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Ontario College of Art and Design University
presentation notes¹

Persistence:
Land(scape) in contemporary
indigenous visual & activist practices
(or indigenous site-based visual practices for re-imagining
communal relationships to land and territory)

slide 1 * title of talk *

I have come out from the West Coast to talk about how land remains central for the cultures of most indigenous communities in Canada and how related site based practices and engaging as public artists on contentious territory are important work.

Thanks to the Ontario College of Art and Design for arranging the travel and accommodation for this day with you and also to the Canada Council for providing an 'inter-arts' project grant, entitled 'Persistence', with travel support related to incidental costs around network on this creative work and site-based, indigenous visual culture, more generally.

slide 2 * alternative title: or indigenous site-based visual practices
+ Canada Council logo

Another way to think of this discussion is how indigenous site-based visual practices can inspire us to re-imagine communal relationships to land and territory.

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Also, there won't be much time to elaborate on the material presented here, so if interested in the projects or images, a PDF with text and low-resolution images is available by scrolling down at www.gordonbrentingram.ca .

slide 3 * Bart Simpson & OCADU's territorial acknowledgement*

I gave another presentation at OCADU exactly five year ago. In the discussions back there, there was lots of talk about indigenous design and visual arts – lots of talk. One difference in returning a half decade later is OCADU's new territorial acknowledge. It means a lot to me and is one of the reasons why I resubmitted my dossier. But I don't yet know what the OCADU community really means by that text. Is it like that scene from The Simpson where Bart almost mindlessly writes over and over, 'The Indians were here first'² were we mouth the rhetoric briefly and then shopping. Or is this territorial acknowledgement the beginning of a new social contract that transforms much of what we teach, learn, make, and share? I'm here because I think that this territorial acknowledgement could be transformative for OCADU, lead to further conciliation in within Canadian visual arts, and am here to give you some examples of how some people are engaging aesthetically, in old and fresh ways, around indigenous territory and sites.

So because I am taking OCADU on its word, I am going to read those words and ask that you join with me in one of those tiny rituals to begin to open up the discussion. Say this with me in any way that you'd like or, if you are silent, make another statement. And after we say this acknowledgement, I want you to briefly look at your neighbours on either side of you, and then have a half a minute of silence with eyes closed. I'll be asking you to ask the background of your consciousness three little questions.

slide 4 * OCAD University (OCADU) acknowledges *

(first half of the OCADU territorial acknowledgement)

"OCAD University (OCAD U) acknowledges the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinabek and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original

slide 5 * ...owners and custodians of the land on which we stand and create.*

(first half of the OCADU territorial acknowledgement)

"owners and custodians of the land on which we stand and create."

Let's take ten seconds to relax.

Then review in your mind if a feeling or word or image (or nothing at all) comes to mind about this territorial acknowledgement and what it means for your work or studies at OCADU.

Then think about your neighbours who you just scanned. Let a feeling or word or image (or nothing at all) come to mind at least for one of them.

Then ask yourself what you may not know much about those neighbours, in relationship to this territorial acknowledgement, and ask yourself what that doubt brings to mind in terms of a feeling or word or image (or nothing at all) about working, learning, teaching, and creating at OCADU in the coming years.

Untangling this mixture of feelings, rooted in divergent experiences of territory, may well have a central role in how you study, make art, and even teach at OCADU, and elsewhere in Canada, in the coming years – and this is the focus of today's exploration of site-based practices.

slide 6 * Marianne Nicolson, *The Sun is Setting on the British Empire*, 2016 *

caption:

Marianne Nicolson, "*The Sun is Setting on the British Empire*," 2016, vinyl, dimensions variable (initially installed on the east-facing wall of UBC's Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery in connection with the exhibition *To refuse/To wait/To sleep* and installed until April 2017.)

So why and how are we adding territorial acknowledgements to our institutional affiliations (effectively forging a new social contract) and for some our creative practices? There are lots of possible reasons and they all have a relationship to what we mean in those acknowledgements, how we carry out our work, and how we share and redistribute resources across territories (including art institutions). This recent work by Marianne Nicolson reflects on the flag of British Columbia and its legacies of colonial and neocolonial violence. The sun set a long time ago on the British Empire but not on the kind of inequities that continue to make The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2015, 94 'calls to action'³ so pressing.

slide 7 * blackboard image of shifting creative divisions *

For my work this blackboard is a kind of blueprint. At the heart of any deep form of cultural conciliation and decolonization, especially extending to teaching in an art school, are reconsideration of and challenges to the 19th and 20th divisions and exclusions involving the following.

art <---> craft
 art <---> design
 design <---> vernacular
 public art <---> site-based art
 land art <---> public art
 two-dimensional art <---> three dimensional art
 text / literature <---> visual art
 art <---> territorial demarcation
 (cultural production of) objects <---> (cultural production of) experiences
 traditional knowledge <---> science
 narrative (knowledge) <---> empirical knowledge
 religious (experience) <---> secular (experience)
 individual (cultural production) <---> collaborative (cultural production)
 art <---> research
 research <---> archives

So what do we have at the other end of these processes of breaking down walls and reasserting more than just a few distinct and hybrid cultures and their territories?

To illustrate what we are moving into (and came out of in much of the 19th and 20th Centuries), I offer an example from where I live and work.

slide 8 * a modernist erasure of Grandma Bay, Salt Spring Island
 (as indigenous territory)*

caption:

a modernist erasure of Grandma Bay, Salt Spring Island, Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram, 2018 April 2

To understand just a bit of the damage of the colonial and modernist periods that we are barely out of, I took this photograph for you. This image from an area near where I live has at least 8,000 years of increasingly well-documented, cultural activity but instead illustrates the Canadian nationalist and modernist erasure of indigenous relationships across the land (and sea). In fact, there is no sign of people, let alone indigenous

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community: modern abstraction to create a faux *terra nullius* ripe for settlement and speculation. In this sense, 'nature' is not particularly 'indigenous'. Notions of ownership, in this landscape of erasure, are effectively hijacked by a (settler-colonial) nationalist ideal. And most landscapes are messier than this especially with inter-cultural conversations.

Now what I am going to show you next not only better represents the world, and is the impetus for so many contemporary indigenous visual practices, but also illustrates the process that has been central to my scholarship and activism: indigenous governments asserting their own stewardship and conservation priorities over homes territories from which they'd been removed – extending to making new markers and involving a range of aesthetics in contested public space.

slide 9 * 2018 March 27 third sign unveiling WEN,NÁ,NEĆ village site,
 Salt Spring Island *

On the evening of March 26, 2018, I received a telephone call to attend an unveiling of a sign the next day. I was to asked to bring juice and photographing was encouraged. There would be families present with whom mine has shared a short century and a half.

The next afternoon was a wonderful spring day of ceremony and storytelling – for the unveiling of a sign for this Indian Reserve that is also the site of a very old village. We were in the forest as if we were on the edge of a nature reserve and so having a long memory, I invoked the memories of Mary and Charlie Zalt the last residents of the village of WEN,NÁ,NEĆ who lived there until 1923. (And I won't be telling you what happened to Mary and Charlie Zalt until the end of this presentation).

slide 10 * Mary and Charlie (Zalt) Zalt *

caption:

Mary and Charlie (Zalt) Zalt, WEN,NÁ,NEĆ, Salt Spring Island circa 1920

Mary and Charlie were the last of a large bilingual community that spoke both SENĆOTEN (that I grew up with don't really speak) and Hul'q'umi'num' (that my father spoke).

While there are signs of rich culture and local technology in the photo, (note the carved canoe, the fencing (for a garden), the WSÁNEĆ house architecture, and Mary's thick traditional bracelet and sweater), much of the artefacts of the historic village, remaining adjacent to and in the remaining lodges, were shipped to museums in New York in the

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1880s – and there have been sporadic, and largely unsuccessful efforts to locate these treasures.

Question

Does anyone in the audience have anything to say about that fluffy little dog? It's a bit early in the history of consumer and urban culture to have lapdogs. So what is going on here?

Answer

Mary's pet was one of the last Salish wool dogs⁴ that are thought to have gone extinct two decades later. Before the introduction sheep and more commonly used than mountain goat wool, dog wool was crucial to a cultural economy based on weaving that was not only about staying warm but of mutual care. And Mary's sweater was probably woven from that same soft wool.

slide 11 * Cowichan woman with wool blanket *

caption:

Cowichan woman with wool blanket, 5 km west of WEN,NÁ,NEĆ, photograph by Edward S. Curtis, 1913

This is a photograph of a classic Salish (mainly dog-wool) blanket taken five to ten kilometres west of WEN,NÁ,NEĆ -- and taken only seven years before the photograph of Mary and Charlie.

Question

Has anyone ever been to a blanketing? It's an important milestone in the lives of many people on the West Coast.

Answer

?

Question

Has anyone ever made a blanket for ceremony?

Answer

?

Make a 'modern' blanket could be a good collaborative art project.

slide 12 * remnant Salish horticulture beds, 80 meters above WEN,NÁ,NEĆ *

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caption:

remnant Salish horticulture beds 80 meters above WEN,NÁ,NEĆ, Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram 2018 March 25

Growing up with these communities and families, I didn't learn how to weaver or carve canoes. Nor did any of my friends. But as a non-Salish indigenous person in that community, I was trained and mentored in some of the most values, ceremonies, and land use practices. I learned about growing food plants and burning to maintain fields so when I encounter old sites such as these, they feel very important.

Last month, I stumbled on this old farming terrace that produced a score of bulbs and root crops and where much of the tending was done by women (and perhaps slaves). And documentation of this past moving into the future is also a kind of site-based practice, in itself, especially in the context of multi-media installations, performances, and other interventions.

slide 13 * WEN,NÁ,NEĆ as text *

caption:

WEN,NÁ,NEĆ by Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram 2015

We may have lost the Salish wool dog but in the 1970s, after two decades of renewed activism, oral SENĆOFEN was transformed into an accompanying text – which is increasingly written and taught – generating new site-based aesthetics and practices.

slide 14 * questions Central to teaching and research in indigenous aesthetic studies and studio learning *

In my work, central to the teaching of and research on indigenous visual studies spanning art and design, especially centred on site-based practices and questions of territory in the coming decade, two big questions emerge.

And I mean questions in the sense that I only have some partial answers. For fuller answers especially at an art school, explorations are needed not only between other artists, indigenous or not, departments and faculties, and across our communities.

slide 15 & 16 * question 1 *

question 1

How are the positions and roles of land and territory in contemporary indigenous visual cultures shifting in the 21st century and what visual conversations are of particular relevance?

for the contemporary art world?

for particular indigenous communities and demographics?

A simple answer is that place-based experience, rooted in particular territories, are central to indigenous cultures across North America. I am uncomfortable with the generality of this explanation especially as related to traditional and indigenous visual culture. And this explanation makes more sense in remembering that the sovereignty of virtually all of the indigenous governments (and respective cultures) on the continent has been attacked and more often continue to be undermined. And as many indigenous demographics in Canada are seeing less overt violence and some increases in living standards, gaps in relationships with territory, and respective ecosystems and traditional resources, are becoming more apparent. Land and space become in increasingly short supply. While I cannot generalize beyond this, I can highlight some patterns in my own highly assimilated family.

So to begin to answer this question of the shifting roles of indigenous place-based, visual culture, I use some examples from my family.

slide 17 * portrait of one Métis family circa 1917 *	*
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caption:

Frank, Esther, Alvin, Wilma, and Vera Brochu ca 1917 silver-toned, black and white photograph, 12 cm X 8 cm

This is my mother's family roughly 101 years ago. My mother is in our lower right. The family appears remarkably middle-class but life has been and will soon be more difficult. Every Sunday, my grandfather there would row his children in a small boat out to an island on the Pacific, a cultural refuge and indigenous cultural centre now thought to have existed for 10,000 years. For my grandfather, the weekly day at Metlakatla was crucial to his legacy and parenting. Within a year the boy next to his mother will have died in the Spanish influenza pandemic. As an off-reserve indigenous family, Métis or probably any other group, the local cemetery would bury the boy. The tragedy and insult unhinged my grandparents who became outspoken aesthetes and aggressively anti-clerical.

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In ten years, my mother and father were married an active in a native-majority subculture of aspiring artists and intellectuals steeped in modernism and jazz. The most family figure in their circle went on to be the Haida carver, Bill Reid.

slide 18 * the Cree communities across a middle section of Canada *

caption:

A map of Cree dialects.

As part of early bilingual indigenous communities, my mother's family largely exist in relationship to Cree cultures and trading networks – travelling back and forth across the middle, so-called 'woodland', latitudes of what is today Canada. The aftermath of the Métis rebellions in the middle of the country pushed my grandfather, brothers, and cousins to find new ways to travel, work, and sometimes trade and teaching: working on ships from eastern Canada around South America and then back up to British Columbia and the Yukon gold fields.

slide 19 * Two white men with a mixed race relative circa 1930 *

caption:

A photograph inherited from my father's sister of two of their brothers and the photograph taken by the wife of the man, her husband, holding their baby.

On the other side of my family, intercultural marriages lead to scenes such as the photograph that I inherited: one of the first photographs carefully framed by an indigenous woman photographing her child being held by her husband standing next to his brother.

slide 20 * part of the Brochu and Ingram family *

caption:

street photograph of my parents and me, Victoria, BC, ca 1959.

So by the time that I came along, it would be easy to reduce my parents' experience of indigeneity to simply 'highly assimilated' or even as totally disconnected from the land but a more careful look would see the following:

1. active engagement in three indigenous languages that were in rapid decline;

2. non-status residents in a Salish community on Vancouver Island, with which there were a century of family ties engagement in a wide range of activism; and
3. decades of activism around native health.

Within a year, my parents worked with a revitalized First Nations government to eject the reserve's Jesuit day and residential school well known for horrific abuses.

Within a few years, I was attending a poorly integrated elementary school with outside mentoring by WSÁNEĆ elders.

Within three years, my father was translating the first book by Nelson Mandela for WSÁNEĆ elders.

In a few more years, my mother returned to her work as a health professional and acutely aware of the vulnerability of aboriginal and Métis women, was party to the first union contract in the local hospital.

And throughout this period, that prefigured the activism of the 1970s, was constant talk of the betrayals of a 1853 treaty and possibilities for rebuilding native communities and institutions

slide 21 * Ellen Neel ca 1958 *

caption:

unidentified photograph of Ellen Neel from the late 1950s – widely circulate.

An iconic figure in this era of so-called 'indigenous modernism' was Kwakwaka'wakw artist Ellen Neel.⁵ As well as supporting her seven children, her disabled husband and seven children from her carving, she was part of one of the first indigenous women's organizations in the country advocating for the dismantling of the residential schools back in the 1950s.

The masthead of The Native Voice, started by a woman in 1946, is included because as well as being an artist activist, Neel wrote and theorized.

slide 22 * Tsartlip (<u>WSÁNEĆ</u>) mortuary box circa 1850 **
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caption:

Tsartlip mortuary box. Museum of Anthropology, The University of British Columbia.⁶

While the West Coast indigenous modernists were innovators, with carvers such as Neel expanding the range of scales of their works, there were also part of a movement to revisit, protect, and often repatriate local art which in turn became part of community revitalization.

This WSÁNEĆ mortuary box was carved within 100 metres of where I grew up and fortunately was acquired and is permanently exhibited at a museum nearby in Vancouver (the Museum of Anthropology at The University of British Columbia).

So a simple way to answer the first question that I posed is that the spatial and territorial experiences of indigeneity in countries such as Canada are being attenuated and often alienated. And site-based visual exploration become part of maps to find our ways home.

slide 23, 24 & 25 * question 2 *

question 2

If art institutions rectify those colonial and modernist era divides within creative practices (that have often held back indigenous artists) especially in relationship to

an array of traditional and contemporary indigenous cultures and aesthetic movements,

is there a basis for a kind of 'decolonial' 'land art' that contributes to

today's often contentious inter-cultural conversations on land, territories, and activism?

So I have two partial answers to this question. The first is that in Canada we are in the midst of a new culture war around indigenous place-based culture ultimately linked to the heart of territory and sovereignty – not coincidentally centred on the areas of the country where treaties are still far from being forged. And the second answer is that there is always been indigenous site-based practices and there is no basis, especially in individual studies, to vacate those histories and relationships.

slide 26 * Supreme Court of Canada, 2017, *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia* *

The 2017 Supreme Court of Canada decision, *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia*⁷ has sets the gains indigenous governments and communities back a generation and will be re-fought and won by indigenous movement in a range of civil institutions especially in spaces of contemporary culture including art schools. Just because a growing portion of

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an indigenous population is partially assimilated with attenuated relationships with territory does not deny them place-based religious, cultural, and aesthetic experiences.

slide 27 * " Kwakiutl house-frame"

caption:

Edward S Curtis. (circa 1903). Kwakiutl house-frame. (village of Memkulis). on file Royal British Columbia Museum.

Another way to answer this question of whether or not there is a basis for 'decolonial' indigenous 'land art' is to remember that there has been plenty of 'pre-colonial' and 'colonial' architecture and 'land art'. These are two examples from the central West Coast.

slide 28 * indigenous public art, Alert Bay, British Columbia ca 1903 *

caption:

Edward S Curtis. (circa 1903). Nimkish village, Alert Bay. on file Royal British Columbia Museum. Item D-08425 - From "The North American Indian"; Page 8.

In this example, the colonial violence around banning the potlatch two decades before pushed art objects from being sacred communal objects to being more secular works anchored in public sites that were increasingly defined by markets centred on white collectors.

Here, we can adapt Richard Bell's seminal 2002 essay "Aboriginal Art—It's a White Thing!"⁸ only so far. Certainly the flowering of Northwest Coast public art, as seen in these photography of Alert Bay around 1903, is the product of colonialism and, in particular, coping with the genocidal (especially for indigenous artists) 1885 Potlatch ban.⁹ In response to the Government of Canada obstructing the link between communal and semi-private uses of West Coast carving and painting, artists survived by producing for supposedly unreligious public space (as well as collectors who were mainly foreign with sales often regulated by Indian Agents profiting from those transactions). But these public spaces were nearly all in indigenous-majority communities where government impositions were defied on a daily basis.

slide 29 * Cover of the 2012 exhibition "Ends of the Earth" *

caption:

cover of Philipp Kaiser and Miwon Kwon (eds). 2012. *Ends of the Earth: Art of the Land to 1974*. New York: Prestel.

Another way to answer the question of whether or not that there is a basis for a decolonial indigenous land art is to consider the indigenous exclusion from land art.

Last month, I finally splurged on the lovely catalogue for the 2012 survey of land art at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles¹⁰ – the definitive survey of early land art in the 1960s and early 1970s. And while I am aware of score of North American indigenous artists, engaging in site-based practices back then, they aren't mentioned in the survey or catalogue and are effectively excluded from the movement that is land art. I then even more money in a more current discussion of theory of land-based and site-based art, the 2015, *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*.¹¹ Neither of these surveys gives any significant space to experiences, histories, and land-based governance systems based on any sorts of indigeneity. In fact, I have not yet found any acknowledgement let alone engagement around indigenous territories on which respective sites have been created. So there are two big problems with the current conversations on the growing movements engaged with environmental themes and the land art that spawned these practices:

1. indigenous artists engaged with land and site-based practices are ignored and effectively erased clearly having considered to not be sufficiently contemporary or networked in the so-called 'art world' and
2. almost more problematically, any sort of acknowledgements of or engagement around the territories of First Nations have not been documented nor squarely considered.

slide 30 * Robert Smithson, 1969, <i>Glue piece</i> , unceded Musqueam Territory *
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caption:

Robert Smithson, 1969, *Glue piece*, near the campus of Musqueam village and The University of British Columbia campus near Vancouver. photograph by Christos Dikeakos.

I am reminded that at the height of his most important period of theorizing, Robert Smithson came to Vancouver and engaged in a number of sites without any acknowledgement of or dialogue with the Musqueam Nation. In the same period, Smithson stated that,

"The artist cannot turn his back on the contradictions that inhabit our landscapes."¹²

For me, the smug statement combined with dumping glue on the Musqueam puts his theorizing into question. In this context, I wonder whether or not early land art was not an updated way to try to culturally erase indigenous territories.

slide 31 * Marianne Nicolson contemporary pictograph *

caption:

Marianne Nicolson – Kingcome Inlet Pictograph 28' x 38' painting
 Done to commemorate the survival and continued existence of the Musgamakw
 Dzawada'enuxw people within their territories

Now there are a lot of indigenous artists working at larger site scales and yet their practices are often effectively in opposition to earlier, (neocolonial) land art. And Marianne Nicolson's site based work is far more based in traditional, local visual practices than conversations with contemporary site-based movements.

slide 32 * some early visual projects *

examples of personal & collective practices

The second half of this discussion is about the particular site-based practices that I use in my work.

My early approaches and practices were rooted in bridging three different aesthetic worlds:

1. growing up in a well-supervised Indian / native posse (not a gang) of youngsters supervised by elders;
2. lots exposure to West Coast artists struggling to make livings within institutional frameworks mediated by anthropologists; and
3. exposure to collaborative, Fluxus-allied art networks that had some presence in Victoria and Vancouver.

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slide 33 * Thlinul / Cumshewa, Haida Gwaii 1974 *

This was the first photograph that I ever took and was part of my studies with an early figure in Salish Studies, Mary Nelson, whose aesthetic traditions were different than these. These poles were left as a memorial to the hundreds of Cumshewa residents, nearly the entire village, who died in the first major smallpox epidemic on Haida Gwaii roughly a century before this image was made.

caption,

Thlinul / Cumshew, Haida Gwaii, 1974. 35 mm slide film part of a three image montage
 2 meter x 3 meter inkjet print. Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram

slide 34 * Tede Matthews & Joseph Barnett, San Francisco 1979 *

caption:

Tede Matthews & Joseph Barnett, San Francisco 1979. black and white selenium-toned print, 40 cm x 50 cm. Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram.

Coming of age in the 1970s, steeped in critical attitudes towards anthropology practices directed at native communities, appropriating social documentary and visual ethnography was second nature and fun. Here, photographing my friends, all of us gay activists, we developed sarcastic and campy narratives, often rooted in genderfuck.¹³

slide 35 * from Photography & Literature issue of OVO (Montreal) 1981*

caption:

4 pages in *OVO MAGAZINE* (Montreal) Volume 11 Number 44 / 45 (double issue)
 Photography and Literature 1981 from “*edziza trip*” a 1981 Prince George and Victoria, BC exhibition of black and white photographs, drawings, and text single magazine page
 dimensions: 21 cm x 31 cm.

Two years later, I was combining photography, drawing, and writing while guiding in north-western British Columbia.

slide 36 * Wurster Hall, University of California Berkeley
 College of Environmental Design *

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Where does a child of indigenous modernists go? University of California Berkeley
 College of Environmental Design, a global centre for West Coast Modernism, ecological
 design, and study of traditional environments and vernacular.

This is where I was based for much of two decades of my life. It was fun. Do I miss it?
 No, my friends have all moved on.

slide 37 * Streetfront Art & Architecture, New York 1994 *

caption:

“*Open space*” installation in the “*Queer Space*” group exhibition curated by a collective
 that included Shirin Neshat and Beatrix Colomina, Streetfront Art and Architecture, New
 York City, June and July 1994. photographs, drawings and text plus printed booklets +
 performances. 20, 40 cm x 60 sheets mounted on two, 1 m x 1.5 m moveable panels.

This group show at Streetfront in New Year further combined photography, drawing,
 text, and three-dimensional sculpture.

slide 38 * Queer Space anthology 1997 *

Throughout the 1990s, I kept photographing, making site-based designs, and writing
 critical social theory on land, marginalized stakeholders, and governance with examples
 from two areas: the huge legal strides made by First Nations and likewise by LGBT
 communities and sexual minorities more generally.

caption:

graphic anthology book: Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette & Yolanda
 Retter (editors). 1997. *Queers in Space: Communities | Public Places | Sites of
 Resistance*. Seattle: Bay Press with Ingram curating graphics and often taking
 documentary photos in cooperation with chapter authors. (1998 Lambda Literary Award
 for Nonfiction Graphic Book) (graphic book with text, photographs, montages, drawings,
 maps, aerial photographs, and designs with ten performances 530 paper pages in black
 and white 18 cm x 23 cm with cover in colour)

slide 39 * Saik'uz First Nation*

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To be a fairly assimilated indigenous person with a few options always risks voyeurism while working in reserve communities. These photographs taken while working with the Saik'uz Nation (with federal funding) were only taken because I was asked by colleagues for some images.

caption:

"*Saik'uz language guardians, Geoffrey Thomas, Rita Thomas, and Susie Antoine, Saik'uz Nation, Stoney Creek, British Columbia, 2011,*" 60 cm x 192 cm inkjet print.

slide 40 * some recent and ongoing site-based projects *

slide 41 * 2015 trellis *

I like to make big sculptural, living things with repurposed local material.

caption:

salmon smoking rack bean trellis, Burgoyne Valley Community Farm, Salt Spring Island [dead, fallen alder, *Alnus rubra*, iron wire, and an indigenous landrace of Scarlet emperor runner bean, *Phaseolus coccineus*] 2015 – 2016. documentation montage and video from discarded cell phones of site-based work. 5.5 m x 18 m x 6 m (montage documentation 72 x 60 cm).

slide 42 * roughgarden *

caption:

roughgarden, garden installation, repurposed iron fencing, split cedar and alder, repurposed on-site stone, native plants and fruit trees, 2014, triangular: 7 m x 11 m x 9 m

slide 43 * Geneva's Rhone River studies *

Mapping aspects of the territories in which I work, especially on foreign residencies, is key to the initial study phases of projects especially in foreign residencies such as this one in Geneva. This is the glacial river, the Rhône, that surges through Geneva.

caption:

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Utopiana, Geneva & Rhône context studies, 2014 digital satellite image montaged with appropriated text on ink-jet print 200 x 170 cm.

slide 44 * crabapple on Burgoyne Bay *

Persistence is a multiple media, site-based project focused on the poorly acknowledged legacy of millennia of Salish fruit tree cultivation and orchard-making and stewardship with two and three-dimensional works extends to video and video installation. Funded by the Canada Council, this funding is centred on my exploration on being mentored by WSÁNEĆ elders in the 1960s.

In addition, I also explore the relevance of these largely ignored fruit trees to Western Europe since most of these fruit trees and their gene pools extend from the Rockies to north-western Europe via Asia. So in working with these trees, I explore their neglect in Europe as a region engaged in colonization of North America and those indigenous trees in north-western North America where colonialism and modernism have largely erased both cultural relationships and ownership.

caption:

Cowichan crabapple, Burgoyne Bay, Salt Spring Island, 2016 August 11 & 12, artists: grunenfelder & ingram.

slide 45 * two crabapple posters *

In 2016, we worked with the City of Vancouver Public Art Program, to celebrate their 25th anniversary, to insert these posters on Salish knowledge into bus shelters. The next step is to reinsert these orchards into public space in the city – under the supervision of local elders.

caption: left to right

qwa'upulhp | *crabapple* | *Malus fusca* (one of four, posters for bus-shelters in Vancouver as part of the 25th anniversary of the City of Vancouver Public Art Program produced collaboratively by the ongoing collective, castle grunenfelder ingram), 2016 montage of photographs and text installed in bus shelters + performances and internet installations 47.25 inches x 68.25 inches.

kwu7upay | *crabapple* | *Malus fusca* (one of four posters for bus-shelters in Vancouver as part of the 25th anniversary of the City of Vancouver Public Art Program produced collaboratively by the ongoing collective, castle grunenfelder ingram), 2016 montage of photographs and text installed in bus shelters + performances and internet installations

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47.25 inches x 68.25 inches. installation: Commercial Drive and Adanac Street,
 Vancouver.

slide 46 * chokecherries *

Does anyone know what fruit this is? It is native and still grows in both Vancouver and Toronto and is the only native fruit tree native to every province and territory?

caption:

chokecherry study, *Prunus virginiana*, Salt Spring Island, August, 2016, Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram, 2 m x 3 m montage.

slide 47 * chokecherry posters *

caption left to right:

t'elemay | chokecherry | *Prunus virginiana* (one of four, posters for bus-shelters in Vancouver as part of the 25th anniversary of the City of Vancouver Public Art Program produced collaboratively by the ongoing collective, castle grünenfelder ingram), 2016 montage of photographs and text installed in bus shelters + performances and internet installations 47.25 inches x 68.25 inches.

thuxwun | chokecherry | *Prunus virginiana* (one of four, posters for bus-shelters in Vancouver as part of the 25th anniversary of the City of Vancouver Public Art Program produced collaboratively by the ongoing collective, castle grünenfelder ingram), 2016 montage of photographs and text installed in bus shelters + performances and internet installations 47.25 inches x 68.25 inches.

slide 48 * chokecherry bark *

As well as photographic and video documentation of Salish fruit trees, I am involving in other kinds of site-based documentation (especially drawing and mapp) and where prudent, overt protection, and even some cultivation.

caption:

Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram. chokecherry bark of an old tree, Ruckle Provincial Park, Salt Spring Island. 2018 February 19.

slide 49 * some other projects based at KEXMIN field station *

caption:

Looking south from WEN,NÁ,NEĆ including part of Gulf Islands National Park, November, 2017, photograph by Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram.

slide 50 * Russell Island clam garden *

At KEXMIN, we spend a lot of time learning from indigenous cultural sites along with blending traditional knowledge with modern science – especially related to divergent notions of witness, monitoring, and site-based interventions.

For example, Russell Island clam garden, in the recently established Gulf Islands National Park, was recently restored by a coalition of local First Nations. With signs of having existed for several thousand years, this clam garden is now threatened by sea level rise, marine acidification, and rising risks of (Alberta bitumen) oil spills with all of the tankers passing through a rocky pass just 10 km away.

slide 51 * Hwmet'utsun (Mount Maxwell, Salt Spring Island) *

caption:

Hwmet'utsun drone video grab, January 2017 January.

I started working on this Salish cultural landscape, of mountain and shore, just thirty-nine years ago early on proposing re-establishment of indigenous land use practices (that got me in a lot of trouble with the Province of BC which views some of this work as advocacy for trespassing). Lately, I have been monitoring, often through photography, video, and increasingly drone video) the status of some crucial Salish sites, going back at least 8,000 years, in cooperation with Cowichan Tribes – as well as trying to understand the shifts in these sensitive habitats, especially under climate change and fire suppression, that support over fifty species at risk.

slide 52 * Hwmet'utsun story *

caption:

Spatial notes on the Hwmet'utsun ('bent over place') cultural landscape

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The mountain Hwmet'utsun ('bent over place') has a symbolic place in Salish cosmology and conservation ethics -- where the mountain sacrificed its height to allow boulders to pass over it to strike and destroy a greedy monster on Vancouver Island.

slide 53 * recent research on Hwmet'utsun *

I was up here last month monitoring some vulnerable cultural sites and observing a flock of young turkey vultures that may be no longer migrating south in the winter but surviving here all winter.

caption:

Sansum Narrows from Hwmet'utsun 2018 March 12 by Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram.

slide 54 * National Aboriginal Day at Burgoyne Bay & Cowichan dancer *

caption: Edward S. Curtis photograph. 1913. 'Cowichan warrior' though there are few indications that this headgear would have been worn in conflict (especially with a cross).

This work is often undertaken in cooperation with and under the guidance of governments such as Cowichan Tribes and is part of longer term processes of reoccupation and joint management. Just below on Burgoyne Bay, at a site in a provincial park being reclaimed by Cowichan families, Salt Spring Island enjoys National Aboriginal Days with dancers with head pieces such as this young man from 1913 – though none of the recent headwear that I have seen has ever included a religious cross as in this 1913 image.

slide 55 * Chilkoot Trail Residency *

I have been selected as one of three artists for the CHILKOOT TRAIL ARTIST RESIDENCY in 2019 in cooperation with Parks Canada, the US National Park Service and the Yukon Arts Centre

[from this year's announcement]

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THE CHILKOOT TRAIL ARTIST RESIDENCY 2019 CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS IS NOW OPEN. The three artists selected for 2018 are: Kristin Link (Alaska, USA), Hilary Lorenz (New York, USA), and Josh Winkler (Minnesota, USA).

slide 56 * CHILKOOT TRAIL map & historical photograph *

caption:

map (Alaska, British Columbia, Yukon)

with photo of Stampeders climbing up the "Golden Stairs" on the Chilkoot Pass trail. ca 1897 United States Library of Congress.

So I want to explore the relationships between labour and perceptions in regional event around the Yukon Goldrush where a lot of northern native people did a lot of the difficult work and a lot of non-native prospectors got rich with the name of the project through photographs, videos, drawings, and some 'memory proposals' called "All That's Left: Traces of early inter-cultural contact along the Chilkoot Trail." I will walk the trail very slowly just twelve decades after a score of members of my family made the trek and explore both early inter-cultural and contemporary experiences of landscape and indigenous notions of deep time. The core activity will be creating a small portfolio of carefully framed photographs portraying sites that presented some aspect or trace of the colonial intrusion, the violence, and for some the hope: overlaps of both indigenous and settler experiences of the trail.

slide 57 * Métis willow architectures *

In terms of traditional Métis material culture, my only contact was through consumers of basketry, leather, and beadwork. And as a similar Métis willow basket began wearing out, the one that I was placed in as a baby, I started ongoing explorations with willow construction.

slide 58 / 59 / 60 / 61 * Brochu-Ingram's contemporary
 riffing on Métis willow architecture*

Making these willow lamps, with material gathered from the ditches below KEXMIN field station, has lead to designing some video installations with lamps such as these on slowly moving platform creating complex and shifting shadows on ceilings.

slide 62 * collaboratives and collectives *

I don't believe in individual artistic authorship. Instead, the process of making and presenting visual art (and other creative work) is always communal and a mediation on local cultures and political economies.

slide 63 * photographs of collaborators *

These individuals are in my core posse: people who I trust and prefer to work with – when they have the time. This group is Salish-majority but includes other individuals with strong inter-cultural skills.

caption:

photographs of Raven John, Rose Spahan, Debra Sparrow, and Alex Grunenfelder

slide 64 * curating: still underwater *

Over the last two decades, about a quarter of my work has involved curatorial research particularly using and creating archives – with some related writing and publishing. This year, I am working on two proposals for protracted, site-based curating.

curating:

still underwater:

Tracing Skwahchays, Hole in Bottom, in today's False Creek Flats (of Vancouver)

Just four decades back, early Salish cultural theoretician urged me to explore the existence (and destruction) of a mythic land/sea scape for all of the Salish: Skwahchays or Hole-in-Bottom, the eastern half of Vancouver's False Creek. Hole-in-Bottom was the place for the Salish, the bottom of the bowl, where our normal world met the transformative (and sometimes malevolent) spirits of the underworld. Hole-in-Bottom was filled-in, very poorly, a century ago. In the context of risk from earthquakes, changes with sea level rise and the area's transformation into a cultural precinct centred around the new campus of Emily Carr University of Art and Design, I am developing a programme of documentation, inter-cultural discussions and environmental interventions to reflect on the destruction of an important cultural site.

slide 65 * central Vancouver ca 1931 *

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caption:

Aerial view of central Vancouver ca 1931 with a remaining portion of Hole-in-Bottom in the lower right.

slide 66 * 1886 schematic of central Vancouver with 1967 photograph by Fred Herzog *

caption:

upper left

map of Vancouver in 1886

lower right

Fred Herzog 1967 Blue Car Strathcona,

Hole-in-Bottom was much larger when Vancouver was incorporated in 1886 and by 1967, in this photograph by Fred Herzog, was relegated to wasteland.

slide 67 * East False Creek before & then as False Creek Flats *

caption top:

Christos Dikeakos, 2002, Piles, Paydirt, False Creek, Vancouver

caption: middle and bottom

"View looking south from False Creek Photo Taken on June 1st 1916 Time 1140 Tide 0.4"

"View of False Creek Flats east of Main Street - W.J. Moore Photo Aug 19 1916" Both photographs from the Vancouver Archive

slide 68 * False Creek aerial image *

caption:

A recent aerial view of Hole-in-Bottom (marked in red) with the new Emily Carr campus inside the red line in the upper right

slide 69 * curating: 'organic projects' *

I am interested in site-based artist movements that subvert and interrogate simplistic notions of ecological design and sustainability through exploring 'organic projects'.

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curating:
 'organic projects'
 email from Bourges

caption:
 A recent email from an experimental curatorial residency in a public art school south-east of Paris.

I have proposed a collaborative exhibition (with graduate students in this school) that explores a North American indigenous 'organic project', a North American 'organic project' rooted in more European cannons (probably New York-based Canadian, Oliver Kellhammer), and a francophone European 'organic' artist.

slide 70 * Sonfist, Beuys, Brochu-Ingram *

captions left moving counter-clockwise:
 Alan Sonfist schematic of 'Time Landscape' circa 1977; Joseph Beuys building '1000 Eichen', Documenta 6, Kassel, 1982; and a schematic by Brochu-Ingram on work in Geneva.

slide 71 conclusions / question *

conclusions:
 In conclusion, there are a lot of forces at work to reconnect indigenous communities, artists, and audiences with territories, sites, and contemporary spaces to rethink and more fully experience. Traditional site-based practices are being revisited and new practices are rapidly emerging. In the face of multiple pressures for young indigenous populations to forsake cultural and territorial relationship for consumerism, site-based practices meld with new forms of activism.

What happened to Mary and Charlie Zalt of WEN,NÁ,NEĆ?

slide 72 * Mary and Charlie (Zalt) Zalt + friend *

caption: Mary and Charlie (Zalt) Zalt, WEN,NÁ,NEĆ, Salt Spring Island circa 1920

In 1923, the Federal Government of Canada, through Indian Affairs, decided to remove all indigenous people from Canada's Gulf Island – even from the tiny Indian Reserves that had been created just half a century before. The Zalts resisted until faced with police apprehension, they disappeared. Leaving their home intact and some of their money (probably for their families), they left one of their canoes on a nearby island. Their dog was never found. As likely as taking their own lives, they faked their suicide to avoid imprisonment and went into hiding somewhere far away. Maybe they even found a refuge – perhaps an art school.

Notess

¹ DISCLAIMER: These notes are intended as rough points of extensive theory and material that to be explored fully and precisely would require several courses and studios. Due to time constraints, the points here cannot be fully substantiated in this initial discussion.

² References to indigenous culture continue to be facile and problematic even in sardonic attempts to spoof cultural appropriation, such as in *The Simpsons*. For example see "The Bart of War" is the twenty-first episode of the fourteenth season of *The Simpsons* aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 18, 2003.

³ http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salish_Wool_Dog

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Neel

⁶ http://www.firstnations.de/development/coast_salish-yos.htm

⁷ *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia (Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations)* - Supreme Court Judgments 2017-11-02 citation 2017 SCC 54 Case number 36664 Judges McLachlin, Beverley; Abella, Rosalie Silberman; Moldaver, Michael J.; Karakatsanis, Andromache; Wagner, Richard; Gascon, Clément; Côté, Suzanne; Brown, Russell; Rowe, Malcolm
<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/16816/index.do> Andromache; Wagner, Richard; Gascon,
<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/16816/index.do>

⁸ Richard Bell. 2018 (2002). Bell's Theorem: Aboriginal Art—It's a White Thing! *e-flux* 90.
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/90/183248/bell-s-theorem-aboriginal-art-it-s-a-white-thing/>

⁹ Section 149, banning potlatches, was a revision of the 1876 *Indian Act* which was inserted into the 1884 revisions.

¹⁰ Philipp Kaiser and Miwon Kwon (eds). 2012. *Ends of the Earth: Art of the Land to 1974*. New York: Prestel.

¹¹ Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson (eds). 2015. *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

¹² Robert Smithson. 1973. Frederick Law Olmsted and the dialectical landscapes. in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 157 – 171. See page 164.

¹³ Some of the most important of these portraits are posted at, <http://gordonbrentingram.ca/1980/> .