



Worn Inward

A Response Exhibition

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Halifax, N.S.

June 8 – October 13, 2019

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Yarmouth, N.S.

November 23, 2019 – May 17, 2020

Grenfell Art Gallery, Corner Brook, NL

September 24 – December 5, 2020

Johnson Geo Centre

May 15, 2021 – July 1, 2021



Foundation

LYDON LYNCH
ARCHITECTURE

**Mark Bursey
and Jane Wells**



“

Survival meant walking through the world with languages and cultural ties tucked under sleeves – worn inward. Words displaced from tongues of descendants; skin eager for stories told through ink.

”

Diving into museum collections, eight emerging Indigenous artists from across the continent participated in group discussions and workshops while exploring self-representation through adornment and wearable design.

Worn Inward hosts a collection of multimedia practices including photography, painting and embroidery, shedding layers of self-preservation in celebrating ongoing survivance.

Responding to Mi'kmaw artist Jordan Bennett's 2018–2019 exhibition *Ketu'elmita'jik* [they want to come home], the sentiments are carried over through designs that speak to the active presence and perseverance of Indigenous identities and worldviews. Self-representation results in a visibility that spreads pride; a fire that sparks confidence and ignites change.

Curatorial statement by Aiden Gillis, Indigenous Arts Programmer

Jordan Bennett



Jordan Bennett is a Mi'kmaw visual artist from Stephenville Crossing, Ktaqamkuk (Newfoundland). He lives and works on his ancestral territory of Mi'kma'ki in Terence Bay, Nova Scotia with his partner in life and art Amy Malbeuf.

Bennett's ongoing practice utilizes painting, sculpture, video, installation and sound to explore land, language, the act of visiting, familial histories and challenging colonial perceptions of Indigenous histories and presence with a focus on exploring Mi'kmaw and Beothuk visual culture of Ktaqamkuk.

Bennett has participated in over 75 group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally. He is the recipient of several awards and honours, most notably short-listed for the 2018 Sobey Art Award, long-listed for the 2016 and 2015 Sobey Art Award, a Hnatyshyn Foundation REVEAL award, and the 2014 Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Councils Artist of the Year. Bennett holds a BFA from Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, MUN and an MFA from UBC, Okanagan.



Killa Atencio

Killa Atencio is from Listuguj First Nation in Mi'gmaq Territory (Quebec, Canada). Proud of her Mi'gmaq and Quechua ancestry she enthusiastically shares and expresses her culture through different artistic expressions – as a poet and spoken word artist and as a visual artist. Along with her artistic expression, Atencio enjoys work that contributes to youth and community development, Indigenous relations and education.



Flesh and Bone 2019
Leather, bone, seed-beads, abalone shell, metal
Suite of 5 pieces:
necklace 18.0 x 15.5 cm
earrings 10.0 x 2.5 cm, each
bow tie 5.5 x 11.2 cm
fringed arm cuff 4.6 x 18.0 cm



Artist Statement

Flesh and Bone is a synergy of traditional and contemporary mediums and methods that combine to show the value of both of these worlds in Indigenous fashion.

The pieces were inspired by this fusion of practicality and adornment and speaks to how, traditionally, in Indigenous cultures it is common practice to use all parts of an animal for sustenance, and survival—and in this case, fashion.



Brandy Bernard

My name is Brandy Bernard, I'm a young Indigenous artist and I work mainly with watercolor and pen, though I've been branching out to other mediums. I've grown up in Halifax for majority of my life. I've been interested in art since I was a kid, but only got serious about it in Junior high; currently I'm self-taught. I've been lucky enough to be involved in one major gallery exhibition in 2018 titled Kepe'kek from the Narrows of the Great Harbour, and a few minor exhibitions here and there.



Untitled 2019
Silk painting,
gold metallic ink
39.3 x 37.4 cm



Artist Statement

I've always wanted to touch back on what I was drawn to when I first started drawing, which were mandalas. It's been awhile and I wanted to do something that came to me as I drew. At some point I started taking inspiration from my necklace which plays on my traditional name; Red Sun.



Darcie Bernhardt

Darcie Bernhardt is an Inuvialuit artist from Tuktoyaktuk, NT, where she was raised on the ocean's harsh winds, carving a special bond between her and Western Arctic landscapes. Currently, she works with the Inuit Arts Foundation as the Southern Canada East Community Liaison, interviewing artists from the Nunakput district to the East Coast region. Bernhardt's 2019 solo exhibition titled *Ouiyaghasiak* reflected on domestic spaces in her community. She questioned the idea of memory by trying to create her own language through her paintings. She recently completed a BFA at NSCAD University, specializing in painting.



Untitled 2019
Oil on canvas
63.8 x 63.8 cm

Artist Statement

I am from Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories where the Arctic Ocean and streams were my playground, coated with snow. In my Inuvialuit and Gwich'in culture I drew inspiration from the delta braid.

In Jordan Bennett's exhibition *Ketu'elmita'jik*, I was inspired by geometric quillwork designs and distinct bright-colour palettes. My painting is positioned as a diamond rather than a traditional square to convey that my delta braid patterns are continuing.



Brandon Hoax

Brandon Hoax is the trickster child of a Stonecoat mother and Dullahan father. They are a Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Onyota'a:ka (Oneida), Two-Spirit artist from London Ontario, and Oneida Nation of the Thames.



Untitled 2019
Ribbon, stainless steel
50.8 x 50.8 cm



Artist Statement

Through the eroticism of the self and their own body, and the fetishizing of the western methods of display, and object/artifact, Hoax introduces a critique of the western art institution and acknowledges the settler states fascination with indigenous craft/art.

They explore ideas of sex and ceremony, voyeurism and survival, self-sexualization and self-expression, self-preservation and self-perversion.

Gesig Isaac



Gesig Isaac is a 29-year-old Queer, Mi'gmaq, and multidisciplinary artist. She has attended Penland School of Craft in North Carolina, and has participated in Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity residencies in 2018: 'Outdoor School,' and 'Urban Moose Hide Tanning Residency.' Gesig's practice explores themes of ecology, Indigenous language retention and land-based knowledge. These themes take form within a material-based practice centered on basket weaving, textiles, hide tanning, and on occasion, jewelry and silversmithing.



Bronze Basket Ring 2019
Bronze, sterling silver
2.4 x 5.4 x 2.7 cm



Artist Statement

For her piece, she has combined her formal silversmith training with traditional Mi'gmaq black ash basket weaving, from her community mentorship driven learning experiences.

The bronze basket piece featured in this ring was first woven by the artist and then cast during the 'Outdoor School' Residency in the summer of 2018.

The ring itself was then constructed in Kjipuktuk (Halifax), Nova Scotia, this past spring 2019. Her work looks to progress the conversation on what Indigenous visibility looks and feels like today.

Flora May

Flora's work is largely based around the Southern Inuit style of NunatuKavut, where she calls home. As an artist and educator, Flora aims to produce work while creating a safe and contemporary space for Indigenous youth to create and enjoy art. She is a textile artist and currently resides in K'ijipuktuk, NS.



Sprouting Grass Moon 2019
Embroidery on cotton
47.0 x 47.0 cm

Artist Statement

Named after the fourth full moon of the year, April's Sprouting Grass Moon, this piece is a celebration of the plants which sustain us through the intemperate twilight season and into spring. The hand-quilted piece re-imagines the medicine bag; how we carry our plants and the stories that accompany them into our lives. Bearberries and Labrador Tea are featured on the textile, which can be worn around the neck or tied into a small bag, in order to serve as a wearable expression of the spirit.



Natasha Root

Natasha Root is a 29-year-old Mixed Media artist born and raised in Listuguj, Quebec. She moved to Halifax to focus on combining her Indigenous style of art that reflects on modern-day society. Her self-taught artwork is especially focused on Indigenous Tattoo designs. She creates work for clients across Canada as a freelance artist.



Untitled 2019
Acrylic on canvas
41.0 x 50.7 cm



Artist Statement

Root's canvas painting was inspired by Jordan Bennett's multiple basket displays in *Ketu'elmita'jik* and the colours she used are similar to the tones that he chose for the paintings he created on the walls of the Gallery space. The painting has been created using 3 colors from her acrylic selection, taking inspiration from the traditional symbols and motifs used in Bennett's work.

Arielle Twist

Arielle Twist is a Nehiyaw, Two-Spirit, Trans Woman who creates to reclaim and harness ancestral magic and memories. Originally from George Gordon First Nation, Saskatchewan, she is now based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia. She is an author and multidisciplinary artist. Within her short career, she has attended a residency at Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity, has work published with Them, Canadian Art, The Fiddlehead, PRISM International, This Magazine, and CBC Art, and has been Nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Shortlisted in The National Magazine Awards, both in 2019. *Disintegrate/Dissociate* is her first collection of poetry.



Astam 2019
Digital photo on satin-print paper
35.4 × 60.9 cm

Killa Atencio, Jordan Bennett,
Aiden Gillis, Gesig Isaac,
and Flora May

Untitled (Collaboration) 2019
Mixed Media on denim
67.7 x 49.0 cm



Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
artgalleryofnovascotia.ca

