



SNAP

SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ALBERTA PRINT-ARTISTS

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Summer has officially arrived! Full disclosure: as I write this I'm cozied up inside with the furnace on avoiding the cold rain — as a born and raised Edmontonian I've learned to be flexible with my seasonal expectations. Despite the damp start to the season, it's shaping up to be a busy one at SNAP. As a board we've been developing our strategic plan for the next 5 years; the process has been an incredible opportunity to reflect on our development, celebrate our successes, and dream big for the future! In the gallery, there's new exhibitions by Toronto-based visual artist Kristie MacDonald, and our emerging artist in residence and new summer Printshop Programs Assistant Max Keene. The printshop is bustling with a breadth of exciting courses and workshops (hello, Shibori Indigo Workshop!). Finally, we're capping off the season with the release of this edition of SNAPline, it's the icing on an abundantly layered and rich cake!

The topic of Resistance is something I reflect on a lot within my studio practice. As an artist, researcher, volunteer, and board member, I'm always thinking about art as an expression of the political. I believe that print speaks volumes. Rooted in a history of political action, dissemination, and institutional critique, printmaking creates accessible, democratic spaces for expression and resistance. It's a celebration of the resonance of the multiple; a physical embodiment of political will and participation stamped in ink. Printmaking is handmade meaning making, and its message is irrepressible and loud. I think that's at

the core of why I love printmaking, it's expressive, often messy, and always rich and nuanced in meaning.

Over the last year, I've been working with the board and our volunteers to expand our reach with SNAPline. You may have even received a phone call from me to discuss all the exciting things we have planned for our SNAPline members! Recently, we have joined the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association which will open our volunteer publication committee and its contributors to receive well-deserved recognition for all their hard work. However, all this is not possible without your support! By joining our SNAPline membership, you are directly contributing to the success and growth of our organization and publication. As a thank you for your generosity and support, you'll receive a limited edition fine-art print and this publication delivered right to your door three times a year. We're bringing print to the people!

Thank you for your support of SNAP! I feel so incredibly fortunate to volunteer and work with such an inspiring community of makers and thinkers. I hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to connecting with you in the gallery, printshop, or at events!



Chelsey Campbell
SNAP Board of Directors

FUNDERS



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The words and images in this edition of SNAPline are important, they are challenging, they are steady, and they are signalling change. Printmaking has always been a tool of resistance movements. As a medium of abundance, of community, and the sharing of space and resources, printmaking has the ability to resist the predominant colonial capitalist narrative. Over the last 10 years I've watched printmaking bring people together into community and conversation, resisting a retreat into isolation and individualism. The transformative power of creative practice within a community is articulated beautifully in Ashna Jacob's interview with Adebayo Katiiti.

Laura Grier's stunning screen printed edition and accompanying text resists an easy or comfortable reading. It's been a great gift to witness their artistic practice deepen and the power of their voice as a Dêłı̄nê First Nations artist and printmaker grow. The links between Grier's work with that of Alyssa Duck Chief and Christi Belcourt are fascinating - using the printed, copied, and repeatable image to extend traditional knowledge and stories but also to change, challenge, interpret, interrupt, and resist. Witnessing the power of printmaking in the hands of emerging and established Indigenous artists across Canada has given me great hope for the future and survival of the print medium. The collective activist spirit moving through the SNAP printshop the last few months has taken me by surprise, often arriving at work to see traces of the protest posters, zines, and t-shirts from the previous night's

print session. It's been a joyful reminder that our community can thrive when we make space for all voices. I hope you take time to read and re-read the words on the following pages to get to know the artists and writers whose images we are so proud to publish, and if you find yourself with questions, I hope you'll make time to connect with us at SNAP.



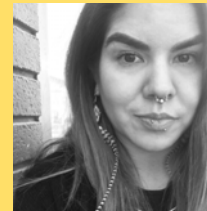
April Dean
Executive Director

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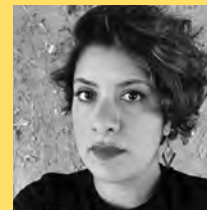


Ashna Jacob is a designer and visual artist based in Edmonton, Canada. A graduate of the Bachelor of Design program at the University of Alberta, she specializes in visual communication design and print media. She explores the themes of human connection, memory, and community through printmaking and performance. In her spare time she likes to eat sweets and read comics.

Photo credit: Adam Waldron-Blain



Missy LeBlanc is a curator and writer of Métis, Cree, and Polish descent. LeBlanc is the inaugural Emerging Curatorial Resident at TRUCK Contemporary Art in Calgary, AB and the winner of the 2019 Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators. Her recent curatorial projects include Tina Guyani | Deer Road (forthcoming, 2019), Reverberate (2018), and What is Known of Old and Long Familiar (2016). LeBlanc is working on a series of exhibitions and a gathering centered on Indigenous language revitalization and epistemologies for fall 2019 as part of her curatorial residency at TRUCK. LeBlanc was born and raised in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton) and is currently based in Moh'kins'stis (Calgary).



Nadia Kurd is second-generation Canadian Muslim and an art historian with a PhD from McGill University. She is currently the Curator of Collections at the University of Alberta Museums.

Featured Artist:

Laura Grier



Laura Grier is a D  l  n   First Nations artist and printmaker, born in Somba k   and based out of Alberta. Through the use of traditional print mediums, they instrumentalize the power of the handmade to reflect political sociology, culture, environmentalism, and Indigeneity. Responding to lived experiences, Laura's work is inspired by the dynamism of Indigenous art practices and believes that printmaking is a tool of resistance and a vessel towards Indigenous Bets'  n   (Spirit). They hold a BFA from NSCADU (K'jipuktuk) and they are currently pursuing their MFA in Interdisciplinary Fine Art at OCADU (Tkaronto).



ABOVE: Laura Grier,
Process image for Bets'  n  
N  n   Prints, 2019



Artist Statement

Bets'ıne Nene Prints

"Spirituality is a deeper level of knowledge and awareness and it too guides our behaviour. Living fully and successfully in the now world, is dependent upon our understandings and our relationship to the living entities of the upper world. Our lives are regulated by these relationships and maintaining the balance in these relationships is of utmost importance. Our very existence depends on maintaining and respecting these relationships."

– Fibbie Tatti

These prints are my gift to the Dene and Sahtúgot'ıne writers whose work has guided me towards this work, and in a way, back home. Inside each print is a ceremonial mark, a message, an action, and a Dene belief system. I hope these prints can help guide you too. Mahsi Cho

TOP: Laura Grier, Process image
for Bets'ıne Nene Prints, 2019

BOTTOM: Laura Grier, *Ediri nene*:
Screen Print, 2019

The Power of Indigenous Print and The Power of Indigenous Refusal

Written by
LAURA GREIR

I often find myself reflecting on how much Indigenous words have influenced my ways of thinking and making. I am filled with feelings of gratitude as I study influential Indigenous thinkers and scholars, who have helped me to clarify and hold on to ideas I have been thinking through. I look towards Anishnaabe Kwe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and her book, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, which has helped me understand more of what I have been experiencing and conceptualizing in regards to Indigenous knowledge, responsibility, and the Indigenous artist. Knowledge is not something you can own. It is fluid, it is a gift, it is collective, it has a past, a present, and a future. What I have come to know, through many great Indigenous peers, leaders, mentors, and elders, is that you have to work for your knowledge. Their knowledge also came from those before them, and it is our responsibility to hold on to our knowledges, as well as our responsibility to consider what to do with it.

I firmly believe that we can create change through art. By activating an artist's ability to problem solve, real radical solutions can be created. However, until we have a world where Indigenous languages and knowledges systems are taught, and Indigenous knowledges are properly and respectfully accessed, we cannot do this work together.

I hope that this piece of writing can offer a small foundation for audiences to consider print works by Indigenous artists. We are resilient people and I am more than willing to share my knowledge with you, but only if you are ready to truly receive it.

**Printmaking holds
on to power and it has
been what I hold on to
when life gets dark.**

I'm drawn to Printmaking as it has been a way to release my various anxieties and energies. Anxieties which build and stretch out while I try to cope with my circumstances, pasts, and possible futures. I also use printmaking as a vessel for Indigenous Bets'įnę́ (Spirit). Bets'įnę́ refers to the human spirit and goes beyond any western concept of Spirituality. This Dene knowledge is key to how I see and approach printmaking. Bets'įnę́ is a living entity, it is multi-layered, and I am still learning its presence. The print process can be a tool to tell a story, and the Spirit drives a type of power, which I see most clearly in acts of Indigenous resistance. As an Indigenous printmaker, I often grapple with making something that might reveal the knowledges I have been gifted. Indigenous knowledge(s) are earned. This stands in contrast to much of the western art systems, which is the attitude of "you make, you show". Because of this western approach, Indigenous work is then at risk of being misinterpreted and homogenized, and the Indigenous artist is at risk of being harmed.



I then look towards my Indigenous Print Elders for guidance and who have inspired me to stay on the path of this medium. Indigenous Print Elders are, from my perspective, Indigenous artists whose work has at some point explored, or utilized printmaking. They carry an Indigenous way of making to the printmaking ethos. They are makers we can learn from, makers who inspire, makers whose knowledges are embodied in their prints. Indigenous printmakers like Dylan Miner and the artistic collaborative duo Isaac Murdoch and Christi Belcourt carry forms of resistance within their work. These artists balance the urgency of political resistance and activism with collective Indigeneity, and they are pushing the front lines of Indigenous

political and artistic resistance. These artists are also challenging institutions of power and battling colonial structures. The work done by our Elders and Art Elders is allowing my generation to step into a new space of dialogue and change; space where Indigenous knowledges can perhaps be understood and activated.

ABOVE: Laura Grier,
Performance, 2019

When I study Dylan Miner's work, who has placed their own Indigenous Michif and Nishnaabemwin languages in their prints, I understand that their relation to language is an inherent knowledge system and a way of honouring ancestors. When Dylan translates knowledge in their art work it creates grounds for understanding and accessibility. However, how I have come to know or see Dylan's work is certainly different from a non-native white settler. Our lived experiences, and Indigeneity allows for a particular connectivity, which may never translate to non-native audiences.

When I witness Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch's activist banner projects in solidarity protests, I see strong resilient stories. Stories which carry lessons and truths. The artists carry the responsibilities of a storyteller, who share their words and stories so that we may learn from them. Christi and Isaac's own inherent responsibility to the land has led to the creation of a strong series of visual communication from the perspective of Indigenous land protectors. By taking on the responsibilities of storytellers, they make sure to give back to communities through activism, youth camps, and collaboration. Yet, part of responsibility is determining whether certain knowledges are ready to be shared. I have learnt that a story doesn't belong to the storyteller, but it belongs to the people. But how do we start telling our stories in a world still engrained in colonial hegemonic mentalities? Perhaps, for now, we don't have to.

So, what is Refusal? Refusal in Indigenous art can mean various strategies and pathways, but I am interested in how Indigenous knowledges should not be subjected to the constraints of the western art system. I was born in Somba Ke (Yellowknife) as a Délı̨nę First Nation. I was displaced from our territory at a young age and was brought up without knowing our languages or our Dene philosophies. I have survived many forms of colonial violence and de-stabilization, but my Indigenous resilience has pushed me forward. My experience is not uncommon, but it should be acknowledged that the time, energies, and sacrifices made for many contemporary Indigenous artists to be here, to have a platform, is great.

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In moving from individual acts of resurgence to connecting with networks of resurgence, coded communication and articulation are important because they protect the network from co-option, exploitation, and manipulation, and the sovereignty of the network remains in the hands of its Indigenous makers.

When I refuse, I see it as an act of resistance to the various systems that want our knowledges, yet rarely do they take on the type of responsibility needed to understand our creative work. When art work is shown with Indigenous languages in particular, it is hard to communicate the complexities embedded within the intricate knowledge system that is language. Many of us are still learners, and some of us have seldom had the chance to learn from our own communities. The Residential Schools did damage to our shared spoken Indigenous languages and realities.

The devastation from colonialism cut me, but inherited responsibility and Spirit have driven me to seek out my Sahtúot'ı̨nē Yat'ı̨ (North Slavey language). Indigenous languages, such as Sahtúot'ı̨nē Yat'ı̨, are difficult and complex, and come with many meanings and expressions. Refusal, to me, is refusing to give up knowledges which I have been gifted and refusing to translate those knowledges for people who have not done the work required. My print work is now focused on creating pieces for Indigenous artists;

in particular Indigenous Printmakers. An Indigenous artist looking at my work may start to recognize ideas like relational connectivity and land-related concepts. Even further, an Indigenous Printmaker may look at my mark making, and start to see the type of story I am trying to tell them through the marks.

"In moving from individual acts of resurgence to connecting with networks of resurgence, coded communication and articulation are important because they protect the network from cooption, exploitation, and manipulation, and the sovereignty of the network remains in the hands of its Indigenous makers. This is perhaps one of the greatest lessons I continually learn from Indigenous artists: coded disruptions and affirmative refusal through the use of Indigenous aesthetic Practices."

-Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

My work was often translated into English, but I am finding more and more that the English language falls short of the intricacies of Indigenous

stories and words. Each word I find in my Indigenous languages is like finding a new relative, a new connection, and that maybe, it was waiting for me too. I am so moved by my Indigenous language because our languages carry deep multilateral power. It can be difficult to show this work as my experience is that my prints are then overlooked, merely glanced at, and rarely discussed. How I see and love, like really love, and hold on to a word or a mark, may never be properly acknowledged or understood by certain audiences. Finally, I want to recognise that my current position and views on refusal are fluid and dependent on how we continuously shape the future. However, my message to fellow Indigenous artists will always remain, and it is that you shouldn't have to give more of yourself than necessary just to appease western audiences who may, or may not, come to truly understand you, your realities, and your work. Mahsi cho

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My Process: An Interview with Adebayo Katiiti

Interview by
ASHNA JACOB





As I wait for Adebayo in the SNAP studio, I scroll through posts about the rainbow that graced the sky a few hours earlier, on the Monday after Pride Weekend. It's a busy time for the LGBTQ+ community, especially organizers like Adebayo, a founding member of RaricaNow, an organization for LGBTQ+ refugees in the city. Ade himself arrived in Edmonton as a refugee in 2016, after having been outed just a few days prior in Uganda, his home country, and being subjected to family rejection and abuse.

Since winning his case to stay, he and his team have been helping other refugees who are in similar circumstances, as well as advocating for and supporting the QTBIPOC (Queer Trans Black Indigenous and People of Colour) community in the city. Adebayo's work has earned him the Changemaker Award at the 2018 Pride Awards, as well as being appointed a member of the Government of Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council.

Adebayo arrives for the interview with a telltale smile—the day has been a good one for RaricaNow, thanks to a successful court case that morning that allowed one of their members to stay in Edmonton and avoid deportation back to an abusive community. A success like that often means saving a life, and it is these powerful moments from his experiences in organizing that show themselves in his printmaking.

ABOVE: Adebayo Katiiti,
Mother's Love, woodcut, 2016

Ashna: Where did you start printmaking?

Ade: I got to know SNAP through Deana, a neighbour of the people I was staying with when I first came here in 2017. She suggested I do art for my first fundraiser [to raise legal fees to help me stay in Canada] and introduced me to Michelle Lavoie, a curator and printmaker. They together invited me to SNAP and helped me print my first woodcuts. We did a project called Re-Imaging Normal that took our pieces traveling around exhibitions in Alberta. After that Michelle invited me to continue working on prints with her, and I've been making work at SNAP ever since. And I don't want to print anywhere else because of how welcoming the place is and how easy everything is. Everyone is helping you all the time and complimenting each other like 'that's so good, you made that?' and I got this idea in my head that there is no bad art, especially if you make it at SNAP. I connect to SNAP because the work I make here is healing and being here releases my stress.

Ashna: What attracted you to woodcut?

Ade: I like the physicality of carving, like I'm carving out all the trauma in my life, like I'm making my mark on this object and it's not going away. Even after a long day of carving I don't feel tired. It feels good even if you don't print. I do a lot of carving at home.

Ashna: Your prints are full of figures, bright pride colours and heavy symbolism and storytelling. What are some of the things that inspire you?

Ade: My prints are related to my story, my lived experiences, things I've survived. I heal and survive using art. I survived a lot of things and I put it on paper so that I can talk about it, so I can look at it and own it. The community work I do is also really heavy emotionally and mentally, you have to go through the legal battles, you have to go to hospitals, some clients are suicidal or have attempted. You have to be a safe space for 20 to 30 people at a time and take in everything they're going through, and you have no outlet for it. Using printmaking I can work through it and process it. It doesn't go away because it's a part of me, but it calms down and that helps me move on.

Ashna: What are some of the themes behind these prints?

Ade: The piece entitled *Mother's Love* is about resisting what my family did and about my relationship with my mother. My family kicked me out and disowned me, and when my father and brothers and sisters rejected me, I refused to accept that my mother would reject me, because we had such a deep connection. I just depended on that love. Which is what she's doing now—she's started to call me again after a year of not speaking to me [after my move to Canada]. In fact, last night I came out to her as a trans man and told her I'm transitioning. She was surprised but it will be okay.



Ashna: Another example of the symbolism that informs your work is the *WAIT* piece.

Ade: *WAIT* was made at a time I was at the peak of helplessness and feeling suicidal. I was scheduled to meet Michelle for a printing session, and I started crying on the bus. There were a lot of heavy things happening in the community regarding Pride—people sending us hateful messages, hate group activity in Edmonton, and one of my clients at the time attempted suicide, and I had to call the cops on another client, which was all really difficult. I had to keep all that in me, and I have to hold a safe space for them within me, but it was all a lot, and I felt I wanted to sleep and not wake up. And when I got to SNAP, Michelle gave me a paper and I put it all down. I was telling myself it's okay to wait, wait to take your life, you can resist it and you can survive it, it's okay to take a step back, you don't have to move so fast, you don't have to move at everyone's pace. And that's where the *WAIT* project came from.

Ashna: And I think it's really interesting that you've been printing the *WAIT* images on t-shirts and it's out there for other LGBTQ+ people to wear; this imagery that symbolizes the realities of your existence, and the visibility of literally wearing that, so the LGBTQ+ people who wear it are adopting it and saying 'I feel this too.'

Ade: Exactly, I wanted to share what I feel every day because I realize a lot of people have the same lived experiences. And I feel my art can save someone if it saved me, and anyone can look at it and say wait a bit, someone will hear you out. So that was the message behind making the shirts; it's for more than just selling.

Ashna: And most of your work has themes that a lot of us QTBIPOC can relate to. This is especially the case with *A Long Road To Peace*, which has become quite familiar to the LGBTQ+ community in Edmonton as the logo for RaricaNow as well.

Ade: I connect personally to *A Long Road to Peace* a lot. As a LGBTIQ refugee, I had this thought that whenever there is a rainbow person going through something, there is always someone watching their back, to take care of them. There is always help around the corner. The two figures in this piece are doing that—watching each other's backs. And this is something that the whole team and all the members of RaricaNow face. Especially for BIPOC, you feel isolated in your communities, but there is hope because there's someone watching your back and someone willing to help, who knows your story and who believes in you, who knows you matter, you're human, whatever discrimination you went through is because of homophobia, and you are you. And that's the Long Road to Peace, it's there but it's a long road, especially if you wear the rainbow, especially if you wear trans colours.

LEFT: Adebayo Katiiti, *Please Don't Go Away, "WAIT"*, woodcut, 2016

The work I do, I relate personally to my life story. I came with nothing, and no one, that grounds and connects me. And when I put that on paper it strengthens me and gives me hope to turn around and watch someone else's back. With RaricaNow my experiences have taught me a lot. It has helped me know this community and society more, that my skin colour can be perceived as a threat. The advocacy work gives me strength to keep going. A lot of friends of mine were very worried about me [during the time I made WAIT], especially because sometimes we have unsuccessful cases with RaricaNow members. But my friends strengthen me and it makes me want to give back.

Ashna: I feel like a lot of people take up this advocacy work out of necessity, because of scarce resources and because a lot of times community is the answer. And that goes back to that idea of watching people's backs.



Ade: I'm working with LGBTQ refugees so it's family, it's community. I can't describe how strong it is. I keep reminding them that we have power, you have power, there is power that is unseen that we can show people. There is power where we stand within our stories, even if you don't move how society wants you to move, you have power even in your existence, even in you being alive. It's like community itself is a powerful hidden movement. People who don't have clear eyes, they will never see it.

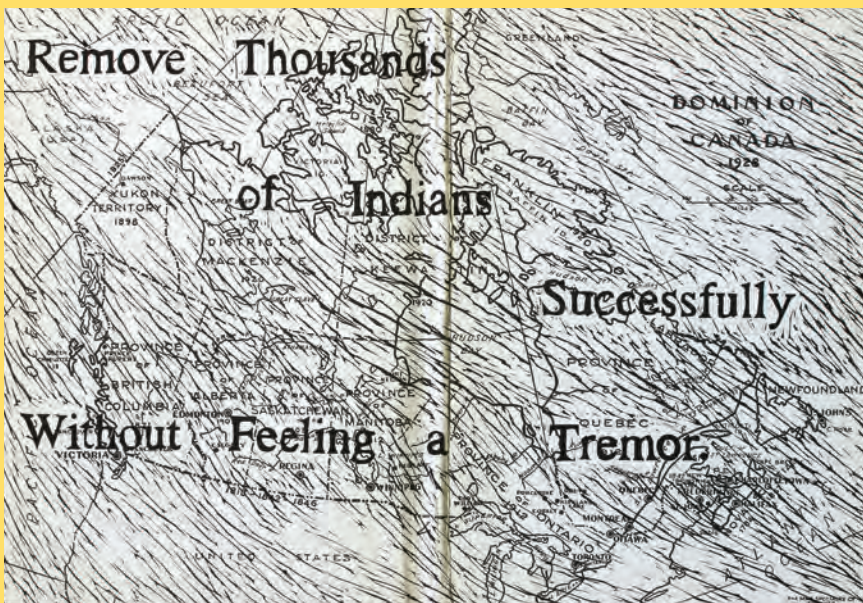
Ashna: What are you working on next?

Ade: I'm going to continue building a series of prints in the WAIT project, and then I think I'll put up a show. I'm getting there. No pressure on me. I'm slowly building up the project. That's the thing about WAIT - you don't have to do things fast. It makes me take time.

LEFT: Adebayo Katiiti,
A Long Road to Peace,
woodcut, 2016

Okii'kaa'sii: Contemporary Indigenous Resistance in the work of Alyssa Duck Chief

Written by
MISSY LEBLANC



The Matriarch, grandmother, outlined in a halo of rose gold. Naahsa, Nitsiipowahsin for grandparent, is an archival photo of Alyssa Duck Chief's great grandmother, Emily Duck Chief, the family matriarch, on a horse riding in the Stampede parade. As a means to reclaim familial and cultural stories from colonial narratives, Alyssa scours the Glenbow Museum's archives for familial photos as well as photos of people from the Siksiká Nation. This image, depicting one of the main matriarchs in the Duck Chief family taking part in the Stampede parade in the mid-1900s, is one such photograph.

Stories of preservation, perseverance, and resistance emanate an aura of gold. In an act of reclaiming history, Alyssa has re-written stories about their Naahsa that they were told while growing up, alongside Niitsítapi tales of how women were gifted the dress from lightning across an enlarged reproduction of the photo. The Duck Chief matriarch enveloped by gold rides tall among stories of her success and resilience.

Alyssa Duck Chief's drawings, prints, and zines embody contemporary Indigenous resistance. Alyssa is an emerging artist from Siksiká Nation and a recent graduate of the Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) drawing program—formally the Alberta College of Art and Design. It's a hot June day when Alyssa meets me to chat about their practice. It's been a few weeks now since graduation and they are taking a deserved break. Alyssa is in the first stages of starting a summer art program on their reserve, a

much needed program that would be welcome on many reserves. Reflecting back on their six years at AUArts—a very white, very colonial institution—they express their awkwardness with creating work at a place where they didn't feel fully supported or receive the critical feedback necessary to grow as an artist until about halfway through their degree.

Stories of preservation, perseverance, and resistance emanate an aura of gold.

As a First Nations student, Alyssa has often felt as if they had to make 'typical' or 'traditional' Native Art and has resisted succumbing to the tropes of how Indigenous artists were and are perceived. The hunger for critical feedback from their peers and instructors coupled with their resistance to being tokenized and stereotyped as another "Native Artist" is what led them to start incorporating Nitsiipowahsin into portraits of their family members. While this marked a significant turning point in their work, it still did not elicit the critical feedback they yearned for from instructors or peers. They recount to me that this outright refusal to provide feedback "charged [them] up" to create something that their instructors would have to respond to. It was then that they realized that everything that they create is a form

of resistance. Resistance against institutionalized colonialism and racism, against an institution that does not provide proper support to their Indigenous students. An institution that sees nothing wrong with using the Lodgepole Centre—their Indigenous student centre—for non-Indigenous related activities and events and employs an unsupportive Lodgepole Centre coordinator who tokenizes their Indigenous students. An institution that does not stop blatant racism and discrimination perpetrated by students towards their Indigenous student cohort. When you are in such an inhospitable environment, you can give up or you can resist. For Alyssa, everything that they do, “even down to the clothes [they] wear” is an act of resistance.

now you must survive
for the sake of your
children and your
children's children

Floating words amongst blurred hands. Hands that have been cared for by those before and will continue to care for those that come after, for as long as they can. Blood memory of their ancestors running through their veins, memories of what they have had to endure, what they have fought to survive. Defied centuries of oppression and sanctioned genocide and to have survived against all odds, against all of their hopes. We must endure and take care of ourselves and those that come after.

Alyssa discovered zines after a classmate had created one. They had never seen nor heard of this democratic counter-culture medium. After researching the history of DIY publishing and creating a few tests, they started to incorporate zines into their practice. The first zines that Alyssa produced were an accompaniment to their larger pieces and were meant to replace a more formal artist statement. Reminiscent of the grungier aesthetic of the punk zines of the '70s and '80s and the critiques of the status-quo found in the riot grrrl zines of the '90s, Alyssa's zines utilize found and archival text interspersed with familial and archival photos. They copy and copy and copy until the images are distorted, blurred, smudged.

At first, Alyssa was worried that non-Indigenous students or faculty would comment or say something negative about their work and the zines they were producing. When Indigenous people take a public stance and make their voice heard by critiquing settler-colonial power dynamics and 'reconciliation' or lack thereof, it is often pushed back by those same people, the same institutions, that they are critiquing. After reading the work of Indigenous authors and with the encouragement of a friend, Alyssa continued taking up space to criticize present day colonization throughout their zines and print works.

As an Indigenous person in so-called Canada, resistance is an integral part of everyday life. It is a fundamental part of being Indigenous. Since the advent of colonization, the First Peoples of Turtle Island have been fighting for sovereignty, for the right to just simply exist. It is no different

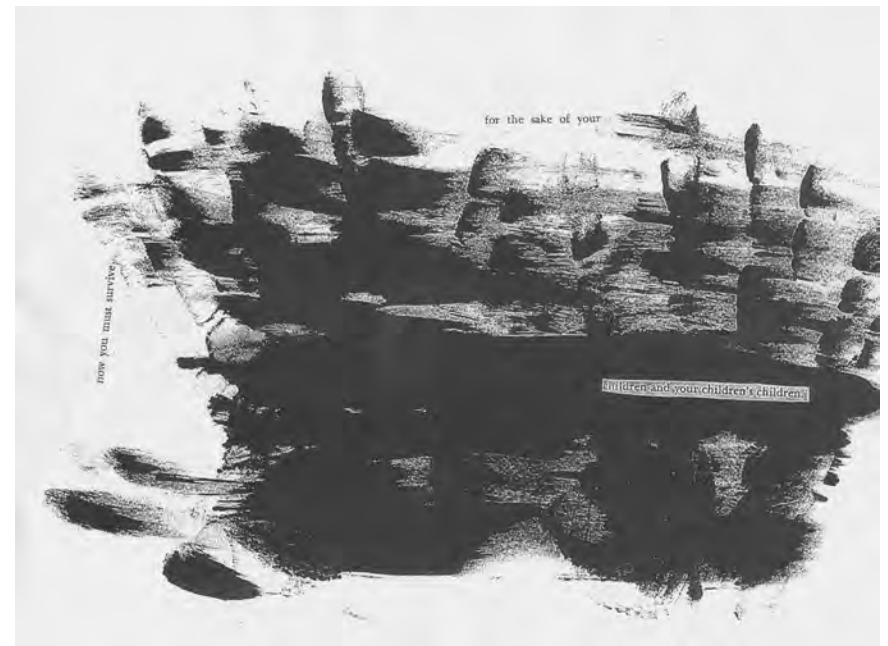
today. We are still fighting for our culture, our language, our land, our existence. We resist the hegemonic wills of a government that up until recently mandated our extinction. As an Indigenous women from a long line of powerful matriarchs in so-called Canada, I resist and fight the dominant narrative of outright refusal to name the genocide against other Indigenous women. Our refusal to comply with the status quo means our survival.

Through their artistic practice, Alyssa takes back the narrative of their familial history from colonial institutions and resists acts of colonization by asserting their Indigenous presence and sovereignty. They are direct with their beliefs and do not back down. The resiliency in their work echoes and reverberates like the sound of a drum.

PREVIOUS SPREAD TOP: Alyssa Duck Chief, *Naahsa* (detail), Archival photo, ink, gold leaf, Dimensions: 26" x 32", 2018

PREVIOUS SPREAD BOTTOM: Alyssa Duck Chief, *Tremors* (detail), Relief print over image, 13" x 19", 2018

BOTTOM: Alyssa Duck Chief, *Your Children* (detail), zine, 8 ½ x 11, 2018



Lasting Impressions: Christi Belcourt and the Potency of Indigenous Printmaking

Written by
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On a bitterly cold January evening, I stood alongside approximately 250 people at Beaver Hills House Park in Edmonton to protest the RCMP's aggression on Wet'suwet'en Territory. Located in northern British Columbia, the hereditary Elders and Chiefs of the territory opposed Coastal GasLink's plans to build a pipeline through their traditional homeland to the coastal port of Kitimat.¹ Indigenous people across Canada saw the injunction by the RCMP and the subsequent arrest of land defenders as one of the many times the Canadian government has tried to suppress Indigenous sovereignty.

As I looked at the all signs made at the protest, one thing became immediately clear: many of the images and slogans used either directly or partially drew inspiration from the work of Nehayiw Michif (Cree Métis) artist Christi Belcourt and Anishnaabe traditional teacher Isaac Murdoch. Screen-printed or photocopied, these images showed the cyclical nature of life on Earth. Most prominent was the image of a standing pregnant figure with her fist raised, whose womb emanates water which cycles through her fist, directly connecting to the sky, which then flows from the heavens in the form of rain into the figure's pail, an homage to the copper pail used by Indigenous water walkers across Turtle Island. Inside her womb is a baby Thunderbird, a reference to the traditional story told by Isaac

Murdoch. The image, sometimes called "Thunderbird Woman's Mom" uses traditional historical references while also referencing current movements of water protection actions and Isaac Murdoch's Thunderbird Woman. Pared with the images, phrases such as "Water is Life," "Consultation is Not Consent," and "Mother Earth Revolution" are used to solidify its Indigenous rights messaging. Many of these images have been made available for free and can be downloaded through the Onaman Collective's website.²

These striking and powerfully illustrative images help communicate the urgent issues facing Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island today. Issues related to access to clean water, the safe-guarding of the land and its resources as well as the survivance of Indigenous languages and the protection of children from child services are just a small fraction of the challenges the Canadian government and its settler citizens have placed on Indigenous communities. Through their work, Belcourt and Murdoch seek to resist the narratives circulated not only by proponents of pipelines, but also the federal, provincial, and municipal governments who continue to undermine Indigenous self-determination.

¹ The proposed Coastal GasLink (a subsidiary of TransCanada) pipeline will carry natural gas to the Pacific coast where a liquefied natural gas project is scheduled for construction. For more, see: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/Indigenous/wet-suwet-en-camp-anti-pipeline-rallies-1.4969916>

² Formed in 2014, the Onaman Collective includes Indigenous artists Christi Belcourt, Isaac Murdoch and Erin Marie Konsmo. "Onaman" is the Anishnaabemowin word for ochre. For more, see: <http://onamancollective.com/murdoch-belcourt-banner-downloads/>

Indigenous printmaking has a unique history in Canada. While the Inuit have long incised images on ivory, stone and musk ox horn, printmaking on paper has a much more recent history.³ Some of the first printmaking co-ops began as government sponsored programs in the Arctic as a way to create alternate economies for the Inuit during the 1950s and 60s. From the co-ops emerged notable artists such as Kenojuak Ashevak, Pudlo Pudlat, Napachie Pootoogook and Jessie Oonark. The images made by these artists ranged from scenes of everyday life to creation stories, Inuit architectural structures to the migrations of caribou. Since the 1990s, Inuit printmakers have increasingly represented more biographical narratives, depicting domestic strife, romantic love, and the various ways in which governmental resettlement programs have altered Inuit life.⁴

In Northwestern Ontario, the Triple K Cooperative, founded and operated by Cree brothers Goyce, Henry, and Joshim Kakagamic sought to provide and ensure that means of printmaking production stay in the hands of Indigenous artists. The incentive to creating the co-op came from brother-in law Norval Morrisseau—whose fame and skills as an artist motivated the brothers to establish their own artistic practice. Founded

in 1973 in Red Lake, Ontario, artists such as Paddy Peters, Saul Williams, and Norval Morrisseau, created high quality silk-screen prints through the Cooperative.⁵ Three years before Triple K Co-op, Anishnaabe artist Daphne Odjig and her husband established Indian Prints of Canada Limited with her husband Chester Beavon to further her career and those of other Indigenous artists.⁶ The works from these collectives can now be found in museum and art gallery collections across this country now known as Canada.

Along similar lines, the establishment of the Northwest Coast Indian Artists Guild in 1977 also sought to produce and promote the print-based work of Indigenous artists. Prior to the establishment of the Guild, the first published silkscreen print was the *Soogwilis: An Indian Legend* (1951), that “represent animals from the natural and spiritual worlds such as eagles, whales, bears, thunderbirds and the sisiutl or two-headed serpent. Images of transformation such as a figure with a bear’s head and salmon tail are also included.”⁷ As Secwépemc artist and curator Tanya Willard notes,

RIGHT: Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch, *Water is Life*, digital image, no date. Image courtesy of the Artist.

³ “An Online Exhibition of Inuit Prints.” Canadian Museum of History, <https://www.historymuseum.ca/capedorsetprints/history/1950s.php> (accessed June 28, 2019).

⁴ Campbell, Nancy, and Annie Pootoogook. 2017. *Annie Pootoogook: Cutting Ice = Ini Putugu: Tukisitittisimavuuq Takusinnggittunik*, (Kleinberg, ON: Goose Lane Editions & McMichael Canadian Art Collection) 85-86.

⁵ Christine Penner-Polle, *Norval Morrisseau and the Woodland Artists: The Red Lake Years, 1959 -1980*. (Red Lake, ON: Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre, 2008), 1074.

⁶ Tania Willard, *unlimited edition* (Kamloops, BC: Kamloops Art Gallery, 2013, January 17 to March 22, 2014), unpaginated. <http://uvac.uvic.ca/gallery/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/unlimited-edition-catalogue.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.



Many of these early works depict formal and conceptual elements specific to the Northwest Coast that would influence other First Nations artists who wanted to re-examine examples from their families and communities that had been suppressed by the residential school system and other forms of colonial control.⁸

The practice of articulating resistance through printmaking endures. Moreover, the images Belcourt and Murdoch have created continue to evolve and adapt. From prints and banners, they now appear as murals in public and educational institutions. The duo have also used their images on clothing, which are sold to help fundraise for the language camp in Northern Ontario. The Nimkii Aazhibikong camp brings together Elders and youth for learning and teaching of languages such as Anishnabemowin. Additionally, practices such as hide tanning, tattooing, and pigment harvesting have been part of the camp's dedication to Indigenous-led learning.⁹

A number of next generation Indigenous artists continue to take up printmaking. Anishinaabeg artists Christian Chapman and Chief Lady Bird have melded screen-printing and digital techniques to create images that merge traditional and contemporary themes. As the founding member of the Justseeds artist collective, Métis/settler descent artist and scholar Dylan AT Miner has both created and worked alongside print artists to support Indigenous sovereignty, migrant and immigrant rights. Kinnegait-based Inuk artist Shuvinai Ashoona's colourful prints, and more recently collaborative work with artist Shary Boyle, has shown

the intersections of everyday life and the fantastical. Artist Sonny Assu (Ligwilda'xw of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations) has merged the formline aesthetic of the west coast with pop culture references to create posters, prints, and banners.

Intertwined with the affordability of materials, ease of reproduction, and its collaborative nature, printmaking has been a creative site for Indigenous resistance. Belcourt and Murdoch's images have been used in various grassroots movements, and I suspect, will continue to circulate as long as apathetic people hold power. When lands are returned, pipelines stopped, languages are recognized, the protection of clean water, and self-determination is achieved — all possible aspirations for the here and now — the images will attest to the history of Indigenous resistance. Future generations will look at the images as proof of the values and ideas shared to ensure an equitable life for all living and inanimate things on Earth.

To support the Nimkii Aazhibikong camp, see: <https://www.gofundme.com/nimkii-aazhibikong-language-camp>

For more on Christi Belcourt's art and projects, see: christibelcourt.com

The author would like to thank Christi Belcourt for her feedback on the text.

RIGHT: Wet'suwet'en anti-pipeline protest, Beaver Hills House Park, January 8, 2019. Photo: Nadia Kurd

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Rick Garrick, "New camp is revitalizing language skills through land, traditions", *Wawatay News*. <http://www.wawataynews.ca/culture/new-camp-revitalizing-language-skills-through-land-traditions>. (accessed June 28, 2019).



SNAPLINE CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

We want to hear your ideas for articles that engage, critique, and/or challenge our notions of printmaking. Pitch us an idea (300 words or less), outlining the proposed article (1500 words or less) or visual essay (a set of images with a statement of 500 words or less), along with samples of previous work, to communications@snapartists.com.

Upcoming Issue: Fragility

Artworks become unstable due to disintegrating materials, fading inks, or wear on a matrix. Lack of access to resources, funding, or workspace makes an individual's art practice vulnerable, while artist-run centres face similar tenuous circumstances. Precarious work (such as temporary work, side hustles, and contract teaching positions) may supplement an artist's income but is unpredictable and offers little security. However, this fragility is facing an enthusiastic resistance. Through activism, education, funding, and policy changes, artwork and artists' labour are being recognized for their merit, creating opportunities for stability and security.

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