden interest in Native art was a fad when he asked, sardonically, "Will you call me in 1993?"¹⁷ This trepidation was not unfounded, for many artists of Luna's generation had experienced exclusion from mainstream art museums and galleries during the 1980s and had only recently begun to be recognized as significant contemporary figures-- even if the recognition was framed as a multiculturalist gesture of inclusion.

Changes in the United States

Despite several important exhibitions organized by larger museums, the real action in the United States during the 1990s was found in community art centers and small non-profit institutions.¹⁸ The American Indian Community House Gallery in New York City (AICH), American Indian Contemporary Arts in San Francisco (Figure 2), the Two Rivers Gallery in Minneapolis, and the C.N. Gorman Museum at the University of California, Davis were

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particularly important.¹⁹ In these smaller venues, Native curators, who were often themselves artists, were not content to wait for others to create the opportunities their communities craved. They had the freedom to organize exhibitions on an ongoing basis, rather than being limited to once-in-a-blue-moon opportunities. Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, George Longfish, G. Peter Jemison, Sarah Bates, Theresa Harlan and Joanna Bigfeather all took strong leadership roles, curating exhibitions in small venues of this kind and advising galleries and museum staff on an ad-hoc basis. For some, this was a continuation of artist activism started in the 1980s. The artists' connections were multi-tribal, often coalescing in urban centers, but extensively networked and deeply intertwined socially and professionally across the country.

Although the majority of these shows still conformed to the group exhibition format, the volume of exhibitions encouraged the exploration of specific themes or media approaches, as, for example, in *Indian Humor* (1995) at American Indian Contemporary Arts, and *Native Response to HIV/AIDS* (1995) and *Fashion from Native Thought* (1998) at the American Indian Community House (AICH) Gallery (Figure 3). These exhibitions were meant to reach and educate a broad spectrum of viewers, but their first audience was Native people in the community. As Joanna Bigfeather, AICH Curator and Gallery Director (1993-1999), recalls, “It was always important to me that the community be involved in these exhibitions and be proud of them.”²⁰ These efforts were reinforced with the opening of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) Museum in downtown Santa Fe in 1992, directed by Tuscarora artist and curator Rick Hill. Although the IAIA Museum was relatively small, exhibiting primarily the collections of the art school and providing an exhibition venue for its alumni and students, it nonetheless established a unique foothold as the only North American museum focusing exclusively on

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contemporary Native art. In subsequent years, it became an important site of practice for the Native arts professionals who served there in curatorial and leadership positions.²¹

At the larger institutional level, we can trace an incremental progress toward greater representation of contemporary Native American art during the 1990s, as manifested by occasional presentations of temporary exhibitions. Most were traveling shows organized by smaller organizations which made the rounds of university art galleries and larger regional museums, such as *Our Land, Ourselves* (1990), *We the Human Beings* (1992) and *The Submuloc Show/Columbus Wohs* (1992) (Figure 4).²² Among mid-sized American art museums, the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona was an exceptional and pioneering leader during this decade.

Founded in 1929, the Heard had historically focused on the traditional arts and heritage of Native people, particularly of the Southwestern United States, but began to shift away from a purely ethnographic approach during the 1970s and 1980s. It organized both medium-sized and more tightly focused exhibitions of the work of selected artists, such as *Houser and Haozous: A Sculptural Retrospective* (1984). In 1974, the Heard held its first invitational exhibition of “leading American Indian painters” following a 1973 sculpture exhibition.²³ By 1983 curator Erin Younger had pioneered the first biennial for Native American art based on a fine art model; Jaune Quick-to-See Smith worked closely with the museum as an advisor and served as a selector for the second biennial in 1985. After being hired as the museum's first curator of fine arts, Margaret Archuleta changed the format back to an invitational which allowed her to expand the exhibition program and to bring in guest curators such as Theresa Harlan for other exhibitions (Figure 5). Archuleta's approach to the fine art invitational format diminished the curatorial or institutional voice and foregrounded that of the artists. The selection process was competitive, and for each exhibition new outside judges were asked to choose the participants.

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She stated that her role as curator was "...to facilitate the first person experience for the artist, the Native communities and for our museum audience."²⁴ This facilitation also involved the invited artists in the selection of their art, their catalogue entries and the gallery text. Archuleta's strong voice and advocacy for contemporary Native art continued to inform the invitational exhibits through the 1990s until her departure from the museum in 2002.²⁵

The model of inclusivity adopted by museums such as the Heard not only included but empowered Native artists. In contrast the creation of the National Museum of the American Indian was widely heralded as a watershed moment because it introduced a model of visual sovereignty which, for the first time in a major museum, enabled Native American administrators and curators to indigenize the presentation of Native culture and history. The representation of the lives and expressions of Native people past *and* present was central to the museum's mission from its establishment, but in its early years the NMAI did not make an active commitment to exhibiting the work of living artists. The museum was founded with the transfer to the Smithsonian Institution of the massive collections of New York City's Museum of the American Indian–Heye Foundation. Over half of the approximately 800,000 catalogued objects from North, Central and South America are archaeological items, and most of the remainder are ethnographic. Thus the NMAI's first priority was to create comprehensive exhibitions that reflected these encyclopedic collections and reified the continued living presence and diversity of Native people by celebrating art of the past at the George Gustav Heye Center, the museum's new exhibition facility in New York City.²⁶ An early sign of the authority and indigenous perspectives contemporary artists would introduce to the museum was an installation by artist and curator Gerald McMaster created for one of the three opening exhibitions, *All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture*. His spiralling circle of beaded moccasins, each pair

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poised in the positions of dancing feet, melded the practice of the contemporary art installation with the function of historic artifact display, jettisoning the standard grids of the Western museum (Figure 6). A second exhibition, *This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Native American Creativity*, focused on contemporary art, and was organized by the fifteen participating artists rather than the museum's curators.²⁷ Despite these strong opening statements, over the next nine years contemporary art was represented at the New York venue primarily through traveling exhibitions organized by other organizations. Among the few exceptions was *Who Stole the Teepee?* (2000), produced in collaboration with Atlatl, Inc, a Phoenix, Arizona-based Native America artist service organization.²⁸

The NMAI's program of contemporary art collecting during this period was similarly cautious because of a concern that, with no contemporary art curator on staff to guide decision-making in this area, its acquisitions could unfairly influence the market for individual living artists.²⁹ Funding for acquisitions was also lacking on a more general level. In consequence, and despite the identification of the poor representation of contemporary art in the collection as a significant weakness in the 1995 "Collections Policy," there were very few purchases of contemporary art and additions to the collection were largely passive, limited almost entirely to donations and works that were traditional in form and execution.³⁰

Unfortunately, too, while there was no official policy or directive to this effect, one of the unintentional consequences of the creation of NMAI was that staff working on Native art and culture projects at other Smithsonian museums witnessed the attrition of funding and postponement of exhibitions.³¹ This indicates the degree to which it may have been assumed that the NMAI would now take responsibility for most, if not all, Native American art content,

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making representation, collecting or support in other Smithsonian museums unnecessary or redundant.³²

Changes in Canada

Although many in Canada have urged the creation of a similar Native-led national museum, this has not yet occurred. Rather, the Canadian Museum of History (formerly the Canadian Museum of Civilization) began to collect contemporary First Nations and Inuit art during the 1970s when fine art institutions remained largely resistant. Since 1977 it has staffed a dedicated curatorial position, held successively by Indigenous artists and curators Robert Houle, Gerald McMaster, Lee-Ann Martin, and Linda Grussani.³³ McMaster and Martin's Columbus year exhibition: *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*, broke new ground, not only by commissioning leading artists to contribute works reflecting critically on 500 years of colonialism, but also through the critical discourse articulated in its Indigenous-authored catalogue (Figure 7).³⁴ Three years later, McMaster was selected as the Commissioner for the Canadian Pavilion at the 1995 Venice Biennale, and, supported by his museum, made the ground-breaking decision to select a First Nations artist, Edward Poitras.³⁵ This precedent would be followed ten years later when Rebecca Belmore's *Fountain* represented Canada at the 2005 Venice Biennale (Figure 8).³⁶ McMaster's *Reservation X: The Power of Place* followed in 1998, again innovated by foregrounding a set of installations which focused on the centrality of place to contemporary artists' conceptions of identity and community, coexistent with their cosmopolitanism and active participation in mainstream art worlds. During these years, too, Lee-Ann Martin mounted an important series of exhibitions which were both thematic (*The Pow Wow: An Art History*, curated with Bob Boyer in 2000 for the Edmonton Art Gallery) and

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monographic (*Alex Janvier: Negotiating the Land*, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, 1994; and *Bob Boyer: His Life's Work*, for the MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, in 2012).

Until recently, however, the best funded and most consistent national project of institutional collecting was carried out by the Centre for Indian and Inuit Art at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Since 1965 it has maintained a National Indian and Inuit Art collection-- now numbering over 5000 works, and has been guided by a mandate to promote contemporary artists by buying key works through a juried selection process, publicizing them through a documentation centre, lending to museums, and organizing small exhibits in its on-site gallery and occasional international touring shows. Managers of the centre have included a distinguished list of Indigenous artist and curators: Tom Hill, Jackson Beardy, Rick Hill, Viviane Gray, Barry Ace, Lee-Ann Martin, and Linda Grussani.³⁷

Since the early-twentieth century, the National Gallery of Canada's (NGC) collection has included a small number of works by Indigenous artists, but until the 1990s it was mandated to collect and display only settler Canadian art.³⁸ During the 1980s, SCANA, the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry, carried out an effective lobbying campaign for inclusion in the NGC's permanent collections and installations. The NGC's curator of contemporary art, Diana Nemiroff, argued successfully for this inclusivity. In 1986, the purchase of a major work by Anishinaabe artist Carl Beam, "The North American Iceberg," signalled the change in direction that was more fully expressed by the 1992 exhibition *Land/Spirit/Power: First Nations at the National Gallery*, curated by Nemiroff, Houle, and Charlotte Townsend-Gault (Figure 9).³⁹ During the 1990s, the NGC quietly began to create a presence for contemporary Aboriginal art in its rotating installations by installing one of its contemporary galleries with Indigenous Canadian works. In 2003 it launched a much larger initiative by incorporating historic and modern

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Aboriginal art (mostly loaned) into the chronological survey presented in its Canadian galleries under the project title *Art of This Land*.⁴⁰

Taken together, these developments evidence a historic, if still tentative, expansion of scope on the part of large Canadian national museums of art, history and ethnology. Even this shift could not, however, have occurred without the activities of numerous smaller institutions spread out across Canada. These include First Nations cultural centre museums, smaller art galleries and university museums, and—not least—a loose network of non-profit artist-run galleries. The Woodland Cultural Centre museum in Brantford, Ontario, which serves nearby Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe First Nations, began to hold annual exhibitions of contemporary Indigenous art in 1975, long before larger museums became involved. In western Canada, a parallel role was played by the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (MoA), which also exhibited contemporary artists' work well before the larger art galleries began to engage with it (Figure 22). Other municipal, provincial and university art galleries also created important temporary exhibitions during this decade both on the work of individual contemporary artists and on thematic topics. Examples include the Edmonton Art Gallery's *Shades of Difference: The Art of Bob Boyer* (1991), the Winnipeg Art Gallery's *Robert Houle: Sovereignty over Subjectivity* (1992), and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery's *Basket, Bead and Quill* (1996)⁴¹

Twenty-First Century Evolutions: A Shifting Landscape

By the turn of this century, the landscape at the National Museum of the American Indian had shifted significantly. In 2000, Gerald McMaster, already a longtime consultant to the NMAI on its planning for the new museum on the National Mall in Washington D.C., was appointed

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Deputy Assistant Director for Cultural Resources, and Truman Lowe, a recognized Ho-chunk sculptor and educator was hired as the museum's first curator of contemporary art.⁴² Although the NMAI had not yet actively committed itself to organizing exhibitions of living artists, a key opportunity arose at its New York venue and led to the development of the exhibition *Continuum: 12 Artists* (2003-2005), a series of solo installations (Figure 10).⁴³ This project set in motion an extraordinary sea change which not only engaged NMAI curators in selecting the artists, but also presented them through individual installations rather than within group exhibitions or juxtapositions of contemporary and historic works-- then a standard practice. With few exceptions, in 2003 Lowe, joined in 2005 by associate curator Kathleen Ash-Milby, also began to build the NMAI's collection by commissioning and acquiring works from the exhibitions, and, later, making independent acquisitions.⁴⁴

The success of *Continuum* led to a succession of influential exhibitions at the NMAI's New York venue, including *New Tribe New York: The Urban Vision Quest* (2005-2006) curated by McMaster, which focused on Native artists living in the New York tri-state area; *Off the Map: Landscape in the Native Imagination* (2007), an exhibition of work by five artists exploring their complicated relationships to the land; and *HIDE: Skin as Material and Metaphor* (2010), a two-part exhibition of artists who addressed issues surrounding race, representation, historical and environmental trauma, and perseverance, both organized by Ash-Milby.⁴⁵ Unlike *Continuum*, the majority of the exhibitions that followed were supported by catalogues, important both as records of the exhibitions and as forums for expanded discourse. Perhaps the museum's boldest move at this time was NMAI curator Paul Chaat Smith's organization of *Emendatio: James Luna*, a solo exhibition and collateral project for the 2005 Venice Biennale (Figure 11).⁴⁶ The project included a performance by the artist during the vernissage followed by a symposium, entitled *Vision*,

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Space, Desire: Global Perspectives and Cultural Hybridity, which interrogated the role of Native and Indigenous art on the world stage.⁴⁷ Taken together, these initiatives demonstrated not only a solid commitment to the presentation of contemporary Native art, but also to the critical interpretive importance of the Native curatorial and scholarly voice.

The Ford Foundation had supported *Emendatio*, and, following its success, awarded NMAI a five-year capacity-building grant enabling it to launch a major contemporary art initiative which ran from 2005 to 2010.⁴⁸ With this critical support, the museum organized a second collateral project at the Venice Biennale in 2007, *Most Serene Republics: Edgar Heap of Birds*, curated by Ash-Milby and Lowe.⁴⁹ It also actively built the collection through continued acquisitions, published numerous catalogues and artist monographs, and organized scholarly symposia and exhibitions. The museum's larger exhibition facilities in Washington, D.C., did not have the same flexibility as the galleries in New York, but they served well as a site for bold solo exhibitions focusing on the work of major figures in the field, such as *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian* (2008), curated by Lowe and Smith, and *Brian Jungen: Strange Comfort* (2009), curated by Smith. Since the ending of Ford Foundation funding in 2011 the NMAI has continued its commitment to contemporary art. No longer constrained by concerns about undue influence on market value, it has shone a light on the work of promising young artists such as Jeffrey Gibson, Will Wilson, and Marie Watt, early in their careers, as well as honoring the contributions of iconic senior artists like Allan Houser and George Morrison.⁵⁰

Similarly bold gestures of inclusion were made by the National Gallery of Canada with a series of large retrospective exhibitions of four pioneering modern and contemporary artists: Marion Tu'luq in 2002, Norval Morriseau in 2006 (Figure 12), Daphne Odjig in 2009, Carl Beam in 2010, and Alex Janvier in 2016.⁵¹ Since the 1990s, the NGC, which had accepted

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transfers of modern Inuit sculpture and prints from Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada (now Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada), has also mounted continuing exhibitions of modern and contemporary Inuit art.⁵² Key to the realization of this program was the Audain Foundation's endowment of a curatorial chair for Indigenous art in 2007. The global scope defined for the new Department of Indigenous Art, headed by Greg Hill, the first Audain Curator, was manifested in the NGC's commitment to organize recurring quinquennial exhibitions of contemporary Indigenous art from around the world. The first iteration, *Sakahana: International Indigenous Art*, curated by Hill, associate curator of Indigenous art Christine Lalonde, and guest curator Candice Hopkins, was presented in 2013. The largest exhibition ever mounted by the NGC, it filled the suite of temporary exhibition galleries with work by Indigenous artists from Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, India, Scandinavia, and elsewhere and was complemented by satellite exhibitions at smaller galleries throughout the National Capital Region (Figure 13).⁵³

Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Canada's second largest art museum, has pursued a parallel path of increasing inclusivity, but has deployed other strategies and narrative approaches. Like the NGC, the AGO focused almost exclusively on Western arts until the 1990s, with the exception of its collections of twentieth-century Inuit art and several pioneering exhibitions and installations.⁵⁴ During the decade following the task force report the AGO, like the NGC, began to experiment with ways to expand its mandate. Assistant Curators of Canadian Richard William Hill and Anna Hudson mounted an innovative installation entitled *The Meeting Ground* in 2003 which juxtaposed Indigenous and settler arts and contextualized them through new kinds of didactics (Figure 14). This gallery was short-lived due to the comprehensive redesign and expansion of the AGO and its exhibitions which began the following year.⁵⁵ But it

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was also a sign of a residual resistance to inclusivity that Hill resigned in protest over an important donor's refusal to have his collection of Canadian art exhibited alongside Indigenous art. Hudson also mounted *Woman as Goddess: Robert Markle and Joyce Wieland*, in 2003, contrasting representations of the female nude by male and female artists who, though also Indigenous and non-Indigenous, had both moved through the late twentieth-century mainstream Canadian art world. In 2005 the Canadian galleries became the responsibility of McMaster when he was appointed Curator of Canadian Art. His approach integrated Canadian and Indigenous contemporary and historical works around three themes: Power, Myth, and Memory. When the gallery reopened in 2008, nineteenth-century settler paintings and sculptures were installed, often dramatically, next to historic and contemporary Indigenous works. In one gallery Kent Monkman's commissioned painting "The Academy," conjured up a nineteenth-century art academy inside an Indigenous earth lodge, populated it with settler and Indigenous patrons, artists and art works, and rewrote the narrative of Canadian art history - from an Indigenous perspective⁵⁶; the next room was anchored by Rebecca Belmore's "Rising to the Occasion," which embodies the impact of the colonial fur trade on her Anishinaabe ancestors in the form of a re-imagined and crazily hybrid hooped-skirted eighteenth-century dress.

McMaster was succeeded in 2013 by Andrew Hunter, who has further transformed the AGO's Canadian galleries, strengthening the presence of Indigenous arts and creating a series of strategic interventions which put settler and Indigenous works in dialogue with each other. At this writing, visitors enter the Canadian section through a long corridor gallery installed with historic, modern and contemporary Indigenous works in a range of media. Moving through the installations, they encounter major works by Morriseau, Beam which are frequently positioned as central focal points of the rooms in which they hang. In 2015-16 one of the AGO's most

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revered works, Tom Thomson's "The West Wind" was placed adjacent to Anishinaabe artist Michael Belmore's "Breadth," a cast bronze deer splayed, corpse-like, on a plinth, veins of copper—a powerful medicine in the Anishinaabe cosmos—shining through (Figure 15). The text panel, entitled "Into the Woods, An Icon Revisited," demythologised the raw natural beauty of Thomson's landscape by revealing the devastations of the land and its original inhabitants wrought by logging, industrialization and colonialism. In another corner, a commissioned installation by Anishinaabe artist Bonnie Devine integrated sculptural installations with a large map of the Great Lakes overpainted with ancestral animals and spirit beings from the Anishinaabe cosmos.⁵⁷ In 2016, also, the AGO established a new curatorial position in Canadian and Indigenous Art and hired Anishinaabe curator Wanda Nanibush to work with Hunter to increase the visibility and build the collections not only of Indigenous but also of African-Canadian and other under-represented arts. Other major Canadian art museums are engaged in similar processes; virtually all provincial, urban and university museums are actively acquiring and exhibiting contemporary Aboriginal art.

Non-profit artist-run centres have played a particularly important role as incubators of contemporary Aboriginal art, nurturing artists whose works go on to be shown in the big institutions and allowing them space to experiment and formulate innovative curatorial premises. An outstanding example is the 2009 exhibition *Beat Nation: Hip Hop as Indigenous Culture*, which compellingly advanced the importance of urban street culture as a fertile source of inspiration for contemporary Indigenous artists. Organized by curator Tania Willard for Vancouver's Grunt Gallery it was remounted as a nationally touring exhibition by the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2012 (Figure 16). The Grunt Gallery exhibits both Native and non-Native artists, but from the late 1990s on its exhibition archive shows a notable increase in the number of

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Indigenous exhibitions. Winnipeg's Urban Shaman gallery, was established around the same time, in 1996, but in contrast focuses exclusively on Aboriginal art (Figure 17). For two decades it has mounted a continuous series of exhibitions by artists "whose work hinges on experimentation in form and content," and can thus "challenge people's notions of 'Aboriginal art.'"⁵⁸

The direction of contemporary Native art exhibitions has also continued to evolve in smaller venues in the United States in recent years. Many of the community-based venues, such as the American Indian Community House Gallery and American Indian Contemporary Arts, have closed or ceased to support regular exhibitions. Even in their heyday, these small organizations struggled with a lack of funding, since no sources were tailored to the unique needs of these culturally specific, small venues. The activism and leadership of the individuals at these organizations, in lieu of stable funding, made these venues rich and dynamic centers of Native art. They also provided critical opportunities for young and emerging curators to gain experience without the limitations of a more structured environment. As noted earlier, the Heard Museum was an important leader in the 1980s and 1990s, but wavered in its commitment to bold and innovative presentations of Native art after Archuleta left the museum in 2002.⁵⁹ But while these initial drivers in the field have fallen back, many regional museums, such as the Denver Art Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum and Minneapolis Institute for the Arts, have increased their contemporary Native art programming (Figure 18). In 2013 the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which was previously an epicenter of activity as the host of the Indian Art Annual from 1946 to 1979, opened a new exhibition, research and storage facility in downtown Tulsa in the Brady Arts District housing a survey of its modern and contemporary art collection. It includes ongoing exhibitions developed with items from their Native art collection, both

contemporary and historic.⁶⁰ Another example is the University of Alaska Museum of the North which opened its Rose Berry Alaska Art Gallery in 1998 with new displays integrating settler and Indigenous historic, contemporary and modern arts and has continued to showcase the arts of contemporary indigenous Alaskan artists in special exhibitions.⁶¹

The Institute of American Indian Arts Museum, re-named the Museum of Contemporary Native Art (MoCNA), has also risen to greater prominence in recent years. Patsy Phillips, former director of ATLATL and a driver of the contemporary art program at NMAI, was hired as director in 2008, and under her leadership the potential of the museum began to be realized. Chief curator Ryan Rice, was recruited by Phillips in 2009, and over the next five years he created an intensive program of over sixty exhibitions and three publications (Figure 19). MoCNA's rich and dynamic exhibition program reached beyond its former regional and student/alumni focus, including many artists from Canada. It has also hosted traveling exhibitions such as the "Changing Hands II: Art Without Reservation," circulated by Museum of Art and Design in New York City.⁶²

Another exciting addition to the scene is the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art which launched the Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art in 1999 (Figure 20). The components of this ambitious and ongoing biennial include a monetary prize for the selected artists, a major exhibition of their art, a substantial catalogue, and purchase of works for the Eiteljorg's permanent collection. The lack of recognition of contemporary Native art in mainstream museums drove the creation of this active and tightly focused program, and created new opportunities to draw the Native arts community together. Funded largely by the Lily Foundation, the Eiteljorg biennials have moved beyond the Heard Museum's invitational model by also providing substantial financial support to the artists, creating a scholarly forum, and

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enabling the Eiteljorg to build a substantial and highly visible collection. It will be celebrating its 10th biennial in 2017.

Interlinkages: Art Museums, Art Schools, Art Markets

The importance of the Lily foundation to the Eiteljorg Museum, the Ford Foundation to the NMAI, and the Audain Foundation to the National Gallery of Canada signal the broader institutional context within which museums and galleries work. We have focused on the museum sector in this essay because of the primary role that exhibitions play in shaping public awareness and understanding of contemporary Native North American art. Yet at the same time, it is important to note that exhibiting institutions do not operate in isolation, but are systemically connected to programs and practices developed in other institutions. On the one hand, the curricula, scholarly literature, and practices of research and critical evaluation formulated within the academy inform the approaches of museum curators and professionals. On the other hand, while funding agencies, foundations and commercial art galleries also respond to academic discourses, they exercise autonomous agency through their selection of artists and exhibitions to support.⁶³ A comprehensive overview of institutional practices would need to map the specific ways in which these three sectors interconnect within the Native North American art world. It would also need to consider the ways in which institutions represent and interrelate historical and contemporary Native North American arts and the different mandates and practices which characterize Native-run and non-Native institutions. Although such a large task is beyond the scope of this essay, we note briefly several key developments in the educational and funding sectors which have accompanied and influenced the recent activities of museums and galleries.

The dynamic growth of contemporary Native American art since 1992 is in part the product of parallel growth in educational opportunities and programs designed to support Native artists. The Institute of American Indian Arts has continued to guide and produce Native artists from the United States and Canada since its founding in 1962 to the present, and has played a fundamental role in offering professional modernist and contemporary art training to young artists. Other informal centers for Native art instructors and students have emerged in mainstream colleges and universities such as the University of Colorado Boulder and the University of California Davis. Influential Native artists are also graduating from prestigious art schools across the country such as Yale and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In Canada, the past twenty-five years have seen a major expansion of educational programs specifically designed for Indigenous artists in both Native and non-Native post-secondary institutions. The Indigenous Fine Arts and Indigenous Art History program at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (now First Nations University) in Regina, was developed by Bob Boyer after he became head in 1980. More recently, other Canadian art schools have increasingly supported Indigenous artists and several have developed dedicated programs. Vancouver's Emily Carr University of the Arts, for example, established an Aboriginal office with expanded course offerings "that teach art and design from an aboriginal perspective,"⁶⁴ while the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto launched its Indigenous Visual Culture Studies program in 2009. The funding sector has played an equally important role. Following the formal adoption of the task force report by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association, federal and provincial government departments and agencies responsible for heritage, arts and museums responded to its recommendations through the creation of new programs and policies. In 1994 the Canada Council for the Arts established an Aboriginal Arts

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Secretariat, which has unrolled a suite of specialized grants not only in visual arts, but also in music, dance and media arts. Both contemporary and contemporary traditional arts are supported, the latter by the Aboriginal/Inuit Traditional Visual Art Forms Program for Individual Artists. Funding and staffing for these programs was significantly boosted in 1998-99, in keeping with the announced priority of the Canada Council to mount "programs that meet the particular needs of Aboriginal artists and arts organizations."⁶⁵ In addition, the Canada Council's Art Bank, which purchases works from contemporary Canadian arts and makes them available for rental and display in businesses and government offices, has actively purchased work from Aboriginal artists throughout this period and holds a substantial collection of contemporary Canadian Aboriginal art.

In contrast, as we have seen, major initiatives in the United States have been launched primarily through private foundations. The Ford Foundation granted over \$20 million to contemporary Native American art programs in public organizations from 2003 to 2010, and seeded the Native Arts and Culture Foundation which began awarding grants in 2010. More recently, the Mellon Foundation has supported post doctoral fellowships for Native American art curators at the Portland Art Museum, the Denver Art Museum, and the Peabody Essex Museum.

Finally, the importance of professional associations and institutions which bring artists and curators together needs to be noted. In Canada, the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (ACC) succeeded SCANA as "a national arts service organization that supports, promotes and advocates on behalf of Canadian and international Aboriginal curators, critics, artists and representatives of arts and cultural organizations, holding lively annual meetings, symposia, and disseminating information about its members curatorial practices and research on its website."⁶⁶ The Banff Center provides sites for discussion and creation through its artists' residencies and the

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organization of thematic symposia. Numerous Aboriginal artists and curators have participated since the late 1990s in gatherings which have generated key articulations of distinctive Native American approaches to contemporary art practices and the roles of art institutions. The 2003 conference "Making a Noise! Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community" is a notable example.⁶⁷ Unfortunately in the United States the activities of ATLATL, Inc.—as an artist-service organization founded in 1977 to bring together and mobilize artists from across the country through national meetings and conferences, which successfully sourced and supported funding for numerous exhibitions during the 1980s and 1990s—have tailed off in the new millennium.⁶⁸

Incomplete Repositionings

525 years after the landing of three Spanish ships on a Caribbean island proved the prologue to a total war of colonization in the Americas, forward-thinking museums have begun to make an effort to include indigenous arts of those continents throughout their collections and exhibitions, and especially in their installations of American and contemporary art. The Newark Museum, the Rockwell Museum, the Brooklyn Museum and the Denver Art Museum have demonstrated commitment and success in varying degrees, each recognizing Native art as part of the national heritage and the history of world art and culture. In Canada the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation is being marked by new exhibitions and reinstallations of the Canadian galleries of museums across the country. The National Gallery has redesigned and expanded its Canadian galleries-- now renamed the Galleries of Canadian and Indigenous Art—and has organized its chronological survey to include settler and Indigenous arts from the centuries prior

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to contact through to the centennial year of 1967 and integrates contemporary Native arts into its contemporary galleries.

Even so brief a survey of the past twenty-five years of exhibitions of contemporary art, reveals a repeated pattern: in a wide range of museums throughout Canada and the United States the increasing participation of Indigenous curators and museum leaders has led to more innovative and progressive exhibitions of Native art. Thanks to the early activism of artists in the 1970s and 1980s and the work of numerous organizations large and small—including many not discussed here—a generation of Indigenous arts professionals was able to seed the field. Although the number of positions that should ideally exist for Indigenous curators still far exceeds the number available, true partnerships and collegial relationships have proved effective in generating progress in the field.

While direct credit and leadership can be given to the Native curators whose work we have noted in this essay and to others we have not had space to discuss, many non-Native curators have also been leading change through their active collaborations with Native artists, curators and scholars. Native art cannot be completely disentangled from the rest of the art world, and, indeed, has never been fully separable. Look closely and you will notice that this *Art Journal* volume, and this essay, join the voices of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals. To progress, we must continue to embrace the diversity of our field, not only by affirming the track record and ongoing need for Indigenous participation in all stages of exhibiting Native art, but also by recognizing the value of different views and strategies for defining the field and pushing it forward. Artists today have many options and are no longer uniformly pigeon-holed by institutions using anthropological models. They can choose whether to work within their tribal communities or participate in a global art world, or both.

Yet as we noted at the beginning of this essay, the history of change we have summarized is uneven and remains far from complete. Although museums and galleries, large and small, have repositioned contemporary Native American arts in meaningful and important ways, there remain striking and troubling anomalies. In Canada, despite a vibrant and organized community of Indigenous artists and curators who are steadily driving the field forward, Indigenous people do not yet manage their own broadly based institution of art and culture.⁶⁹ In the U.S. significant collections and exhibitions of modern and contemporary Native American arts remain conspicuously absent from some of the country's largest and most important art museums—the Museum of Modern Art and the National Gallery of Art, for example—while in others, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Native American arts tend to be tucked into departments of "Africa, Oceania, and the Americas," as tokenistic up-dates to the historic works on display.⁷⁰ Most troubling has been the absence of Native American arts—historic, modern and contemporary—from museums specifically dedicated to American art.⁷¹ This omission is especially striking in view of the marked efforts towards inclusion and collection building these institutions have made in the field of African-American art, which for many years suffered a similar marginalization to that of Native American art. Although we are aware, at this writing, of discussions underway at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the past sins of omission in such leading American museums are telling of the great gaps in collections and representations that need to be overcome in order to remedy the long history of exclusion.⁷² A glimmer of hope is the recently announced inclusion of the Native artist collective Postcommodity in the forthcoming Whitney Biennial, although there is much ground to be made up following the decades of omission.⁷³

As we also noted, however, quantitative measures do not resolve the underlying tension between the models of inclusion and sovereignty that inform institutional practices. On the one hand, acts of inclusion do not in and of themselves respond to or resolve the decolonizing critiques expressed in the works of many contemporary Native American artists. The dream of many Native American artists during the 1970s and the 1980s was to have a major exhibition in a mainstream art museum. That goal is now being achieved by the generation that has succeeded them, as evidenced by such major solo exhibitions as *Brian Jungen*, which toured from the Vancouver Art Gallery to the New Museum in New York in 2005, and *Jeffrey Gibson: Said the Pigeon to the Squirrel* at the National Academy Museum in New York in 2013 (Figure 21). While such occasional successes should be applauded and supported, it has also become clear that the success of a few artists in major exhibitions at mainstream art museums and galleries does not solve the over-riding issues of lack of visibility within the larger art landscape.⁷⁴

The debates and contradictions continue to play out in the positioning of contemporary Native American art within museums. They are highlighted by the outdated museological convention of exhibiting contemporary Native art within the confines of galleries of historic ethnic material—a problematic practice that is being used less and less. Thus, when the Nelson-Atkins Museum-Musée du quai Branly exhibition *The Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky*, was installed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2015 to general (even fawning) acclaim, the inclusion of contemporary artists in an exhibition focused on historic material struck many as both an injustice to the artists and a dated framing device. However important a showing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is for an artist, this mode of inclusion suggested that contemporary Native artists could enter its halls only if squeezed into the tail end of an exhibition of work from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷⁵ While contemporary artists continue to draw upon their

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ancestral traditions and belief systems, the “then and now” approach implies a need to justify the current work by its references to these traditions and reaffirms viewers' common belief that the past is the only source of authenticity, perpetuating settler 'amnesia' of the colonial histories in between of which Skinner speaks.⁷⁶ Further, it undermines progress in the representation of Native art and inhibits progress. It is, as Richard Hill has so aptly stated, “not acceptable that we are constantly treated as novel and mysterious strangers on our own land, forever in need of an introduction to validate our presence.”⁷⁷

In recent years, the emerging discourse of Indigenous visual sovereignty has stressed the right of self-determination of Native artists, writers, and curators. A logical extension of this position is to suggest that instead of focusing on exclusion from the mainstream, the goal of Native artists should be to occupy their own space because fighting for inclusion affirms the non-Native art world's power of validation. Conversations among Native artists and scholars in public forums, such as the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conferences, have reinforced this position, calling for the concentration of energies in home communities rather than abroad. This presents a dilemma for Native artists regarding the ramifications of participating on the global art stage by exhibiting in biennale exhibitions and selling their work through major commercial art dealers.⁷⁸

Jolene Rickard has, perhaps more helpfully, urged us to think about sovereignty as a relational concept. This is demonstrated on the mall in Washington by the very architecture of the National Museum of the American Indian where, as she observes, “the echoes of Southwestern canyons in the building are juxtaposed against classical European architectural tombs, creating a renewed Indigenous alterity.”⁷⁹ She argues that while political sovereignty and visual sovereignty are inextricably tied to each other, sovereignty should be understood as both

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processual and relational. As Rickard writes, "I've come to view sovereignty as an Indigenous tradition whose work is strategically never done. The emergent space of sovereignty within aesthetic discourse is not marked or theorized and needs to be articulated as a framing device to interpret the work of Indigenous artists."⁸⁰ 'Inclusion,' in other words, whether it takes the form of an autonomously governed museum within a larger system, or a separate gallery within a single institution, will remain the marked element as long as neocolonial power relations continue. Indigenous visual sovereignty necessarily evolves in relation to and alongside shifts from colonial, to post-colonial and—one day—decolonized relationships between settlers and indigenous peoples.

If, then, in this decolonizing world we take the historical consciousness museums work to create to be a key measure of institutional practices, the invisibility of Native arts in mainstream institutions has been as crippling for non-Native as for Native artists. Skinner, for example, refers to the continuing pattern of omission as a form of amnesia. He asks:

...what happens when settlers are encouraged to take responsibility for their position and privilege within settler societies, and to locate themselves in a way that disrupts the amnesia and invisibility that are central to settler colonialism. If invasion is a structure and not an event, then settler-colonial art history is a way to start decolonizing art historical methodologies so that new ways of engaging with indigenous and settler art production become possible.⁸¹

What is at stake, Skinner implies, is not just a more accurate understanding of history or a desire to achieve social justice through more equitable allocations of space in art galleries, but the transformative possibility that is offered by the openness to different concepts of aesthetic

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expression and cultural practice that comes with the consciousness of mutual responsibility and the sharing of land.

It is clear that better representation of Native art in museums should not be reduced to a choice between inclusivity in mainstream venues and institutional separation. Both approaches can advance the scholarship and serve the artist, but neither, on its own, can meet the need for the visibility that is lacking, especially if they continue to ghettoize or reduce necessary conversation between art worlds. That institutional practices that accurately reflect twenty-first century art worlds can only emerge when Native American and settler arts remain in dialogue was signaled in the title of the exhibition we discussed at the beginning of our essay—*Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist*. To see that exhibition at NMAI, in a space adjacent to the *Nation to Nation* exhibition on the history of treaties in the United States, and other exhibitions which testify to the millennia of Indigenous presence in North America lent to the contemporary work on display a resonance unique to the venue. But is also true that seeing the exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art would have brought out the artist's deep engagement with American traditions of abstraction, pop and landscape art during the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps the last word should belong to the artist herself: When asked whether her retrospective at NMAI was somehow less than what she had hoped to achieve because it was at an ethnic museum, WalkingStick countered that it was in some ways much more. “Being honored by your own is huge. Having the exhibition at NMAI brought a richness of friendship, respect and affection to the experience that I wouldn’t have had [at a mainstream museum].” Nevertheless, she says, one opportunity should not exclude the other. “Aren’t they both valuable and important to your soul?”⁸²

ENDNOTES

¹ Kay WalkingStick, "Native American Art in the Postmodern Era," *Art Journal* 51 (3), Recent Native American Art (Autumn 1992), 15.

² Full disclosure: One of this essay's authors was a co-curator of the exhibition discussed here: *Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist*, curated by Kathleen Ash-Milby and David Penney, National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., November 7, 2015—September 18, 2016.

³ Holland Cotter, "Kay WalkingStick's American History," *New York Times*, April 13, 2016, accessed July 13, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/arts/design/kay-walkingsticks-american-history.htm>; Philip Kennicott, "Kay WalkingStick, painting her heritage," *Washington Post*, November 6, 2016, accessed July 13, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/kay-walkingstick-painting-her-heritage/2015/11/05/3aef3380-824a-11e5-9afb-0c971f713d0c_story.html.

⁴ In 1992, the National Museum of the American Indian was still very much a work in progress. Created through an Act of Congress in 1989, the existing staff, collections and facilities of the Museum of the American Indian—Heye Foundation were in the process of being folded into the Smithsonian Institution. The original Museum of the American Indian public facility, opened in the 1920s at Audubon Terrace at 155th St. and Broadway in Manhattan was in the process of shutting down while the staff worked on inaugural exhibitions for a new facility, the George Gustav Heye Center at One Bowling Green, which would not open until 1994.

⁵ The National Museum of the American Indian may be the only major museum with an annual acquisitions budget and collecting plan that prioritizes contemporary Native art. The Denver Art Museum has aggressively collected as well, though it is largely supported through work with a major private donor. The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art has the second largest collection of work by living Native artists, but purchases are tied to the support of the fellowship program, supported largely by the Lily Foundation. During the past decade especially the National Gallery of Canada and other major Canadian art galleries have been actively expanding their contemporary Indigenous art collections.

⁶ We use the term "visual sovereignty" to denominate the right claimed by indigenous artists to determine their modes of self-expression and to own space for the presentation of their work independently of direction or approval from outsiders.

⁷ Damian Skinner, "Settler-colonial Art History: A Proposition in Two Parts," *Canadian Journal of Art History*, 35 (1): 131-171.

⁸ The statement was made at a 1994 symposium organized by the Commonwealth Association of Museums. See Deborah Doxtator, "The Implications of Canadian nationalism for Aboriginal Cultural Autonomy," in *Curatorship: Indigenous Perspectives in Post-Colonial Societies*:

Proceedings, Mercury Series Directorate Paper 8 (Hull QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1996), 56-69.

⁹ Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 17. See also Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutman ed., *Multiculturalism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) 25-74.

¹⁰ Public Law 101-185, the National Museum of the American Indian Act, November 28, 1989.

¹¹ At the time of this writing, an unfortunate historical parallel is unfolding in North Dakota as Native American activists from the United States, Canada and elsewhere are joining with the Standing Rock Sioux to protest the desecration of sacred lands and defend their land and the safety of their water supply against threats posed by the Dakota Access Pipeline.

¹² Public Law 101-601 H.R.5237 - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and Public Law 101-644 Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990.

¹³ The task force was commissioned in 1989 as a response to the national boycott of a *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, a 'supershow' organized in conjunction with the 1988 Calgary winter Olympics. It was funded by the federal Department of Communications (now Heritage Canada) and co-chaired by Tom Hill and Trudy Nicks. Its report, *Turning the Page: Forging new Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples* (Ottawa: Canadian Museums Association, 1992) is available from the Canadian Museums Association. See Trudy Nicks, "Partnerships in Developing Cultural Resources: Lessons from the Task Force Museums and First Peoples," *Culture* 12 (1992): 87-94; and Ruth B. Phillips, "Moment of Truth: The Spirit Sings as Critical Event and the Exhibition Inside It," in *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal: McGill Queens, 2011).

¹⁴ The momentum for change also reflects the impact of earlier activism. Jolene Rickard, for example, points to the American Indian Movement and its occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 and the first United Nations Conference on Indians in the Americas in Geneva in 1977. "Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100: 2 (Spring 2011), 470.

¹⁵ Richard William Hill's current research project is contributing such understandings. See his article "9 Group Exhibitions That Defined Contemporary Indigenous Art," *Canadian Art*, July 28, 2016, <https://canadianart.ca/features/9-group-exhibitions-that-defined-contemporary-indigenous-art/>. We are grateful to Hill for allowing us an illustrated a schematic exhibition map made as part of his research process. (See Figure 4)

¹⁶ Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice," in Gerald Vizenor ed., *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1.

¹⁷ Steven Durland, "Call Me in '93: An Interview with James Luna," *High Performance* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 34-39. Luna was also known to ask this question in several of his performances.

¹⁸ For example, *Shared Vision: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century*, and *Watchful Eyes: Native American Women Artists*, organized by the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona in 1992 and 1993 respectively.

¹⁹ Although the C.N. Gorman Museum was part of the University of California, Davis, at this time it resided in a single gallery within the Native American Studies department and was run by professor George Longfish with no full-time staff. In programming, funding, and audience it was closer kin to a community gallery than a university museum with full staffing and administration.

²⁰ Joanna Bigfeather, telephone conversation with Ash-Milby, May 27, 2016.

²¹ Joanna Bigfeather, director 1999-2002; Margaret Archuleta, director 2003; Ryan Rice, chief curator 2009-2014; Candice Hopkins, chief curator 2015; Patsy Phillips, director 2008 to present.

²² *Our Land/Ourselves: American Indian Contemporary Artists* (Albany: University Art Gallery, University at Albany, State University of New York); *We the Human Beings: 27 Contemporary Native American Artists* (Wooster, Ohio: College of Wooster, 1992); *The Submuloc Show / Columbus Woks: A Visual Commentary on the Columbus Quincentennial from the Perspective of America's First People* (Phoenix, AZ: Atlatl).

²³ *Invitational '74*, January 26-March 3, included T. C. Cannon, Helen Hardin, Larry Golsh, Valjean Hessing, Jerry Ingram, Mary Morez, and Fritz Scholder. *The Heard Museum of Anthropology and Primitive Art Newsletter* (January-February 1974), 1, 3.

²⁴ Margaret Archuleta, "Curator's Statement," *7th Native American Fine Art Invitational* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1997), 2.

²⁵ See *Art in Two Worlds: The Native American Fine Art Invitational 1983-1997* (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 1997). The museum organized eight biennials and invitationals from 1983 to 2002. After Archuleta's departure, the position of Curator of Fine Art was not filled until 2006 with Joe Baker, who left the museum in 2008. Among other solo artist projects, Baker co-organized two critically noted group exhibitions during his three-year tenure: *Holy Land: Diaspora and the Desert* (2006), co-curated with Lara Taubman, and *Remix: New Modernities in a Post Indian World* (2007) co-curated with Gerald McMaster in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian. At the time of this publication, the Heard Museum has not since filled the position.

²⁶ The George Gustav Heye Center, named after the founder of the Museum of the American Indian, George Heye, is located in the Alexander Hamilton Custom House, a historic landmark building in lower Manhattan.

²⁷ The 15 artist collaborators included visual artists, performing artists, and a poet. They were Arthur Amiotte, Douglas Coffin, Allen Deleary, Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahale, Margo Kane, Frank LaPena, Jane Lind, Harold Littlebird, Jose Montano, Soni Moreno-Primeau, Dan Namingha, LeVan Keola Sequeira, Hulleah Tsinnahjinnie, Denise Wallace, and Josephine Wapp.

²⁸ Several Native curators were involved at various stages in this project, including Rick Hill (Richard Hill, Sr.), Truman Lowe, Joanna Bigfeather and Bentley Spang. See Fred Nahwooksy and Richard Hill, Sr., eds. *Who Stole the Teepee?* (Phoenix: Atlatl, 2000). Atlatl, Inc. was an influential organization for Native artists in the 1990s, hosting national conferences that brought the Indigenous arts community together and provided support services.

²⁹ This was not a published policy, but the practice of museum staff. The rationale was confirmed by Ann Drumheller, NMAI Registrar during this time period, as well as Ash-Milby, who worked in the Curatorial Department during this period, 1993-1999 (Ann Drumheller, personal communication with Ash-Milby, October 27, 2016). As an example, a purchase proposal of works from the exhibition *Indian Humor* in 1998 by Ash-Milby was not approved by senior curatorial leadership to be reviewed by the collections committee, Curatorial Council. Rare exceptions were the purchase of two works by Jim Schoppert in 1997 and later works by Edgar Heap of Birds, Gail Tremblay and Marcus Amerman from *Who Stole the Teepee?* in 2001. There were many complicating factors, competing needs, and sometimes conflicting priorities, in the museum's first decade, as confirmed by museum staff past and present, including former director W. Richard West, Jr., and former Assistant Director for Cultural Resources Bruce Bernstein. (W. Richard West, Jr, personal communication to Ash-Milby, October 28, 2016, and Bruce Bernstein, personal communication to Ash-Milby, November 2, 2016.)

³⁰ Collections Policy, National Museum of the American Indian, 1995, 9.

³¹ Rayna Green, Curator Emeritus, Smithsonian National Museum of History, personal communication to Ash-Milby, November 5, 2016.

³² Funding for special projects throughout the Smithsonian never meets the amount needed, and difficult choices are always necessary. For example, in the mid-1990s contemporary Native art acquisitions at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art were curtailed in favor of other underrepresented groups, including Latino artists. According to Andrew Connors, a former curator at SMAA who had organized an exhibition, *Pueblo Indian Watercolors* (1993) and acquired a work by Allan Houser for the museum, the rationale given to staff was that NMAI had greater authority and expertise to pursue this work. Andrew Connors, personal communication to Ash-Milby, November 5, 2016.

³³ Until 2013 a second curatorial position for contemporary Inuit art was held by Odette Leroux, Maria Muellen, and Norman Vorano. The two separate curatorial positions for Inuit and Indian art were combined into one in 2014.

³⁴ Gerald McMaster and Lee Ann Martin eds., *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives* (Hull, QB: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992).

³⁵ Gerald McMaster, *Edward Poitras: Canada XLVI Biennale di Venezia* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1995).

³⁶ See Lee-Ann Martin, "The Waters of Venice: Rebecca Belmore at the 51st Biennale," *Canadian Art* (Summer 2005), accessed November 25, 2016,

<https://canadianart.ca/features/rebecca-belmore-venice/>. In 1999 Nancy Marie Mithlo spearheaded significant ongoing interventions to represent Native artists at the Venice Biennale through exhibitions, performances and public programs. The latest iteration, "Wah.shka," will be co-curated with Mary Bordeaux during the 2017 biennale (http://nancymariemithlo.com/Venice/Venice_Biennale_2017/index.html).

³⁷ A parallel Inuit art centre was disbanded and its collections transferred to the National Gallery of Canada and other Canadian museums in 1992. A federally endowed Inuit Art Foundation took over the promotional activities between 1985 and 2012. The past history of institutional engagement with Aboriginal arts was the subject of the 2006 Aboriginal Curatorial Collective meeting. See Barry Ace, "The Way Ahead: Surveying the Curatorial Landscape," accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.aboriginalcuratorialcollective.org/research/thewayahead.html>.

³⁸ See Diana Nemiroff, "Modernism, Nationalism and Beyond: A Critical History of Exhibitions of First Nations Art," in Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle, and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, *Land/Spirit/Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992).

³⁹ For an example of this lobbying, see Alfred Young Man ed., *Networking: Native Indian Artists Symposium IV* (Lethbridge, AB: Graphcom Printers, 1988).

⁴⁰ See Anne Whitelaw, "Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31: 1 (2006), accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1775/1897>; and Ruth B. Phillips, "Modes of Inclusion: Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario," in *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal: McGill Queens, 2011), 252-276.

⁴¹ This list is by no means comprehensive, but, rather, a sampling that illustrates regional initiatives. In Canada, the foundation had been laid in the 1980s by ground breaking shows staged across the country, such as *New Work for a New Generation*, curated by Robert Houle for the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan in 1982; *Horses Fly Too*, curated by Norman Zepp and Michael Parke Taylor for the Norman Mackenzie Gallery in 1984; *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers*, curated by Tom Hill and Elizabeth McLuhan for the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1984; and *Beyond History*, curated by Karen Duffek and Tom Hill for the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1989. In the U.S., important, foundational exhibitions during these years were *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage*, curated by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith at the American Indian Community House in 1983, *Contemporary Native American Art* curated by Joan Randall in consultation with George Longfish at the Gardiner Art Gallery, Oklahoma State University also in 1983, and two exhibitions curated by Jimmie Durham and Jean Fisher: *Ni'Go Tlung A Doh Ka [We Are Always Turning Around On Purpose]* at Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, SUNY Old Westbury, Long Island in 1986; and *We the People* at Artists' Space, New York, New York in 1987.

⁴² McMaster held this position until 2002 when he became a Special Assistant to the Director until he left the museum in 2005. Lowe held his position from 2000 to 2008.

⁴³ The 12 artists featured were Kay WalkingStick, Rick Bartow, Joe Feddersen, Harry Fonseca, Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds, George Longfish, Judith Lowry, Nora Naranjo-Morse, Shelley Niro, Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith, Marie Watt, and Richard Ray Whitman.

⁴⁴ Some contemporary art purchases were approved after McMaster and Lowe were hired, but due to budget concerns and lack of fine art collecting plan, these seem to have been limited to works needed for the NMAI “permanent” exhibitions at the new Mall Museum, such as the mixed media sculptural composition *War Shirt #2* (2003) by Bently Spang and painted ceramic work *Love and Luggage* (2002) by Tammy Garcia. Purchases from *Continuum* artists began in 2003, including the *Chief Joseph Series* (1974-76), a multi-panel painting series, from Kay WalkingStick. Curatorial Council Minutes, January-December 2003, National Museum of the American Indian, Office of the Registrar, Cultural Resources Center, Suitland, MD; W. Richard West, Jr., former director of the NMAI (1990-2007), personal communication to Ash-Milby, October 28, 2016.

⁴⁵ Ash-Milby initially worked for NMAI from 1993-1999 as a research assistant and assistant curator. She returned to NMAI (New York) in 2005 after several years working as a freelance curator and serving as the curator and co-director of the American Indian Community House Gallery (2000-2005).

⁴⁶ Paul Chaat Smith was initially hired in 2001 to work on the development of the inaugural mall exhibitions for the new museum facility on the Washington, D.C., mall which opened in 2004.

⁴⁷ *Vision, Space, Desire: Global Perspectives and Cultural Hybridity* (Washington: National Museum of the American Indian, 2006).

⁴⁸ Program Officer Elizabeth Theobald Richards (2003-2010) established the Ford Foundation’s first funding portfolio primarily focused on Native American cultures entitled Traditional Knowledge and Expressive Culture that included two initiatives: Strengthening the Field of Native Arts and Cultures (capacity building), and Advancing the Dialogue on Native American Arts in Society (supporting public discourse advancement through publication, exhibits and scholarship). NMAI, along with multiple other organizations, received funding under both of these initiatives. Over seven years the Ford invested over \$20 million in direct support to Native organizations and cultural communities through these initiatives. Elizabeth Theobald Richards, personal communication to Ash-Milby, June 6, 2016.

⁴⁹ See Kathleen Ash-Milby, ed., *Most Serene Republics: Edgar Heap of Birds* (Washington: National Museum of the American Indian, 2009).

⁵⁰ A complete index of exhibitions at the National Museum of the American Indian in all locations can be found at www.nmai.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/past.

⁵¹ *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist; The Drawings and Paintings of Daphne Odjig; A Retrospective Exhibition: Carl Beam; and Alex Janvier*. In 2007 the NGC also presented a touring exhibition of Haida contemporary art, *Robert Davidson: The Abstract Edge*, organized by the Seattle Art Museum, in 2007. The Inuit exhibitions were organized by NGC curators Marie Routledge and are listed in the Exhibition History section of the NGC website.

⁵² Then Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

⁵³ During this period, too, the National Gallery exhibited contemporary Indigenous art in other themed exhibitions alongside non-Indigenous art.

⁵⁴ Most notable was *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers* (see note 32), and in 1992, it commissioned Robert Houle to make the site specific work "Anishinaabe Walker Court" in response to its 1984 purchase of Lothar Baumgarten's "Monument for the Native People of Ontario."

⁵⁵ Richard W. Hill, "Meeting Ground: The Reinstallation of the Art Gallery of Ontario's McLaughlin Gallery," in Lee-Ann Martin ed., *Making a Noise!: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community* (Banff, AB: Banff Centre Press, 2003), 50–70. See also Naohiro Nakamura, "The Representation of First Nations Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 45-46 (2012): 417-440.

⁵⁶ See Phillips, "Modes of Inclusion," for a detailed discussion of Monkman's work.

⁵⁷ On Bonnie Devine's installation see Ruth B. Phillips, "Between Rocks and Hard Places: Indigenous Lands, Settler Art Histories and the 'Battle for the Woodlands,'" *Journal of Canadian Art History* [submitted].

⁵⁸ Accessed May 16, 2016, <http://urbanshaman.org/site/history>.

⁵⁹ According to David M. Roche, appointed director of the Heard Museum in 2016, "the Heard must find a way to make American Indian art about the future, and work to once again be at the forefront of providing opportunities to living artists of Native background and to advancing American Indian art." Towards this end, the museum will adding a 7000 square foot gallery in 2017. David M. Roche, personal communication to Ash-Milby, October 25, 2016.

⁶⁰ Philbrook Downtown opened with the survey, "Identity and Inspiration: 20th Century Native American Art" organized by curator Christina Burke.

⁶¹ See Aldona Jonaitis ed., *Looking North: Art from the University of Alaska Museum*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998) for a discussion of the museums reconceptualization.

⁶² *Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation 2, Contemporary Native North American Art from the West, Northwest and Pacific*, September 22, 2005—January 22, 2006, Museum of Art & Design, New York, N.Y. This group exhibition was curated by Ellen Napiura Taubman and David Revere McFadden.

⁶³ Joseph Alsop pointed out the triangulated relationship of art history, collecting, and markets in his exhaustive study, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 15-18.

⁶⁴ Accessed April 19, 2016, <http://www.ecuad.ca/about/at-a-glance/history-and-evolution>.

⁶⁵ Accessed April 19, 2016, <http://canadacouncil.ca/aboriginal-arts-office/find-a-grant?page=0>.

⁶⁶ Accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.acc-cca.com/wordpress/about/mandate/>.

⁶⁷ See Martin ed., *Making a Noise!*

⁶⁸ Unpublished report, Atlatl, Inc., National Service Organization for Native American Arts, 1977-1997.

⁶⁹ A prime example of this is the formation of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective/Collectif des Conservateurs autochtones (ACC/CCA), founded in 2006 as a national arts service organization that supports, promotes and advocates on behalf of Canadian and international Aboriginal curators, critics, artists and representatives of arts and cultural organizations. In addition to acting as a conduit for sharing information with Indigenous artists and curators, the ACC/CCA holds colloquias and other gatherings for the exchange of ideas and intellectual discourse in the field.

⁷⁰ According to Judith Ostrowitz, former Research Associate in the Department of Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas (AAOA), a small number of contemporary traditional items, such as a mask by Robert Davidson, have been exhibited within the limited exhibition space for the AAOA. A print and painting by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and two paintings by Kay WalkingStick, were acquired between 1993 and 2008. Ostrowitz supported the acquisition of works by Edgar Heap of Birds and Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas in 2015. Judith Ostrowitz, personal communication to Ash-Milby, June 1, 2016.

⁷¹ At the Whitney, the main exception is the inclusion of the artist Jimmie Durham, whose work has been included in previous biennials, the museum's collection, and will be featured in a forthcoming solo retrospective, *Jimmie Durham: Art at the Center of the World*, organized by the Hammer Museum. Although his success and recognition on the international stage is laudable, his inclusion in exhibitions at the Whitney does not adequately represent the achievements of Native artists from the United States. The Museum of Modern Art, likewise, has very minimal representation of Native artists, with single works by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Fritz Scholder and Lewis de Soto.

⁷² Crystal Bridges has recently purchased works by Jeffrey Gibson and Emmi Whitehorse and, as of this writing, a major Native art exhibition is in early stages of development. Candice Hopkins, personal communication to Ash-Milby, October 28, 2016.

⁷³ Robin Pogrebin, "Here Comes the Whitney Biennial, Reflecting the Tumult of the Times," *New York Times*, November 17, 2016, at www.nytimes.com/2016/11/18/arts/design/here-comes-the-whitney-biennial-reflecting-the-tumult-of-the-times.html as of December 12, 2016.

⁷⁴ See Daina Augaitis, *Brian Jungen* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, Douglas & McIntyre, 2006).

⁷⁵ "The Met made an important start to the process of inclusion for contemporary Native American and First Nations artists during my tenure there by including a gallery of recent works

in the exhibition 'The Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky (2015)' in both 'traditional style' as well as in new media. I was able to add a number of paintings, photographs, and videos that were only on view at the New York venue of the exhibition and, as a result, some works were acquired for the permanent collection. However, a great deal needs to be done to continue this progress." Judith Ostrowitz, personal communication to Ash-Milby, June 2, 2016.

⁷⁶ A full critique of the exhibition development model used by the organizers of the exhibition, which follows an outdated anthropological approach of enlisting "consultants" (formerly informants) instead of partnerships or collaborations, was written by Joe Horse Capture: "Horse Capture: 'Native People Have a Story to Tell – Their Own'", April 25, 2015. Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/04/25/horse-capture-native-people-have-story-tell-their-own-160144>.

⁷⁷ Richard Hill, "Close Readings: *Before and after the Horizon: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto July 26-Nov 23, 2014 and *The Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, March 9 – May 10, 2015" *C Magazine: Contemporary Art and Criticism* (Winter 2016): 38-41.

⁷⁸ This viewpoint demonstrates that ideas about "success" in the Native arts community are not uniformly shared.

⁷⁹ Jolene Rickard, "Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100: 2 (Spring 2011), 465.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 478.

⁸¹ Skinner, "Settler-Colonial Art History," 167.

⁸² Kay WalkingStick, personal communication to Ash-Milby, May 27, 2016.