

GALLERY 101
MARCH 7 2020

Canne • Raven Commando • Laura Fauchon • Anna Heffernan • Jordyn Hendricks
• PJ Leroux • Rachel Nungnik • Nawyaak • Gwen Palluq • Frankie Pasap • Janice
Toulouse • Georgette Whiteduck • Carmel Whittle

WE ARE NOT INVISIBLE

An Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Art Exhibition





Gallery 101

Director's Welcome

Welcome to Gallery 101.

G101 honours and respects the original people of the territory we currently occupy: unceded and unsundered Anishnaabe-Aki who have been living and working on this land since time immemorial. Two important protocols of this place are that here, no one may go hungry, and no one may show aggression. What beautiful intention that we will honour at the opening of We Are Not Invisible as we share food and listen respectfully to each other while experiencing this difficult subject matter with beautiful and powerful artwork.

On behalf of the members, board of directors and workers at Gallery 101 I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health who have funded this project. We thank the womxn from Wabano, Minwaashin Lodge, Tungasuvvingat Inuit and the ACTION committee (Anti-Violence & Coercion Taskforce for Indigenous Organizations & Networks) who together developed our call for artists to participate in a human trafficking awareness art show and selected the artworks you see here today. We are grateful for the artists that answered our call and created this work. Thank you.

Laura Margita
Director/Curator, Gallery 101

Curatorial Statement

We Are Not Invisible is an exhibition addressing the shocking and shameful fact that the city of Ottawa is a hot spot in Canada for human trafficking. Misogyny, homelessness, racism, land and property development ensure Ottawa is not always a safe place to be, especially for those of us who have been historically silenced, marginalized, or hidden. This exhibition is about making a safe space for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who have been affected by or have directly experienced this human rights crisis, to present their stories through art.

Our partners from Wabano, Minwaashin Lodge, Tungasuvvingat Inuit and ACTION made it possible for us to find this amazing group of artists - many of whom are new to the G101 community. They have created brave, loving, feminist, and decolonizing art works about a bitter and terrible reality. Their talent and participation has made all of our work worthwhile. The act of learning, sharing, strategizing and developing this project was as healing as it was informative for us as organizers. The resilience and knowledge of the participating artists inspired us and left us so thankful for their talent and bravery in presenting this work.

Thank you for coming to see this work and we hope that you will help spread the news about this current crisis and support the change we need to make Ottawa safe for all who live and travel here.





Exhibition opening - March 7, 2020

Saulteaux Elder Irene Compton, of the Keeseekoose band in Saskatchewan (left) and Inuk Elder Meeka Kakudluk opened *We Are Not Invisible* with a song of Miigwetch, stories, prayers, and lighting a qulliq, to honor the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people who are now, as Meeka shared with us, part of the light.

CANNE
RAVEN COMMANDO
LAURA FAUCHON
ANNA HEFFERNAN
JORDYN HENDRICKS
PJ LEROUX
RACHEL NUNGNIK
NAWYAAK
GWEN PALLUQ
FRANKIE PASAP
JANICE TOULOUSE
GEORGETTE WHITEDUCK
CARMEL WHITTLE



Unless noted, all documentation images in this catalogue by
Gallery 101/ Kristina Corre



CANNE

Chase
Acrylic on canvas (2019)

This piece represents the inescapable truth of trafficking, kidnapping and the forgotten reality of many Indigenous women/girls. Looking deeper, we reflect on the many different paths that we as Indigenous people have taken in our lifetime and the stories, traumas and lives that have evolved from each of these journeys.

About the Artist

Canne is an Indigenous painter who studied at the Ontario College of Art & Design. Her unique style and vibrant use of colours delivers a purposeful intensity throughout her collection of work.

Canne's diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis in her early twenties fuelled her art with a renewed vigour. She has found a profound healing power in the artistic process and this journey is ever present through her art. She is constantly pushing her own boundaries in the artistic realm often mixing different mediums, interspersing iconic imagery and continually bringing vibrant awe inspiring colour combinations to each new series she completes.

Canne's paintings have been showcased across the country, most notably at The Law Society of Upper Canada, Toronto City Hall, the Harry Jerome Awards, Toronto International PowWow at the Rogers Centre as well at the Fusion Art Show in Montreal, Quebec. Her work has been published in print media including: Stolen Generations, Fireweed, and the Toronto Star. Canne has also been featured in several documentaries detailing her life and art.

Canne's collection of work is a true reflection of her diverse life experiences as well as her Ojibwe roots.

RAVEN COMMANDO

Red Hand Series: Silent No More

Digital photographs on Kokum scarf (2019-2020)

My red hand series raises awareness for 2SMMIWG. These people are often a result of human trafficking in some form or other. This project is important to me because even though I haven't lost anyone this way, like so many others, I live in fear of it happening. To my daughter, to my sisters, to my friends, to the 2S/women/girls I see every day and have grown to love, to myself.

I was looking at a location in a small town with these two incredibly beautiful and strong women with red hands on their faces. Suddenly, a black truck comes to a halt beside us for far longer than that stop sign required. One of the two big men sitting inside rolled down his window and angrily yet quietly told us "You ladies better watch yourselves" before rolling up his window and speeding off. That man didn't hesitate to threaten us openly in broad daylight with my 6yr old daughter listening in. What would have happened had one of us been alone and it was dark?

One of the men who is part of this project was discussing with me the impact 2SMMIWG has on him. He hasn't lost anyone this way either, but is so scared for his daughter that he needs to be aware of her whereabouts at all times. He needs to be the one to drop her off at school every morning and he needs to be the one to pick her up after school too. He needs to be sure she will be safe, otherwise he couldn't live with himself should anything happen and he wasn't there to protect her.

I also want to incorporate the fact that this touches everyone, not just the indigenous population. For this reason, I am also including the portraits with red hands of a non-indigenous woman, man and child. They have friends and family who are Indigenous 2S, women and girls and losing them would affect their lives greatly.

About the Artist

I love capturing real subjects with raw emotion. The thing about life is that it is composed by moments in time and once that look, the way this person smiled, that leaf has hit the ground, has passed, it will never happen exactly like that ever again. I want to be there to make sure it isn't forgotten. I also write, admittedly not as publicly as I publish my photography, but short stories and poetry are routinely part of my days in some form or other.



LAURA FAUCHON

“Tekakawitha” Saint Kateri Tekakawitha – Lily of the Mohawks
Acrylic on canvas (2019)

The meaning behind this painting is to bring awareness to sex trafficking and to our murdered and missing Indigenous women. The painting was painted to look like the stained glass in the church and Tekakawitha as representative of all indigenous women as elevated to status of a saint, she represents all indigenous women in the sight of our Creator, High and lofty, Holy and beloved.

About the Artist

I am an Indigenous Artist (Cree/Saulteaux) from Peepeekisis First Nation in Saskatchewan. Treaty Four area. I am mainly an acrylic painter who also uses other mediums such as mixed media and drawings. My paintings and style are mainly indigenous although I also do landscapes and other forms and styles using bright, bold colors to celebrate my homage to my culture and the celebration of creation. My most noted works have included design work (book cover) for Defend Dignity, a National Organization for the awareness of Sex Trafficking.





Image courtesy of artist

ANNA HEFFERNAN

Gego zaaminangen niinizisan (Don't touch my hair)
Digital illustration on paper (2019)

Many teachings tell us that our hair has spiritual qualities, and that we carry knowledge and experience in our hair. Due to its cultural and spiritual **importance**, many Anishinaabe and other First Nations people have boundaries around others touching their hair. Setting these boundaries around our hair is one example of how we as Indigenous women are asserting our own bodily boundaries and autonomy in relation to others.

About the Artist

Anna Heffernan is a multidisciplinary artist of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe, Irish, and French Canadian ancestry. She is a member of Curve Lake First Nation. Anna paints, draws and beads as a way of connecting with her Nishnaabe heritage and expressing the knowledge she has been given. Her art blends traditional and contemporary Nishnaabe themes and motifs. Her work can be found on Instagram @miskwaadesigns.



JORDYN HENDRICKS

Heart Berry Drum (2019)

The strawberry, also known as the heart berry, carries a multitude of teachings and symbolism. Berries are a symbol of healing, and are a very powerful medicine. I use my drum for healing, the heart berry is a fitting image to represent the resilience I have with the help of healthy coping tools such as my drum. This piece is extremely personal & carries my stories & memories. When I was struggling through the worst moments of my eating disorder, strawberries were one of the very few foods I felt safe to eat. Now, as I am recovering, strawberries are a reminder of how far I've come, & not only when it comes to eating issues. Carrying this piece & carrying this drum keeps me balanced, & pushes me forward.

About the Artist

Taanshi, Jordyn Hendricks dishinakashoon. Rivyar Rooj doschin.

Jordyn Hendricks is a two spirited Otipemisiwak artist from Red River region, born in Selkirk, Manitoba and raised in Ottawa on unceded Algonquin territory. Their art is often a sort of documentation of everyday life around them, whether that be realism sketches or more abstract imagery carrying teachings or stories. Hendricks creates meaning in their art through visual representation of deeper concepts. Often in Hendricks' art themes of healing, indigeneity, & experimentation can be seen.

PJ LEROUX

Stolen

Long exposure digital photograph on fine art paper (2019)

This image is part of a series done in collaboration with Josee Bourgeois in an attempt to open some eyes as to what has happened, is happening and will continue to disproportionately happen in Canada and the U.S if attitudes and values, more so than laws, don't change.

About the Artist

PJ Leroux is a part time photographer/ full time driver who first developed a passion for photography as a cab driver in Jasper National Park, Alberta, spending many cold nights chasing stars and the Northern Lights. After meeting Valerie Taggart and the birth of their first child PJ and his family relocated to Hinton, Alberta as a truck driver in the forestry industry. With the birth of their second child the returned to PJ's home in The Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First nation/Golden Lake, Ontario.



Image courtesy of artist

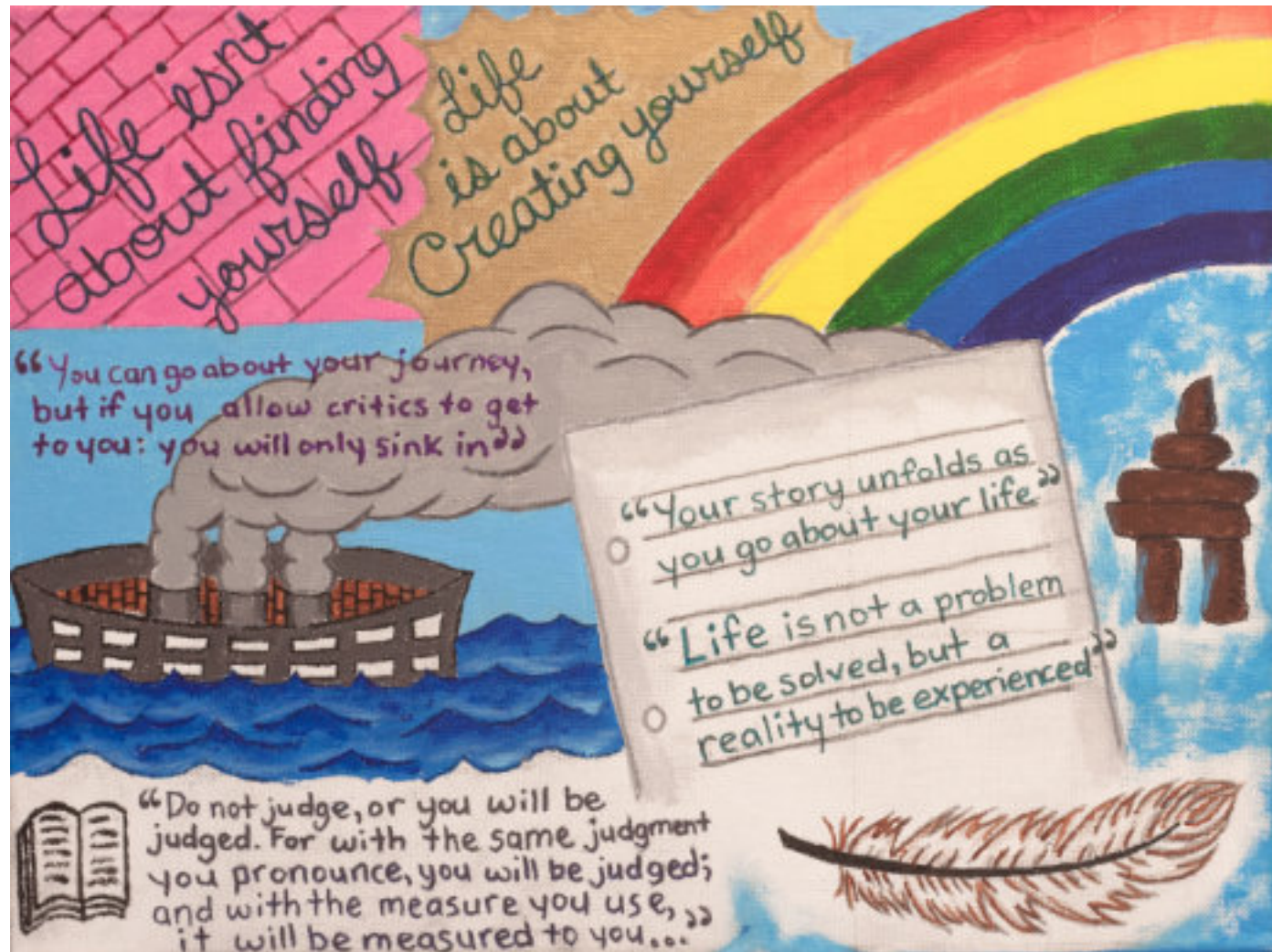
RACHEL NUNGNIK

Life isn't about finding yourself, Life is about creating yourself
Acrylic on canvas (2020)

Negative to positive.

About the Artist

Rachel Nungnik is an Inuk artist living in Ottawa.



NAWYAAK

Can you see my eyes crying for help
Pencil crayon on paper (2019)

The duct tape over her mouth signifies that she has to be quiet. Her eyes are crying.

Why Me!
Pencil crayon on paper (2020)

*Look at me! Look at what you are doing to me.
You blind me and tie me up like I'm nothing!
You gave me anger, and put me into the darkness.
You took my dignity, my soul, my life away from me.*

About the Artist

Nawyaak is an Inuk artist living in Ottawa.



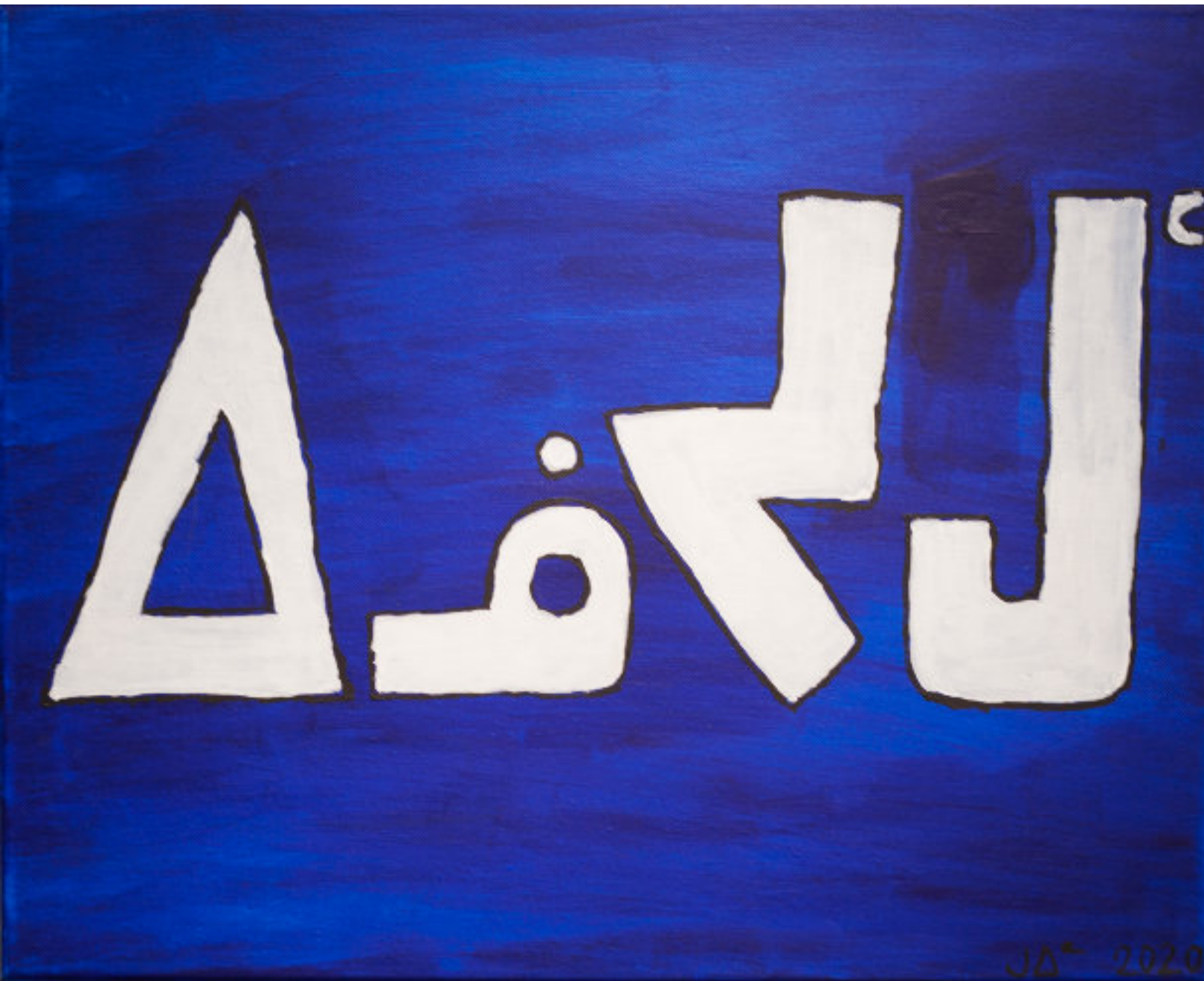
GWEN PALLUQ

We Are Inuk
Acrylic on canvas (2020)

'We are Inuk' in Inuktitut.

About the Artist

Gwen Palluq is an Inuk artist living in Ottawa.





FRANKIE PASAP

MMIWG2S
Mixed fabrics and copper jingles (2020)

This dress is a representation of the Indigenous female, her strength, resilience, and her beauty.
Her connection to the earth.
Her ability to bring healing to her people.
Her commitment to keeping her Indigenous culture alive.
Her plight to keeping the memory of every missing and or murdered Indigenous woman, girl, and 2 spirit alive!

About the Artist

My name is Frances Pasap, I am a proud Nakoda woman from Whitebear First Nations in the Treaty 4 Territory better known today as South/Eastern Saskatchewan Canada. I am a visitor and work on Un-ceded, Un-surrendered Algonquin Territory also known as Ottawa, Ontario Canada

My creative outlet is art in several different forms, from painting, seed beading, haute couture fashion to creating cultural regalia. I also love spending any extra time with my children at home.





JANICE TOULOUSE

Pocahontas Oil on linen (2018)

I honour Pocahontas, a renowned Matriarch to encourage respect for Indigenous women. She is the first Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman in recorded history.

While renting a studio in a castle ruins in France I painted a portrait of Pocahontas to honour her spirit. Because there is no true likeness of her, I imagined what she looked like. I thought about what it feels like, being an Indigenous woman away from her people. I remembered the cultural shock I felt when I first arrived in France in the 80's. I was about the same age as her, did not speak the local language and had no other Indigenous people to speak with.

Her birth name was Matoaka and she was born in 1595. In 1613, to ensure tobacco wealth and their safety, the early colonizers captured Powhatan's daughter as a hostage. She was baptized as Rebecca and married to John Rolfe. Her Powhatan husband was killed although their child survived. Pocahontas was in good health when she boarded the ship, and was later poisoned. She died trying to make it back home. She was buried in Gravesend England, March 21, 1617.

About the Artist

Janice Toulouse is an elder Ojibwe artist painter, born and raised in Serpent River First Nation, Northern Ontario. She exhibited her art internationally for 40 years. She earned an MFA from Concordia University, Montreal. She taught Painting and Contemporary Indigenous Art at ECUAD in Vancouver for twenty years, until 2017. Her art practice is to share her painting and storytelling as an Anishinabe kwe. Her artworks investigate the parallel history, nature and spiritual beliefs that exist in our visual culture. Exhibited in Canada, U.S.A, and Europe. Toulouse is a recipient of several awards including the REVEAL award in 2017, and the NMAI award and New York residency in 2002.

"My art is my statement on my life as an Anishinabe kwe through the language of contemporary art. My research is revising history from an Ojibwe perspective, to respect and connect all life. As an artist and teacher, during my lifetime I have worked to bring Indigenous art to the world. I have traveled widely, now in my elder years, it has been advised by my traditional elder from Garden River, that I return home to our territory to pass on my experience as an artist."

GEORGETTE WHITEDUCK

Minaton

Beaded vamps on birch and cedar (2014)

Minaton means taking care of or caring for something delicate and there are many ways to say this Algonquin. These vamps, with two flying geese were created to remember my relatives who have been left without justice. Where you see a single pine in each, an outline of water and different cattails in the background you see different stages of being. The vamps have been mounted in a black shadow box framed with birch and cedar.

I have family members who are missing and murdered where their voices still need to be heard in the justice system. They may not be here they but they are the ones that will pave a path. These vamps have traveled across Canada and US with the Walking With Our Sisters Memorial Exhibition where they have been in many ceremonies with different nations.

About the Artist

Georgette Whiteduck is a member of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake.





CARMEL WHITTLE

Infinity Broken Mixed media (2020)

This is an experiential installation that holds space for the women and seeks to connect to the viewer as participant. We are all connected, however most of us will never know a world where we are held captive, enslaved, and disconnected.

Green nature wraps itself around the steel spiral. The rings of the spiral, like trees, hold knowledge and history in their markings - not unlike the markings on the faceless head covered on top by the colonized system. The pocked, moss-stained featureless face shows the passage of time. The brutal scars are all that remain. The tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and cedar are there to support the sacredness of all human life. When the smudge is lit the smoke rises with intentions - for protection, hope, freedom and compassion.

The red blanket covering the figure represents the flesh-the blood-the human. All are invited to participate in this representation - to touch the cover and move it around in an act of engagement. Through the touching we connect and become more than observers. The stones at the base have been rolling in the sea since time immemorial. It is in this washing, the continual returning to the shore, that hope is offered to us all. There we find the strength to persevere: to never give up, and never forget. They form an anchor of protection around the sacred medicines.

About the Artist

Carmel Whittle is a Mi'kmaq-Irish, visual artist, musician, songwriter and filmmaker from Newfoundland & Labrador. She is one of eleven children identifies as 2-Spirit Lesbian Female.

GALLERY 101
MARCH 7 2020

Becoming Visible

TEXT BY JENNY MCMASTER

We Are Not Invisible is about bringing to light the prevalence of human trafficking in Ottawa and making space for the experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQIAⁱ people who have been addressing issues of exploitation and violence within their respective communities for centuries. The exhibition is about listening, as survivors and members of communities vulnerable to being targeted dictate the terms of their own visibility. First Nations, Inuit and Métis women are often under-represented in mainstream media and the arts, and when they are represented, they find themselves distorted through a Eurocentric, patriarchal and frequently white-supremacist gaze. This exhibition is about self-representation, reasserting the Indigenous witnessing of events past and present, reclaiming the territory of the body, and forging a space in the arts community defined by radical decolonial change.

In writing this catalogue essay I was challenged by the question of how to speak about aesthetics in an activist context and also about how we can redefine our artistic venues. It is impossible to discuss the subject matter of the art without addressing the context in which it was shown. Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities have historically been, and continue to be exploited by art institutions which tokenize and commercialize Indigenous culture without tangible benefits to Indigenous communities. As well, museums traditionally house artifacts to preserve the past, speaking in terms of heritage versus living culture, implying something dead and gone versus alive and in the continuous process of evolving. Artist-run centres and progressive museums have the opportunity to become places of active declaration and storytelling, where art objects may operate within dynamic living stories versus inert artifacts and evidence of times gone by.

Arts organizations can create new spaces by creating new kinds of events. *We Are Not Invisible* is the result of partnerships between arts workers and frontline-workers. An accessible call for works was written and presented to Indigenous community members by The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Minwaashin Lodge, and Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI). The organizers, Casey Hunley, Kayla Spagnoli, Jennisha Wilson, Cecilia Perez, Laura Margita and Kristina Corre worked to ensure that Indigenous people directly affected by human trafficking led the exhibition. This meant giving artists, some in crisis situations and many who had never shown work in a formal gallery setting, access to art supplies, support in the application process, as well as orientation sessions onsite at Gallery 101. As Jennisha Wilson of TI explains, for many of the artists submitting work meant overcoming many obstacles and getting to a place of wellness. *We Are Not Invisible* includes works from both conventional and unconventional artistic paths. All works submitted were taken into consideration as they each conveyed a significant experience.ⁱⁱ

We Are Not Invisible is about bringing to light the prevalence of human trafficking in Ottawa and making space for the experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQIAⁱ people who have been addressing issues of exploitation and violence within their respective communities for centuries. The exhibition is about listening, as survivors and members of communities vulnerable to being targeted dictate the terms of their own visibility. First Nations, Inuit and Métis women are often under-represented in mainstream media and the arts, and when they are represented, they find themselves distorted through a Eurocentric, patriarchal and frequently white-supremacist gaze. This exhibition is about self-representation, reasserting the Indigenous witnessing of events past and present, reclaiming the territory of the body, and forging a space in the arts community defined by radical decolonial change.

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In order to speak about the themes and context of the exhibition, it is essential to speak about the causes of the crisis it addresses. The sexual enslavement of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people, is one result of genocide and the forceful uprooting of individuals from their homes, and communities from traditional lands. The Canadian Government forcibly displaced and separated Métis and First Nations peoples, sending their children to residential schools, and restricting communities to reserves on small often inhabitable parcels between `crown land`. The Canadian Government also coerced Inuit peoples into leaving their lands and giving up their means of self subsistence, while their children were forced to attend settlement schools. First Nations women lost their status and were forbidden to live on reserves if they married men of European descent.ⁱⁱⁱ For these women, losing status meant losing

connections to loved ones, support systems, safe, healthy living environments, and traditional systems of knowledge and healing – all of which contributed to on-going generational trauma that has made individuals vulnerable to be targeted and exploited by human traffickers.

Another cause of the targeting of Inuit, Métis and First Nations people by human traffickers is the prevailing racist depiction of Indigenous women as disposable in Canadian society. This is evident in the media where they are primarily framed as drug addicts and prostitutes, and described as malevolent especially in stories concerning violence perpetrated by white men. In our colonial present, we continue to find the image of the squaw, the derogatory female counterpart of the male savage. As Cree and Metis scholar and poet Emma La Roque explains, "(The squaw) has no face. She is lustful, immoral, unfeeling, and dirty." ^{iv} She is blamed for her own circumstances. In the face of this false, forced mask of degeneracy, how does one become visible on their own terms? In the wake of terror and trauma, how does one find the voice to articulate their story? In the context of isolation and uprootedness, how does one claim space?

The tone of *We Are Not Invisible's* vernissage was set by the ceremonial actions of Inuit and First Nations elders. To open the exhibition, First Nations Elder Irene Compton, a Saulteaux woman from the Keeseekoose band in Saskatchewan, smudged the gallery and asked visitors to gather in a circle around the jingle dress created by Frankie Pasap. Elder Irene played the hand drum and led the singing of an honour song dedicated to the Missing and Murdered Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People. She shared her knowledge on the subject of women's strength and healing. After the song, Inuit elder Meekaka Kakudluk (Meeka) lit her Qulliq, or seal oil lamp, created by renowned Inuit artist and

carver Jerry Ell who also made the Qulliq that was lit for the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. While the Qulliq is traditionally associated with the strength and care an Inuit woman gives her family, Kakudluk also uses the Qulliq as an important means of centering herself when faced with the challenge of a difficult conversation.

Ceremony also appeared as an aspect some of the art works in the exhibition. Artist Carmel Whittle contributed a piece she described as an "experiential installation that holds space for women and seeks to connect to the viewer as participant." In accordance with sacred tradition, Whittle's *Infinity Broken* (p 34) was placed facing east. The sculpture resembles something between a hooded figure and an altar. Natural materials wrap around a steel spiral. Traditional First Nations medicines tobacco, sage, sweet-grass, and cedar are present to support the sacredness of all human life. The red blanket covering the central figure represents the flesh and blood of humanity. All are invited to participate in this piece - to touch the cover and move it around in an act of engagement.

One key theme in the exhibition is storytelling. Casey Hunley of Wabano states that *We Are Not Invisible* was created with the recognition that for many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, art tells stories and storytelling is a form of history keeping, teaching, and healing.^v While in a western European context, history is described in terms of a chronological series of events predominantly describing the past, in Indigenous culture, oral traditions draw together past, present, and future. Dakota professor Waziyatawin states, "our stories provide a sense of identity and belonging, situating community members within their lineage and establishing their relationship to the rest of the natural world; they also serve as a source of bonding and intimacy between the storyteller and

the audience."^{vi} Kayla Spagnoli of Minwaashin Lodge remarks that regardless of the locale of an Indigenous person, be it inside or outside of an Indigenous community, their story is important. ^{vii}

Storytelling can also be described as a way of mitigating trauma; releasing it, putting it in someone else's life, or making it not invisible.^{viii} Nawyaak's simple but poignant coloured pencil drawings titled *Why Me* and *Can't You See My Eyes Are Crying for Help* (p 24) are brave testaments of terrible events experienced after relocating south to Ottawa. Gwen Palluq's acrylic painting *We Are Inuk* (p 26) is a declaration of identity regardless of the feeling of dislocation she experiences in her new city. Rachel Nungnik's *Life Isn't About Finding Yourself – It is About Creating Yourself* (p 22) incorporates images reflecting on her transition southward and the sense of the fragmentation of culture. The quotes in this piece make a strong statement about claiming agency in the present, regardless of difficult times.

Janice Toulouse's *Pocahontas* (p 30) and Laura Fauchon's *Saint Kateri Tekakawitha – Lily of the Mohawks* (p 14) are two works which can be described as the re-telling of history. Both paintings are of iconic women whose life histories encompass both trauma and resilience. Toulouse's *Pocahontas* was hung above the gallery space as if observing and acknowledging the artists and visitors. She appears to be dressed in both Indigenous and European clothing, just as she moved between both cultures. Pocahontas was an accomplished translator and the first Indigenous woman on record as being trafficked. Fauchon's painting *Takakwitha* resembles a stained glass window commemorating the first Indigenous woman saint. Like most saints, Kateri's life was marked with tragedy. Her family died of smallpox, and while she survived, she was left disfigured. She subsequently joined a Jesuit mission and moved from New York State to

Montreal. She is remembered as a bridge of cultures. Saint Kateri was canonized by Pope Benedict in 2012 when a bone relic from her body cured a boy of flesh-eating bacteria.^{ix}

Another theme present in the exhibition is the experience of being continuously uprooted or in transit. Forced migration through colonization was a precursor to other non-consensual forms of relocation.^x In Canne's *Chase* (p 10) we see a nameless highway through the lens of cold abstract shapes. The piece evokes anonymous individuals glimpsed from car windows as drivers pass by from one place to another. People with no fixed address are easily forgotten by social support systems. PJ Leroux's *Stolen* (p 20), uses a long photographic exposure to portray this uprooted reality. Leroux is a full-time truck driver and well acquainted to the no man's land between cities. In this photograph model Josée Bourgeois sits at the side of the highway on an utterly inhospitable strip of asphalt and concrete. The blur of head and tail lights in the image indicate the speed of passing vehicles and eminent dangers of many kinds.

Georgette Whiteduck's *Minaton* (p 32) is another work of art that may be associated with the road. Whiteduck's piece was first exhibited in the 2015 travelling exhibition *Walking With Our Sisters* organized in partnership between Gallery 101, Carleton University Art Gallery, and Indigenous elders and community members. *Walking With Our Sisters* was characterized by its community-based activism. Beading circles met across the country to sew vamps and open spaces for the brave work of discussing missing and murdered Indigenous women. Carried in a bundle along the circuit of the exhibition, these vamps, or moccasin tongues, were intentionally left detached to represent the lives of absent sisters. At exhibition spaces, including the Carleton

University Art Gallery in Ottawa, the vamps were installed in the shape of pathway to symbolize that the missing and murdered women, girls and Two-Spirit people walked alongside the participating artists and visitors.

In her essay, *What the Body Remembers*, Claudette Lauzon discusses the difficulty of representing the invisibility of Indigenous women who have disappeared.^{xii} One strategy is the use of an empty dress indicating the presence of absence. A dress is both closely linked to the body and carries cultural messages. Frankie Pasap's *MMIWG2S* (p 28) is a full scale jingle dress: a healing ceremonial regalia commonly used by dancers during a pow-wow. The jingle dress dance began with a northern Ojibwe tribe in the early 1900s. When a medicine man's granddaughter grew sick, his spirit guides informed him in a dream to make such a dress for her. They said if she were to dance in this style of dress she would become well. At first the daughter was too weak to dance but as other members of tribe joined in she grew stronger. Its likely the illness in the story was the influenza pandemic of 1918 which devastated First Nations communities on the Great Lakes.^{xiii} Pasap's *MMIWG2S* also connects with the REDress Project, launched by artist Jamie Black in Sudbury, Ontario. Black describes this project as an aesthetic response to the many missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. Since its inception the campaign has become a yearly event.^{xiii} Pasap's dress was likewise created to remember and honour the dead and missing. It is sewn with copper bells inscribed with about 300 names, though the number of known or reported missing and murdered women, girls and Two-Spirit people actually exceeds 2000.

The theme of the reclamation of the body is central to this exhibition. Patriarchal, white-supremacist property relations systematized through colonization have stripped

Indigenous peoples of their lands and Indigenous women of their bodily autonomy. Colonists recognized that women and two-spirited people were central to the fabric of First Nations, Metis and Inuit societies. The Canadian Government intentionally worked to undermine feminine power in order to gain access to land and resources. As Casey Hunley of Wabano states, "Euro-Christian ideologies were used to perpetuate harmful narratives and stereotypes to justify inhumane treatment."^{xiv} In this sense, Hunley explains, the over-representation of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people in human trafficking is really a continuation of a pattern of violence which has long been ingrained in Canadian society and systems of law and government.^{xv}

Anna Heffernan's digital print *Gego zaaminangen niinizisan (Don't touch my hair)* (p 16) is a poetic rendering of the establishment of boundaries around the Indigenous body. Many teachings, she states, "tell us that our hair has spiritual qualities and that we carry knowledge and experience (within it)." Among other acts of cultural genocide, residential school authorities cut off the long hair Indigenous children. Today, an act of resistance, many First Nations people choose to grow their hair long, and have upheld boundaries related to others touching their hair. In this image, a woman's braid establishes its agency taking the form of a lively snake. Jordyn Hendrick's delicately painted *Heart Berry Drum* (p 18) is also about the body. The strawberry, also known as the heart berry, is a symbol of healing. While struggling with their eating disorder, strawberries were one of the few foods the artist felt safe to eat. Strawberries are now a reminder of how far they have come. Their drum acts as a device of balance which pushes them forward.

Raven Commando's *Red Hand Series: Silent No More* (p 12) depicts bodies marked by the reality of human trafficking. The artist states that although she hasn't lost anyone in this way she lives in fear of it happening to her family and friends. The *Red Hand Series*

is a collection of photographic portraits in which each person is marked by an ominous red hand. The people featured in this series include a man, as well as a non-Indigenous woman, because the loss of women, girls or two spirited people in their community would affect them greatly as well. The Kokum scarf, on which the photographs are displayed, is a staple in the wardrobe of Cree grandmothers.^{xvi} Raven's use of the Kokum scarf as a containing space, calls to mind the Anishinaabemowin word Kobade. Kobade is a word used to refer to great-grandparents and great-grandchildren. It means a link in a chain between generations, nations, and individuals. It denotes the importance of interconnectedness to ensure the well-being of all.^{xvii} This interconnectedness can refer to the effects of racism and genocide on generations of people, as well as strength in unity, and the healing provided by the support of one's family, community, and cultural identity.

It is this strength in unity that may be facilitated by activist exhibitions. While *We Are Not Invisible* is about raising awareness about the violence faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQI people in Ottawa, it is also about promoting the cultural and personal resiliency which has enabled so many to thrive. By building relationships between art institutions and First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, places of safety may be created. *We Are Not Invisible* taps into art's ability to allow us to speak when words do not come easily and also its capacity to serve as a site for discussions of a very challenging topic. It is not often artists with the lived experiences explored in this exhibition get to tell their stories. To become visible in the face of generations long trauma requires great courage. By making their art, by coming together with others with whom they share a common history, and through the courageous act of sharing their accounts and talents with the wider community, these artists have taken a significant step to creating change.

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- ^{vi} Jonha B. Van Noy, "Can Museums Promote Community Healing? A Healing Museum Model for Indigenous Communities" (Masters Thesis, University of Kansas, 2007) pg 35, ProQuest Information and Learning Company (UMI: 1449685).
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- ^{xvii} The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health pg 5

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenny McMaster's family line has several branches including Northern Irish, Scottish, and Germanic, as well as Swedish and Mennonite. Some of her ancestors moved to Canada at the beginning of the last century while others immigrated to the Northern America in the seventeen-hundreds.

Jenny is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts at the University of Ottawa. She is exploring performance, sculpture and animation and the question of what we perceive to be animate and inanimate. She was pleased to participate in the virtual residency hosted by OCADU, titled *Contingencies of Care*, which delved into topics such as Indigenous views on the natural world and working through cultural trauma through creative writing. In the past she has been engaged in community art education projects funded by the Ontario Arts Council. She has also taught at the Ottawa School of Art and Algonquin College.

EXHIBITION PARTNER

WABANO CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Mandate
Established in the National Capital Region in 1998, the mandate of the Wabano Centre is to prevent ill health, treat illness, and provide support and aftercare programming. Our services are offered in a culturally sensitive way that welcomes, accepts and represents all Indigenous peoples.

Mission
The Wabano Centre is an urban health centre that:

- Provides quality, holistic, culturally relevant health services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities of Ottawa;
- Engages in clinical, social, economic and cultural initiatives that promote the health of all Aboriginal people;
- Promotes community-building through education and advocacy; and,
- Serves as a centre of excellence for urban Aboriginal health.

Vision
We envision a world in which all First Nation, Inuit and Métis people have achieved full and equitable access to the conditions of health including: pride in ancestry, cultural reclamation, peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable environment, resources, and social justice. And where the gifts and wisdom of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures are recognized as valuable, distinctive and beautiful.

CASEY HUNLEY
Wabano Anti-Human Trafficking Education Coordinator & A.C.T.I.O.N Member

We Are Not Invisible is an extension of the work that I do for the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health as the Anti-Human Trafficking Education Coordinator and as a member of the Anti-violence and Coercion Taskforce for Indigenous Organizations and Networks (ACTION). It is based on the recognition that for many Inuit, First Nations and Métis people, art tells stories— and storytelling is a form of history-keeping, teaching, and healing. This show is intended to be an awareness campaign, a call to action, and a spotlight on the courage, strength, and resilience of Indigenous womxn as they continue to express themselves in their communities, politics, and art. It is meant to raise the questions: what happens when we listen to Indigenous womxn's voices, and pay attention to what they do? What happens when we recognize the power, agency and sovereignty required to withstand centuries of genocide while also rebuilding families, communities, and Nations? We see the result in these artists' work, filled in equal parts with hope, strength and presence.



EXHIBITION SUPPORTERS

TUNGASUVVINGAT INUIT

Tungasuvvingat Inuit is a multi-sector hub for Inuit of all ages, whether they have just started unravelling the challenges of navigating urban living in The South, or staying connected to their culture in The North.

Gallery 101 thanks Tungasuvvingat’s Jennisha Wilson and Cynthia for supporting *We Are Not Invisible*.

Our Purpose

Like the traditional Inuit Blanket-Toss Game, Tungasuvvingat Inuit’s programs and services will “catch” anyone in the Inuit community who needs our support. Interconnected and holistic in approach, our services offer barrier-free referrals centered on the needs of the client. It is the Mission of Tungasuvvingat Inuit to broadly provide Inuit-specific programs that contribute to the health and wellbeing of Inuit and to encourage and support similar programs for Inuit across the country. Inuit constitute one of the fastest-growing and youngest segments of the Canadian population, with half of all Inuit aged 23 years or younger and more than one-third 15 years or younger. Inuit are more likely to achieve success when being served by fellow Inuit, enjoying the choice of speaking their first language of Inuktitut or English. The deep integration of our Programs is the key to our “community of services.” When Inuit access any of our services, they immediately become aware of a wide spectrum of other services that also are available.



MINWAASHIN LODGE

Minwaashin Lodge provides a range of programs and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and children (regardless of status) who are survivors of domestic and other forms of violence, and who may also be suffering the effects of the residential school system. All programs and services are provided in the context of cultural beliefs and values to ensure a holistic approach is used as part of the healing journey.

Gallery 101 thanks Minwaashin Lodge’s Kayla Spagnolio for supporting *We Are Not Invisible*.

Vision Statement

We envision a world where all of creation, the earth, the air, the waters, animals and people are safe, honoured and respected; where children and elders are valued; where culture and diversity are celebrated.

The mission of Minwaashin Lodge is to provide prevention and intervention services and programs for grandmothers, women, children and youth who are survivors of family violence and the residential school system, including those impacted by intergenerational effects. A full range of violence prevention and intervention programs and services is provided in the context of reclaiming the wisdom of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural teachings.





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Gallery 101 honours and respects the original people of the territory we currently occupy: unceded and unsundered Anishnaabe-Aki who have been living, working, and caring for this land since time immemorial.

Gallery 101 exhibits contemporary visual, media, and performance arts that explore self-representations of decolonizing, feminist, intersectional counter-narratives.

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