

Unholding

November 19, 2017 – January 21, 2018

This has become mine, this unholding. Whereas, with or without the setup, I can see the dish being served. Whereas let us bow our heads in prayer now, just enough to eat;

– Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS* (Graywolf Press, 2017)

Artists of Indigenous heritage have, for many decades in New York City, developed their practices in self-initiated contexts while endeavoring to extend the reach and visibility of their work to broader publics. Even as progressive art discourse celebrated an emergent multicultural outlook in the late 1980s, narratives around Native American art, culture, and experience remained simplified. Inspired by curator and artist Lloyd Oxendine's American Art Gallery, founded in SoHo in the early 1970s, institutions such as the American Indian Community House (AICH) and American Indian Artists Inc. (AMERINDA) opened urban spaces for Indigenous representation which thrived outside of conventional value systems. Cultural and operational experimentation abounded and the roles of artist, curator, historian and activist were regularly blurred: G. Peter Jemison, whose early paintings were exhibited by Oxendine, served as the first gallery director of the AICH, while Jolene Rickard, whose photographs complicate separations between Native and American iconographies, is an acclaimed curator and a leading scholar in Indigenous visual history.

Two exhibitions organized by Jean Fisher and Jimmie Durham in the 1980s notably brought this work into dialogue with institutional and academic contexts: *Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka (We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose)* at SUNY Old Westbury's Amelie A. Wallace Gallery in 1986, and *We the People* at Artists Space in 1987. These exhibitions presented a generation of artists to a wide audience and scrutinized the

hegemonic white American gaze by addressing questions of inclusion, framing, containment, and viewership. Artworks such as Pena Bonita's photomontage series of a car stalled on a reservation road pierced the buoyant postmodern image with a wry political realism. Kay WalkingStick initiated the powerful double visions of her diptychs to complicate how iconography and materiality commingle in landscape painting. Curator and writer Candice Hopkins has noted that, "foregrounding Native artists' voices rescued their aesthetic legacy from the clutches of modernism, rife as it was with misinterpretation, unequal power relations, and exoticism, and firmly positioned them within the contemporary."¹ So too, these artists questioned some of the implicit settler colonial assumptions in the contemporary, such as in Alan Michelson's interrogations of linear temporality and the naturalization of economic growth, and carved critical spaces of aesthetic sovereignty.

Constructing ties between this history and the present, recently produced works such as poet Layli Long Soldier's *WHEREAS* (Graywolf Press, 2017) and Adam and Zack Khalil's *INAATE/SE/ [it shines a certain way. to a certain place./it ies. falls./]* (2016) offer profound reckonings with cultural mythology and treaty while deeply experimenting with artistic form. For younger artists such as these, a sense of dexterous porosity and shapeshifting often propels their work, and many are active outside the traditional mediums of visual art, working in film, sound, performance, and text. Self-organization may take the form of applied corporate entities (Native Art Department International), vehement collaboration (Laura Ortman), and close engagement with one's own artistic networks (Demian DinéYazhi' and others). In each case, the Indigenous voice is more than foregrounded, but defines the context and conditions of its presence.

Unholding is accompanied by a print publication that includes commissioned texts by Candice Hopkins and Christopher Green, alongside a reprint of an essay by Jean Fisher. Judith Barry and Ken Saylor contribute a graphic and a web-based project that revisits their collaboration with Jean Fisher on the design for the exhibition *We the People*.

1 Candice Hopkins, "We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (Summer 2017), 39.

Artists Space recognizes the rich tapestry of Indigenous activity occurring in New York City. Among concurrent events that involve participants in *Unholding*, on November 15, Adam and Zack Khalil and Jackson Polys present in *Culture Capture: A Screening of The Violence of a Civilization Without Secrets* at The James Gallery. On November 18, Alan Michelson and Jackson Polys host the third colloquium in the Vera List Center's *Indigenous New York* program at the New School, where *Maria Thereza Alves, Seeds of Change: New York—A Botany of Colonization* is on view from November 3 – 27. *Transformer: Native Art in Light and Sound*, curated by Kathleen Ash-Milby and David Garneau, is on view at the National Museum of the American Indian from November 10, 2017 – January 6, 2019. Maria Hupfield's work is included in the exhibition *Studio Views: Craft in the Expanded Field at Museum of Arts and Design* from October 24 – December 17. This will be expanded into a public performance staged by Hupfield in *DoublePlus*, a shared program with Dr. Mique'l Dangle and Mike Dangeli curated by Emily Johnson at Gibney Dance from December 7 – 9.

Artists Space acknowledges its location on Indigenous land.

Out of These Remains

Candice Hopkins

In 2012 Brian Jungen and Duane Linklater made a silent film. Much of the film focusses on the two of them walking. It is silent, perhaps because not many words were shared, or because the words shared were not meant to find our ears. They navigate rolling hills with tall prairie grass, swampy muskeg with skinny spruce; they walk atop the small round rocks of creek beds and along the sides of gravel roads. As they walk, they have rifles slung across their backs, yet they don't walk in a threatening way, but deliberately, earnestly. This is a film about land and the inherent rights to that land. They are walking in a territory known as Treaty 8. (One of the "numbered treaties," these represent agreements made between two sovereign nations, in this case between Native peoples and representatives of the Crown. Canada still pledges allegiance to its figurehead of the British monarchy.) Only toward the end of the film is it revealed why there is all this walking. They spot a moose at dusk, its eyes glinting. They fire off a shot but miss. A short time later, in another part of the territory, they get their moose. They cut the meat, cleanly. All that is left in the end is the hide, which they roll up like a blanket. Later, even this will be smoke tanned, good material to make moccasins and warm winter mitts. The film is titled *Modest Livelihood*. This is the meager living described in the treaties.

Grass figures like a character in a different prairie, too. Years of treaty violations created a hostile environment in Minnesota in the mid-1800s. These were desperate times, yet Andrew Myrick—a trader at the Lower Sioux Agency—refused to extend the Indians credit. They were starving. "Let them eat grass," he said. Layli Long Soldier details how, in the resistance named by others as the "Sioux Uprising," Myrick was among the first killed. When they found his body his mouth was stuffed with grass. She writes:

I am inclined to call this act by the Dakota warriors a poem.

There's irony in their poem.

There was no text.¹

This wordless action reveals something about oral traditions, how history lives through metaphor and through story. Poetry, all. For Myrick's death and other crimes attributed to the uprising, on December 26, 1862, thirty-eight Dakota men were hanged. It remains the largest mass execution in US history.

When the filmmakers, the Khalil brothers, speak about oral tradition, they use it as a means to shape the future. "The prophecy," they explain, "serves as both a record of the past, and a foretelling of the future." "It is not a fatalistic prophecy but one which presents multiple forks in the path of the Ojibway people and seeks to guide us along productive lines."² They speak of the Prophecy of the Seven Fires, a basis for their film *INAATE/SE/ [it shines a certain way. to a certain place. /it flies. falls./]* (2016). They also speak of knowing their culture through its fragments. Parts of words, pieces of phrases. Their films are not a reckoning with the past, rather they are a way to forge ahead, to envision another future from these shards, out of these remains. They say that this is not about authenticating ourselves through the past. This is something of a decolonial act, to find agency in those surviving parts, those fragments of language that are not a deficit. Their video, *The Violence of a Civilization Without Secrets* (2017), documents our belongings that are held in museums, in a kind of stasis. There is violence in this accumulation, a demonstration of power as well. With these "objects" the museum holders and scientists are busy writing new histories with alternative facts. One of the most disturbing is the discovery of a 9000-year-old skull that forensic scientists erroneously believed to have distinctly European features. Nationalists took this as an opportunity to lay a claim for their "rightful" ownership of the Americas, an opportunity to lay stronger foundations and propagate deeper roots. Local Native people called for

1 Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS: Poems*, Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2017.

2 Giampaolo Bianconi, "Native Videographers Shoot Back": An Interview with Adam and Zack Khalil, The Museum of Modern Art, February 29, 2016. Online: https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2016/02/29/native-videographers-shoot-back-an-interview-with-adam-and-zack-khalil/.

immediate reburial of the bones, their ancestor needed this respect. This is but one example of the shift that happens when something is seen as a resource, be it bones, or land, especially land.

When thinking of Standing Rock, I always think of the land. The gently sloped hills along the river, the tents and later trailers, yurts and hogans, clustered together with well-worn paths between. People—naming themselves the Water Protectors—said that they felt called to this place. Thousands gathered. Some said it felt like another future, the mass gathering of Indigenous nations and allies to think about how we can do things differently, to understand the need to protect the water and the land as urgent, immediate. Standing Rock exposed the complicity of law enforcement, corporations, and the government to the highest level. This was a threat. The Water Protectors realized that one way to effectively corrupt the pipeline was to stop the flow of money. They did this by asking banks to divest. They were successful in Norway, but first they tried in the little town of Bismarck, North Dakota. Setting up the appointment was easy enough, but when they turned up to meet with the bank manager, they were met by police. Standing Rock sparked something, their tenacity grew into a collective voice of resistance, one that the nation could no longer ignore. Many years ago I remember the writer Paul Chaat Smith remarking that “we had never made it above the fold” of any major paper like *The New York Times*. By “we” he meant us Natives. At the time I accepted it as status quo, but Standing Rock changed all of that. All of a sudden, even in New York, people were pausing, realizing we had been here all along.

When *We the People* opened at Artists Space, it didn’t make that much of a ripple in the mainstream art world. Jean Fisher, co-curator of the exhibition, recalled that while thousands saw it, Lucy Lippard was one of the few to review it. I asked Lippard about it this past summer, curious to see what she recalled. She remembered pitching a review of the show to *The New York Times*. It was flatly refused. The editor remarking something along the lines of “Indians!? Why would we cover that?” Well below the fold.

Unholding marks thirty years since the opening of *We the People*. It’s telling that a lot of what is on view is not on view in the conventional sense. There are interventions, taking the form of discussions, video

screenings, performances—everything in motion. I am reminded of an action still etched in my memory. In Vancouver, British Columbia in a historic hall, built by the Freemasons, where artists have gathered since the early 1970s, there was another gathering. This one was concerned with decolonization and sound. When it was time for her to present, violinist Laura Ortman stood up. She said, “I don’t have any words to share with you, instead I have this.” She walked to the center of the room, placed her violin under her chin, and began to play. Her horsehair bow piercing the strings, sometimes screeching, other times so soft that the tone was almost inaudible, yet each note had the same urgency, communicating where words fail. In that moment, when all the voices were silence, I heard the future. All I had to do is open my ears. I could hear the wind in her home territories in Southern Arizona, where it is so strong that it shapes the rocks into undulating lines and waves like water. She recalls how she first went home shortly before September 11th, 2001, the first time meeting her birth mother. It was as though her music was bringing all of the shards of wounded cultures together, sharp still. Yielded in the right way, these will become our weapons.

See the People

Christopher T. Green

Among the first exhibitions in New York to show contemporary Native American art in a mainstream non-Native gallery, *We the People* introduced innovations in curating Indigenous art to the central contemporary New York art scene when it opened in 1987.¹ A year prior, Jean Fisher had enlisted Jimmie Durham to co-curate the exhibition *ᏍᏓᏁᏍᏓᏁᏍᏓ* (*Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka*), typically translated as "We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose," at SUNY Old Westbury.² The exhibition's Cherokee title asserted a presence for Indigenous language and created a space for the six artists who directly challenged the positioning of Native Americans in the American imagination as colonial victims or romantic stereotypes belonging to the past. Against the primitivist thinking that had excluded Indigenous art from modernism, on display in the infamous "*Primitivism*" in *20th Century Art* exhibition at MoMA in 1984, *Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka* was meant to insist, according to Fisher, "that in Native cultures the new and the traditional are always mutually articulated," and that American ideas of "authentic" Native art

1 Candice Hopkins has recently noted that, "The nuanced and generative discussions that these exhibitions sparked on Native contemporary art, politics, and identity are currently being drowned out by renewed calls for Durham to authenticate himself as a Cherokee person." The history of Indigenous curation will have to come to terms with what it means for *We the People* to have been organized by an artist whose claims to Cherokee heritage have been deeply troubled by scholars and activists from the three Cherokee tribes, whose sovereignty to name their own members and leaders and claim that Durham is not Cherokee cannot be dismissed. Candice Hopkins, "We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (Summer 2017), 41.

2 Cherokee artist and language preservationist Roy Boner Jr. has asserted that the title "makes no sense as a complete Cherokee word," and that, due to misspellings of the phonetic transliteration, "At best, it could potentially be parsed as 'turning good.'" Roy Boner Jr., "Not Jimmie Durham's Cherokee," *First American Art Magazine* no. 16 (Fall 2017), 85-86.

failed to account for the dynamism of Native culture.³

Failing to find a New York venue for this exhibition, Fisher and Durham dismantled it and put together *We the People* for Artists Space with a greatly expanded roster of artists from across the US. Its title references the beginning of the US Constitution, which celebrated its bicentenary in 1987, its words appropriated from the Haudenosaunee Six Nations. Reflecting that the names of most Indigenous peoples for themselves translate as “the people,” the catalogue cover design carried a list of many Anglicized Indigenous names. Its theme, summed up as “Native Americans looking at white America looking at them,” was described by Fisher as aiming not to provide white audiences with revelations about who Native Americans really are, but rather to address “how white culture perceives, and is perceived, by ‘Indians.’”⁴

It is tempting to say that *We the People* set the stage for Indigenous art in New York, but that would not quite be fair to history. The 1931 *Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts* at the Grand Central Galleries featured recent Pueblo paintings, and the 1941 exhibition *Indian Art of the United States* at MoMA proved that New Yorkers had a thing for Native American art. It also wasn't the first show of contemporary Native art, not by a decade. Lloyd Oxendine opened the American Art Gallery sometime between 1970 and 1972 in SoHo at 133 Wooster Street, on the same block as Artists Space at 155 Wooster. This holds the distinction of being the first contemporary art gallery dedicated to Native American art in New York, and Oxendine's 1972 *Art in America* article “23 Contemporary Indian Artists” was one of the first surveys of modern Native American art in print.⁵ Along with the American Indian Community House's long-running gallery and many other commercial gallery exhibitions of Indigenous artists, *We the People* comes rather late in the history of what has been identified as the Contemporary Native American Art Movement.⁶ Really it set the stage for a certain kind of contemporary Indigenous art, legible in

3 Jean Fisher, “We the People: Notes on Curating Contemporary American Indian Art in the 1980s.” Online: <http://www.jeanfisher.com/we-the-people-notes-on-curating-contemporary-american-indian-art-in-the-1980s/>.

4 Jimmie Durham, Jean Fisher and Paul Smith, *We the People*, exh. cat., New York: Artists Space, 1987, 8-9.

5 Lloyd Oxendine, “23 Contemporary Indian Artists,” *Art in America*, July-August 1972, 58-67.

6 David Bunn Martine, *No Reservation: New York Contemporary Art Movement*, New York: AMERINDA, 2017.

the postmodern moment of the New York art scene, which problematized the white male master-narrative and threw the constructed image back at the white gaze in pieces. The “primitive” artists were looking back at the white audience looking at them, and mostly laughing about it.

We the People opened the door to the mainstream, and articulated a space in which, it would turn out, only a few of the exhibited artists would find staying power. When the exhibition is closely examined it is clear that, like any group show, there were deep contradictions between the artists and works on display that deserve close attention. The participating artists had disparate ideals and aesthetics and were united by the promise of wider recognition and visibility in a space that could present contemporary Indigenous voices while being limited in its capability to address sociopolitical realities beyond the symbolic realm.

When recently describing why she first wanted to go to New York, Cherokee painter Kay WalkingStick said “I wanted to become part of it. I wanted to open doors for young Native artists...All these people were showing important art, meaningful art – it wasn’t all feathers and beads. So I tried to show my art.”⁷ One of the more established artists in *We the People*, she was less concerned with the questions of identity than she was with the American modernist tradition of painting. The paintings she showed in 1987, including *The Yucatan* (1987), were some of her first in the diptych format she has become best known for, with one abstract impasto panel featuring geometric shapes while the second depicts an impressionistic landscape. While critics have typically read these diptychs as representative of her biracial identity, the contrasting panels are less about an “Indian” side and a “white” side than they are about WalkingStick’s interests in attempting to unite the physical and spiritual through the juxtaposition of difference.⁸ Certainly the abstract and landscape panels of *David’s Pond* (1987) seem less about difference than the similarities that echo across the sides; the blue and yellow of the left panel’s linear incisions carry across into the pond’s reflections on the right, the shape of which is in turn reflected in the abstract panel’s floating brown oval. A similar effect occurs in *The Golden Gunnison*

7 Kay WalkingStick, address to the Native American Art Studies Association 2017 Biennial Conference, Tulsa, OK, October 28, 2017.

8 David W. Penney, “Stereo View: Kay WalkingStick’s Diptychs,” in Kathleen Ash-Milby and David W. Penney, eds. *Kay WalkingStick: an American Artist*, Washington, DC: National Museum of the American Indian, 2015.

(1987), a diptych illustrated in the '87 catalogue, in which the bend of the Gunnison River is mimicked by two modulated arcs, the landscape mirrored in the geometric abstraction.

WalkingStick's diptychs do not explicitly engage the gaze that concerned Fisher and Durham. Alan Michelson's installation for *We the People*, on the other hand, was a crucial element for the exhibition designers Judith Barry and Ken Saylor, who wrote that it encapsulated "so many ideas central to [Native American] experience of white America (archeology, landscape, colonization, folk art, etc.) while at the same time working well with the existing/inherent architecture of ARTISTS SPACE."⁹ The installation of *Up-Biblum God* (1987) in a small dark room made use of dramatic spot lighting set to illuminate mounds of earth placed in the gallery and embedded with glowing bottles and orbs, a crucifix, a hanging shredded bible, a thickly painted trade blanket, and a carved yolk, amongst other items. The installation, named after the Elliot Indian Bible, the first bible printed in British North America in the Narraganset language, upset the white cube display before leading the spectator into the larger gallery, which was arranged to mimic an ethnographic museum display with vitrines in the center holding Durham's well known artifacts from *On Loan from "The Museum of the American Indian"* (1986). This design worked with Fisher and Durham's aspiration to offer "a deconstruction of the colonial 'ethnographic gaze.'"¹⁰ Though Michelson, one of the youngest artists in the exhibition, was living in Boston at the time, his installation was a precursor to the site-specific work he would create in the early 1990s as a response to the hidden histories of Manahatta. His 1992 *John Jacob Astor and Native Americans*, a contribution to REPOhistory's Lower Manhattan Sign Project, marked the Pine Street headquarters of Astor's fur-trading empire with a sign that included the slogans "OUR BLANKETS FOR YOUR BEAVER" and "OUR WHISKEY FOR YOUR SANITY," addressing the questionable trading practices that were precursors of modern capital markets. *Permanent Title* (1993) further investigates the amnesia of colonial New York by taking charcoal rubbings of contemporary surfaces in the city that stand atop former settler burial grounds. The rubbings, done on waxed muslin bags that reference the cerecloth shrouds used in burial practices of the

9 Ken Saylor and Judith Barry, "Description of the Exhibition Design for 'WE THE PEOPLE,'" October 21, 1987. Artists Space Archive, Box 25, Folder 1, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University.

10 Fisher, "Notes on Curating."

eighteenth century, index the settler mentality in which nothing is sacred except for the demands of mercantilism and real estate, a detachment from place and ancestors.

G. Peter Jemison was the director of the American Indian Community House Gallery from 1978-85 and moved the gallery to its SoHo location on West Broadway. By the time of *We the People*, he had left the gallery to become the manager of Ganondagan State Historic Site, an upstate historic Seneca village that was a major shift from the downtown art scene. In the *Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka* catalogue he is quoted as saying. "As American Indian artists, we are not fully evolved. We are still coming to terms with all the daily contradictions of our lives."¹¹ His paper bag series, begun in 1980, seems to evoke those contradictions. The brown paper bags, a quintessentially New York material, were combined with influences from Native cultures, such as Seneca beaded bags, Lakota parfleche containers, and Cree birchbark boxes, in sculptural creations that juxtapose multiple images around the four sides of the bag for unexpected connections.¹² Some depict flowers that evoke beadwork or, as in *Cattaraugus Coho* (1985), fish that Jemison took to concern Seneca aspects of his life, such as smoked trout and walks in the woods. Other bags are explicitly political, such as *An International Lie* (1987) in which images of Haudenosaunee men under the titular words are juxtaposed with the adjacent image of Oliver North swearing into his Iran-Contra hearing. Like his acrylic painting *All Indians, Don't Live West of the Mississippi* (1987), in which "All Indian" is stenciled on the left side of a map of America across the Mississippi from a black-and-white checkerboard covering the Eastern United States, *An International Lie* targets the ignorance of most Americans of living Native peoples. The insertion of a contemporary political event acknowledges that yes, Natives watch the same news as everyone else, but the work also suggests that the much earlier international lie was the failure of the United States to uphold nation-to-nation treaties it signed with many tribes.

At the time of *We the People*, Jolene Rickard and Pena Bonita were both members of the Native Indian Inuit Photographers Association,

11 Jean Fisher and Jimmie Durham, *Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka*, exh. cat., Old Westbury: Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, 1986.

12 Lawrence Abbott, "G. Peter Jemison," in *I Stand in the Center of the Good: Interviews with Contemporary Native American Artists*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska press, 1994, 88.

established in 1985. This group, unlike other artists in *We the People*, was not interested in being recognized as artists first and Natives second. As Rickard describes, both were equally valid and important in the groups' practices. Rickard has become best known over the past three decades for her critical writing and her conception of visual sovereignty, but her photographic work instantiates the praxis that her writing is founded on. Influenced by calls to international bodies for the recognition of the Haudenosaunee as a sovereign nation, she inherited from her family an understanding that sovereignty is a form of direct action and took it into her practice in the mid-1980s. It is a sovereignty likewise based on a specific cultural location, and tied to art and tradition. As Rickard writes, if local "philosophies or traditions are not understood, the artwork is typically narrowly confined to thin interpretation based on old-fashioned identity politics" – the kind of identity politics the organizers of *We the People* otherwise seemed more interested in.¹³ Her *Self-Portrait- 3 Sisters* (1988) can thus not be understood without an understanding of the Haudenosaunee epistemologies and ways of life expressed in the relationship of companion cropping, resource management, and cosmologies that exist outside of settler frameworks. *Leadership* (1987), a photo of a deer antler, refers not just to the Gustoweh headdresses of Haudenosaunee leaders, but also to the identities of individual nations and the role of the Clan Mothers who may symbolically remove the antlers of a chief not living up to his responsibilities, thus "dehorning" him of his authority, an internal political sovereignty. Considering Indigenous art without understanding the nuances of sovereignty, according to Rickard, is a significant omission.

Bonita's photo collage *Stalled* (1987-) is an ongoing series that uses an image of an Indigenous man looking under the hood of an old car stalled in the middle of the South Dakota Badlands on the way to the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Bonita found humor in the familiar Rez situation, and through her series she has overpainted the image with dollar bills, slogans, and frames that present the scene anew in many different configurations. The specificity of Rez life is revealed in but also obscured by Bonita's additions, and the grid of nearly a hundred modified versions of the photo displayed in *We the People* overwhelms the specificity of place with its serial reproduction. When Bonita arrived in New York in

13 Jolene Rickard, "Diversifying Sovereignty and the Reception of Indigenous Art," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (Summer 2017), 81-84.

1973, she attended Hunter College, where her professors asked her “How are we supposed to know what your art is about? It’s too Indian.”¹⁴ Her photos of New York street scenes, such as *Youngest Trapper on 7th St.* (n.d.), in which a young boy sets a box trap on a city sidewalk, lay aside the constraints of rural stereotypes and depict urban Indian life with playful nuance that Bonita’s professors would not have been able to recognize.

Artists Space opened its doors to contemporary Native American art. What kind of space resulted? Was it a sovereign space for these artists, designed and curated by predominantly non-Native organizers? Can such a variety of art and contradictory concerns possibly make such a space sovereign? There is a specter of a politics of recognition in the idea that merely granting access to Indigenous artists is in and of itself a noteworthy accomplishment, for one must ask on whose terms the recognition of Native American art as “contemporary” occurred (the answer is, of course, the white mainstream’s).¹⁵ The artists in *We the People* did not represent a cohesive sense of contemporary Native art or politics beyond their assertion of presence and demands to be seen. Edgar Heap of Birds, an advisor to Durham and Fisher, withdrew from participating in the exhibition because he wanted it to focus on socio-political issues facing Indian Territory in Oklahoma at the time, specifically the protests against official celebrations of the centennial of the 1889 Oklahoma Land Rush. His 1989 work *Apartheid Oklahoma* would take up this cause, but Durham and Fisher thought this was too “geographically distant” for the New York crowd. It likely also had to do with their goal

14 Phoebe Harris, “A Talk with Pena Bonita,” *American Indian Magazine* 16, no. 4 (Winter 2015).

15 The “politics of recognition” is a model for a recognition-based approach to liberal pluralism, commonly attributed to Charles Taylor, that argues for the recognition of distinctive cultural traditions and identities within liberal society. Recent postcolonial theorists, including Richard Day and Glen Coulthard, have pointed out that such a model now seeks to reconcile Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler state sovereignty through the accommodations of Indigenous identity claims in a renewed legal and political relationship with the colonial state. However, Coulthard argues, the configurations of colonialist state power are now reproduced through such conciliatory practices that emphasize recognition and accommodation. I would suggest that in the case of fine art, the recognition of Indigenous cultural production as “contemporary art” likewise enters it into a category that reproduces such configurations and is deeply colonial in its foundation. See Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Guttmann, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994; Richard J. F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000; Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

to reframe Indigenous art as present and contemporary against the dominant stereotypes of rural and land-based culture, without realizing that the two were not mutually exclusive. Heap of Birds argued for the recognition of contemporary political action, the kind of direct action that Rickard identifies as central to her conception of sovereignty, and one, in the wake of Standing Rock, that none today would deny. This tension between politics of the symbolic realm and land-based activism mirrors the tension between strategic essentialism and the desire to exist outside of identity-based politics facing Indigenous artists today (or, as Rickard calls it, “individual fancy” versus “survival of tribal thinking”). Both were already present in *We the People*, if not legible to audiences revving the engines for debates over identity politics in art in the next half-decade.

I asked Alan Michelson, one of the few artists still active in New York, how he thought *We the People* stood up, three decades later. He offered the poem below in response.

Tomahawk

When We the People
Invited Brie the People
to See the People
They saw
He the People
now and then
She the People
We say time to
See the People
Cree the People
Koori the People
Metis the People
Maori the People
See and be seen.

We the People: Notes on Curating Contemporary American Indian Art in the 1980s

Jean Fisher

During the 1980s, the artist, poet and political activist Jimmie Durham and I co-curated two group exhibitions of contemporary art by American Indian artists: *Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka (We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose)* at the Amelie A Wallace Gallery, SUNY Old Westbury, Long Island, 1986, and *We the People* at Artists Space, New York, 1987.¹ The special advisors for both exhibitions were Edgar Heap of Birds and G. Peter Jemison. The entire curatorial project was an attempt to foreground contemporary Native artists' voices, by opportunistically making use of those pathways into mainstream institutions to which I, by chance, had access as a British art critic then affiliated to *Artforum International*. Our aim was to present a body of artistic practices that used a range of aesthetic strategies to speak to contemporary Native sociopolitical realities. In other words, to foreground the emergence of artistic practices that had grown out of the Civil Rights and American Indian Movements and which rejected an earlier imposition on Native artists to sentimentalize an idealized past or to cling to a victimry narrative, both of which were unthreatening to white liberal collectors, and were thus inadequate in shifting entrenched negative attitudes towards Native peoples, as Durham's essays often pointed out.

My own engagement was prompted by complete shock at the condition of reservation life that I had witnessed during a camping trip across Montana in 1980: a fourth world of poverty and social alienation that, in my ignorance, I had not realized existed in the USA. This was later to be confirmed during a second trip through New Mexico and discussions with the late Tewa social anthropologist, Professor Alfonso Ortiz. As a consequence I began to research settler-American Indian colonial history,

1 © 2013 by Jean Fisher. Reprinted with permission.

which had some parallels with the English colonization and settlement of Ireland with which I was already familiar.

By the mid-1980s, postcolonial theory had begun to filter into general consciousness, largely prompted by the writings of Edward W Said and Frantz Fanon, which provided a discursive ground upon which to develop some thoughts on socio-political art practices. As an artist I was primarily concerned with the politics and ethics of art, but traced through an emancipatory politics rather than the identity politics that began to dominate the New York art world during the latter part of the 1980s. In the 1970s, Durham had returned from art school in Switzerland to join the American Indian Movement,² and was well versed in anti-colonial criticism: he had worked with many American Indian, African American and Caribbean writers and activists, was Founding Director of the International Indian Treaty Council and its representative at the United Nations, and had extended his activism through writing.³ In New York City he was also active as a performance artist, but unfortunately I had no direct experience of this aspect of his practice, although the art critic Lucy Lippard most certainly did.

But, in the mid-1980s, from a curatorial perspective, we were largely working with few precedents in the mainstream art system. The New York City art scene, preoccupied with postmodern theory, was transiting from appropriation to Neo-Geo, which seemed like the end-game – or better, death-knell – of American art's international hegemony in terms of critical authority, although this was not reflected in the commercial market. Nonetheless, there was as yet little critical discourse on the marginalization of non-Euro-Americans in the mainstream art world of New York, and silence on American Indian artists. The debates had to be invented, which – notably through the efforts of African American artists Fred Wilson and Howardena Pindell, and Cuban-American artist Coco Fusco amongst other outspoken critics in New York City – initially meant

2 A member of the Cherokee Wolf Clan, during the 1970s, Durham had been a member of AIM's Central Council. At the time I approached him with the curating project he was engaged with what I believe was his last supporting advocacy: an appeal to Congress by the Women of All Red Nations for Native water rights – the Corps of Engineers had been diverting water from the Missouri Basin to major cities, leaving the rural Native people with little or no potable water. The dismal fact is that this appeal failed.

3 During the 1970s Durham published several essays in Treaty Council News and, during the 1980s, in *Art and Artists*, the publication of the Foundation for the Community of Artists of which he was for a time Director. *Third Text*/Kala Press was later to publish most of Durham's early writings in the volume *A Certain Lack of Coherence*, 1993.

challenging racist exclusion and stereotyping.⁴ Moreover, the death of Ana Mendieta in 1985 and exoneration of her husband Carl Andre's part in this tragedy polarized the New York art world along ethnic-mainstream lines, and hardened the resolve of "others" to fight for a critical voice.

With respect to Indigenous America, in New York City two ill-conceived exhibitions illustrated the mainstream attachment to colonial thinking. "*Primitivism*" in *20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* at The Museum of Modern Art, 1984, failed to address the cultural exchanges of modernism, continuing to present "tribal" arts as unauthored and culturally stagnant. However, the critical debate on the exhibition generated by the critic Thomas McEvilley in *Artforum* between 1984 and '85 indicated that the tide was finally turning against Euro-American intellectual hubris. *Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art, 1965-85* at the American Museum of Natural History (no less!) in 1985 purported to show the "survival" of Native traditions, although these were understood only in terms of ethnographically framed historical material practices. In fact, the most contemporary arts exhibited were beaded sneakers and baseball caps. Moreover, the curators had also persuaded a poor soul to remake ledger book drawings which Native men had made while under military incarceration during the 19th century. Catching a Saturday morning arts program on New York TV, I heard a schoolteacher explaining to her pupils visiting the exhibition that "this was what the Indians made when they lived on our land," which summed up the general attitude to Native American arts. Modernism, it seemed, was absent from Native traditions. These gross distortions of the realities and dynamics of Native cultures were what Durham wanted to address in our exhibitions.

Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka (We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose)

Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka was made possible because an obligation to stage exhibitions was attached to my teaching job at SUNY Old Westbury. I proposed a contemporary American Indian show because I had seen

⁴ In 1979 Artists Space had come under intense criticism for not censoring *The Nigger Drawings*, an exhibition of abstract charcoal drawings by Donald, whose title overstepped the line of freedom of artistic expression. This focused attention on the racism of the New York City art world. It was not until I returned to the UK in the late 1980s that I encountered parallel postcolonial critiques by British Black and Asian artists, who had also turned to curating their own exhibitions.

some critical, conceptually-oriented work in marginal New York galleries (notably, American Indian Community House Gallery on West Broadway, curated by G. Peter Jemison, and Joe Overstreet's Kenkeleba House Gallery in the Bowery), and this work undermined the premises of *Lost and Found Traditions*, notably in their interpretation of what "traditions" mean in American Indian world views.

However, I insisted I could only do the exhibition if it were co-curated with an American Indian scholar. Serendipitously, my boss at SUNY was the artist Luis Camnitzer, a political exile from Uruguay, who knew Jimmie Durham well. Durham agreed to help me if I helped him with some publicity he was doing for the Women of All Red Nations, who were lobbying Congress over Native water rights. This effort failed: as Durham said, Indians were no longer a fashionable cause – so we decided to try to promote socio-political issues through exhibitions in mainstream art institutions.⁵

The title of the SUNY exhibition was meant to insist that in Native cultures the new and the traditional are always mutually articulated, so what white America promoted as "authentic" Native art based in 19th century models (already the result of intercultural trade) was a gross stereotypical and colonial misreading of the traditional dynamism of Native cultures and their openness to the adoption of new ideas and technologies – there was no reason why a video, for instance, should any less reflect indigenous cultural values and narratives than a wampum belt or winter count painting.

Our strategy was to choose just six artists each with several pieces of work. Jimmie selected the artists with advisory input from G. Peter Jemison and Edgar Heap of Birds (who was then associated with Group Material, amongst other artist collectives). The artists selected were: Jimmie (Cherokee) with the satirical installation, *On Loan from the Museum of the American Indian*; Peter (Seneca/Cattaraugus), exhibiting a selection of his painted brown paper bags; Edgar (Cheyenne/Arapaho),

5 We subsequently got a modest foothold in *Artforum* and the Whitney Museum's Students' Independent Study Program. However, when I approached the then editor of *Artforum* to publish an article by Jimmie, she said she would accept a text if it was jointly written (she was unaware that he was already a writer). So, we just spliced together two separate texts, published as Jimmie Durham and Jean Fisher, "the ground has been covered," *Artforum*, Summer 1988, 98-105.

exhibiting versions of his painted die-cut letter text works; Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), exhibiting a selection of her black and white photomontages; Richard Ray Whitman (Yuchi/Pawnee), exhibiting a selection of his black and white "Street Chief" series, amongst other photographic works; and Jean LaMarr (Paiute/Pit River), exhibiting a selection of colored etchings and monoprints. As Jimmie and I were hanging an item from the On Loan installation called *Types of Arrows* (labeled "thin – wavy – short and fat"), an elderly man who had wandered into the gallery came and asked, "What did you use wavy arrows for?"

We insisted the college find funding for an illustrated booklet/catalogue as it was important to have a record, which was not common practice at the time for small shows. Each artist was invited to provide translations of Jimmie's Cherokee *Ni' Go Tlunh A Doh Ka* in their own Native language to preface their page in the booklet, but this was not possible in all cases as so much language had been destroyed by forced assimilation policies. There was no funding for a professional photographer, so I took 35mm slides and sent each artist installation views.

This exhibition travelled to North Hall Gallery, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, and, courtesy of Edgar's association, Oklahoma University. Cooper Union agreed to show it, but backed out without any explanation less than one month before opening. We therefore decided to dismantle that show and put together a second one if we could find a central New York venue. After approaching various non-commercial gallerists with little success, Valerie Smith, then curator at Artists Space, and Susan Wyatt, director, agreed to stage the project.⁶

We the People

The exhibition title is the beginning of the US Constitution, formalized on September 17th, 1787. This title was chosen, with deliberate irony, because our exhibition coincided with the bicentenary of the Constitution, and the US had appropriated these words from the Iroquois Federation.

⁶ Another little anecdote: I had proposed to the curators of the Artists Space exhibition, *The Fairy Tale: Politics, Desire and Everyday Life*, 1986, that an obvious candidate for inclusion was Maidu artist Harry Fonseca's painting *Once Upon a Time #1*, 1985, which satirically depicted Coyote Trickster in bed as Grandmother from the Red Riding Hood tale. Artists Space declined to include the painting in the show, but allowed an illustration of it to accompany my essay "Coyote Comes, Laughing" – in fact, it was the only illustration in their booklet.

Moreover, most American Indian Nations' names mean "the people" in their languages. This is why the booklet/catalogue cover design carries a detail of a list of names (from the only comprehensive list I could then find), albeit many are Anglicized.

Durham's initial idea for the new exhibition was that it should not be confined to American Indians; but then it was decided that the issues of Native America were too specific to be diluted with those of non-Indigenous others, despite shared experiences of racism and marginalization.⁷ Durham set the theme of the show as "us looking at them looking at us," so it was not intended as a demonstration of "American Indian" art per se, but as a reflection on how American Indians viewed the way white America represented them – a deconstruction of the colonial "ethnographic gaze." Durham selected the artists from across the US, again with advice from Edgar and Peter, including some artists who had participated in the SUNY Old Westbury show, whilst acknowledging that he did not have a comprehensive view of contemporary Indian artists. One practical fact emerged: not all participants had experience of making work towards a specified conceptual theme – indicative, perhaps, of the extent of their marginalization from "mainstream" art practices at that time? The artists included in the exhibition were: Pena Bonita (Apache/Oklahoma Seminole), Harry Fonseca (Nisenan/Maidu), Marsha Gómez (Choctawa/Chicana), Tom Huff (Seneca-Cayuga), G. Peter Jemison, Jean LaMarr, Alan Michelson (Mohawk), Joe Nevaquaya (Comanche/Yuchi), Jolene Rickard, Susana Santos (Tygh/Yakima/Filipina), Asiba Tupahache (Matinecoc), Kay WalkingStick (Cherokee) and Richard Ray Whitman. A cassette tape by the Taos Pueblo/Creek flautist John Rainer Jr. provided a soundscape. The exhibition included a video program, organized with the collaboration of Dan Walworth and Emilia Seubert from the Museum of the American Indian.⁸ And we had juniper burning at the entrance desk.

There had been a few tense moments. Edgar had suggested that the

7 This "multicultural" concept later formed the basis of the Whitney Biennial of 1993, which, however, received negative reviews from a largely hostile mainstream critical press.

8 The video program consisted of: Arlene Bowman (Navaho), *Navaho Talking Picture*, 1986; Victor Masayesva Jr. (Hopi), *Hopiit*, 1981; Chris Spotted Eagle (Houma?) *Do Indians Shave?*, 1972; Asiba Tupahache, *A Tragedy and a Trial*, 1986; Ute Indian Tribe Audio-Visual, *The Ute Bear Dance Story*, 1986; and Rick Weise (dir.) and Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe – scriptwriter), *Harold of Orange*, 1983.

show should focus on Oklahoma Territory to which many diverse peoples had been ethnically cleansed; but Edgar withdrew from the exhibition when we argued that, despite the fact that at a different time this would be very illuminating, it was too geographically distant to challenge New York's attitudes. It was important to maintain trust between the artists and the gallery at all times. We had to closely monitor all the public briefings that the gallery put out to ensure they properly reflected our intentions. The gallery became anxious when work didn't arrive when expected, and we had to reassure them that it would turn up on time – which, of course, it did. Valerie, however, turned out to be a tremendous help in actually hanging the work.

Alan Michelson wished to present an installation, so was allocated the small dark space. For the organization of the remaining two large gallery rooms we solicited advice from Judith Barry and Ken Saylor who had been working on the politics of exhibition design. The front space was organized in a rectangular format to mimic an ethnographic museum display. Vitrines in the center of the space contained Jimmie's "artifacts" from his installation *On Loan from the Museum of the American Indian* (1986), as well as a new work of sculpted figures displayed on the wall like "trophies," referring to the story of Cynthia Parker. However, contrary to the traditional ethnographic documentary content, the viewer was confronted with drawings, photographic and text-based panels by Richard Ray, Joe, Pena and Asiba, which referred, often ironically, to racism, Indian stereotyping and the realities of American Indian life. We accompanied Asiba's text-based statement with as many examples of commercial packaging that appropriated American Indian figures or imagery as we could find.

The work in the far space projected a more colorful and exuberant tone to suggest *living* culture and to undermine the "white cube." It was dominated by Jean LaMarr's mural.⁹ The mural was complemented by acrylic diptychs by Kay; oil paintings by Susana; Peter's painted paper bags on little shelves, and two large "coyote" paintings by Harry. Tom and Marsha's sculptures were arranged on pedestals in semi-circles to invoke the Native concept of a circular and relational world. Despite objections, we had the pedestals painted an earth red, the closest we could find to

⁹ Jean had wanted to gather local schoolchildren to paint it, as was her custom back home, but this wasn't possible to organize, so we solicited volunteers from the Whitney Students' Independent Study Program.

the color of pipestone, which may have been too obvious, but we needed to get rid of their dead whiteness and the color worked aesthetically with Jean's favorite color, violet, which was heavily featured in the mural.

As with the SUNY exhibition, we insisted that there should be a booklet/catalogue. This contained an introduction by me ("Guidelines"), an essay by Jimmie, "Savage Attacks on White Women, as Usual," an essay by Paul Chaat Smith, "Anadarko Calling," and an introduction to the video program by Emelia Seubert. It was my decision to stamp a skewed version of the Bureau of Indian Affairs bison seal on the back of the booklet, but confess this was irony taken a step too far.

Despite the fact that the exhibition was massively attended by the public, I know of only two reviews – by Lucy Lippard in the *Art Paper*, and by a critic in the English art magazine *Art Monthly*, who, I suspected, hadn't actually seen the exhibition as there was no mention of Jean's very prominent mural. On the other hand, curators travelled from Canada to Artists Space and selected some of the artists for their exhibition *Re-visions* at the Banff Centre, 1988. *Re-visions* was a riposte to *The Spirit Sings*, 1988, yet another blockbuster exhibition of ethnographically-oriented perspectives on American Indian/First Nations art and culture designed to coincide with the Winter Olympics. However, with breathtaking cynicism, *The Spirit Sings* was sponsored by Shell Oil, the corporation responsible for land grab, pollution and cultural devastation of the Lubicon Lake Cree in the territory.¹⁰

The Next Phase

Having established a precedent for mainstream group exhibitions of American Indian contemporary art, the next phase of our project was to persuade mainstream gallerists to stage *individual* Native artists' exhibitions. The two logical artists with whom to begin were Jimmie and Edgar. We also needed to expand into an international dimension, so I turned to the UK and sent documentation on their work to three gallerists whom I thought could be interested: Robin Klassnik at Matt's Gallery, London, Declan McGonagle at the Orchard Gallery, Derry, and Mark Francis at The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh. Both Robin and Declan

¹⁰ For a summary of this situation, see Fisher, "The Health of the People is the Highest Law," *Revisions*, 1988; republished in *Third Text*, No 2, Winter 87/88, and *Vampire in the Text*, 2003.

agreed unreservedly: Robin was always willing to take risks with unknown artists, and Declan immediately understood the parallels between American Indian and Irish colonial struggles. These individual shows took place during 1988. In Derry, both Edgar and Jimmie responded to the fraught political situation in the city. Edgar's billboard in the Bogside, with the inscription "Peace Unite Respect/Irish Homelands/No More Kingdoms/No More Kings," alluded to the shared colonial history of Ireland and Native America; whilst Jimmie's carved surveillance video camera atop a faux ceremonial pole pointedly addressed the control and containment experienced by colonized peoples. In Matt's Gallery Edgar chose to present his subtle paintings referring to land and landscape; whilst Jimmie presented an installation based around his research into the historical visits by Native American individuals to England.

Summary

Our exhibitions were staged at a moment just prior to the recognition of "multiculturalism" and the dissemination of postcolonial debates in the mainstream art world. But an overriding question emerged: what were the values and limitations of these debates to the Indigenous context? To clarify this is to enjoin what Loretta Todd (Métis/Cree), more than fifteen years ago, called a "scholarship of our own" whose pathways were of "our own choosing." This is a vital issue but extremely difficult for a non-Native person to decipher. How might Indigenous subjectivity translate into political and artistic agency in the global sphere? In the Indigenous context one cannot speak of the *post*-colonial in any periodized sense of the term. American Indian Nations occupy an experiential and critical terrain that continues to be engaged in *anti*-colonial struggles with a permanent settler society – notably, for juridical recognition of cultural, territorial, political and economic sovereignty – whilst simultaneously grappling with more generalized postcolonial issues of history and representation.¹¹

Thus, if "postcolonial" names a period of critical reflection on the legacy

11 Whilst most "tribes" are *sovereign Nations*, which treated legitimately with the US federal government, a Supreme Court ruling in the case *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* maintained that the "tribes" were "domestic dependant nations" whose relation to the United States was like "that of a ward to his guardian." The case forms part of the "Marshall Trilogy" on American Indian sovereignty, 1823-1832. In effect, it gives the federal government final arbitration in Native affairs, and it has periodically sought to dissolve the sovereign status of various Nations.

of colonization, how far has this served the American Indian context? Among the most widely circulated postcolonial commentaries during the 1990s few addressed Indigenous contexts, so how were they to be negotiated from Indigenous perspectives? Notwithstanding local circumstances, anti-colonial critique and postcolonial theory address rather different concerns. The former sees a world of antagonisms and hierarchical distinctions, and tends to be polarized around a rhetoric of victim and victimizer, exploiter and exploited, inevitably leaning toward cultural essentialism (nationalist or nativist). Aside from the problems of binarism and victimry, which are recognized as unproductive, this rhetoric also elides complex identificatory processes like the psychic ambivalence of desire and dread between self and other so compelling in the postcolonial writings of Homi Bhabha. Postcolonial theory was evolved largely by diasporic intellectuals in the wake of the collapse of militant liberation movements, and sidestepped confrontational divisions in favor of discursive practices that spoke of pluralized identities, border-crossings and cultural hybridity. It was nonetheless criticized for privileging cultural and textual analysis over social, political, and historical realities. It is precisely, then, the pragmatic issue of realities that distanced postcolonial theory from American Indian contexts.

My instinct with respect to all Native cultures of the Americas is to say that cultural “hybridity” is a false face. The peoples may not have originally had horses and carts but in North America they walked, talked and traded across the continent they called Turtle Island, which is exactly as it appears on the map; and throughout the entire Americas the peoples had a rather more sophisticated concept of a relational moral universe, of social cohesion and sustainable agriculture, than Europe. From the moment of first contact with Europeans, American Indians proved adept at adapting new objects and technologies to their own practical lives and belief systems. Despite immeasurable losses, there remains a history and practice of resilience and adaptation in the face of one of the cruellest genocides and memoricides in human history. From this debacle, in recent decades there has emerged a body of Native scholars and artists who confront the premises of Western philosophy and orthodoxy towards what Loretta Todd advocated as a “discourse of our own.” Whether or not the Anglo-Western world is prepared to listen is another matter altogether. In any case, the nature of the debate that gave rise to *We the People* has moved on and perhaps different questions are now on the agenda capable of enhancing Indigenous agency.

Artists Space Supporters



Board of Directors

Honorary Lifetime Members

Kynaston McShine
Irving Sandler
Cindy Sherman

Eleanor Cayre, President
Steven Schindler, President
Andy Stillpass, Treasurer
Amanda Sharp, Secretary

Shane Akeroyd
Negar Azimi
Andrew Black
Jonathan Caplan
Martin Cox
Liam Gillick
Barbara Gladstone

Carol Greene
Rachel Harrison
Joan Jonas
David Joselit
Philippa Polskin
Seth Price
Eleanor Heyman Propp
Allan Schwartzman
Rirkrit Tiravanija

Super Friends of Artists Space

Shane Akeroyd
Julie Ault
Galerie Buchholz
Eleanor Cayre
Virginia Cowles Schroth
Gladstone Gallery
Marian Goodman Gallery
Greene Naftali
Lévy Gorvy Gallery
Lisson Gallery
Lawrence Lühring
LUMA Foundation
Eleanor Heyman Propp
Allan Schwartzman
Rirkrit Tiravanija
Danh Vo
Helene Winer

Andrew Black
Jonathan Caplan &
Angus Cook
David Joselit &
Steven Incontro
Ivan & Lisa Kaufman
Michael Ringier
Andre Sakhai
Cindy Sherman
Andy Stillpass
Thea Westreich Wagner &
Ethan Wagner

Friends of Artists Space

Sadie Coles HQ
Hauser & Wirth
Matthew Marks
Ronnie Sassoon &
James Crump

Carolyn Alexander
Nayla Audi
Cecily Brown
David Cayre
Jack C. Cayre
Igor DaCosta
Thomas Dozol &
Michael Stipe
Lonti Ebers
Allison &
Warren Kandlers
Jill & Peter Kraus
David Kordansky Gallery
Margaret Lee
Mendes Wood DM
Pierre Orlowski
Philippa Polskin
Steven Schindler
Diana Wege
Christine Wentz
David Zwirner
Anonymous

Pedro Barbosa &
Patricia Moraes
Sascha Bauer
Paul Bernstein &
Dr. Alfred P. Gillio
Galerie Gisela Capitain
Chantal Crousel &
Niklas Svennung
Michael De Paola
Martin &
Rebecca Eisenberg
Jeanne Hardy
Alice & Paul Judelson
Kurimanzutto
Galerie Lelong
Joshua Mack
Suzanne Modica &
Ashley Carr
John Morace &
Tom Kennedy
Barbara &
Howard Morse
Real Fine Arts
Esther Schipper
Rob Teeters &
Bruce Sherman
Christen &
Derek Wilson

Miguel Abreu
Tauba Auerbach
Brooke Alexander
Simone Battisti
Blum & Poe
Bortolami
Gavin Brown
Sabrina Buell
James Cahn &
Jeremiah Collatz
Eileen & Michael Cohen
Paula Cooper Gallery
Betsy & Peter Currie
Peter M. Currie
Peter Darrell &
Jane Ormerod
Beth Rudin DeWoody
Frederick & Diana
Elghanayan
Maxwell Graham
Wade Guyton
Jane Hait &
Justin Beal
Jacob King
David Lewis
Toby Devan Lewis
Catherine Lord &
Kim Thomsen
Marcelo & Ana Martins
Material Vodka
Fernando Mesta
& José Rojas
Sophie Morner
Maureen Paley
Yana Peel
Petzel Gallery
Laura Poitras
César & Mima Reyes
Isabel Rose
Jeffrey Rowledge
Alex Sainsbury &
Elinor Jansz
Melanie Shorin &
Greg Feldman
Helen Warwick
Toby Webster
Begum Yasar
Alex Zachary

Core Contributors

Cowles Charitable Trust
The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation
Lambent Foundation Fund
of Tides Foundation
Stella Artois
The Andy Warhol Foundation
for the Visual Arts
The New York City
Department of Cultural Affairs
The New York State Council
on the Arts with the support of
Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
and the New York State Legislature

Contributors

Michael Asher Foundation
The Milton and Sally Avery
Arts Foundation
The Bay and Paul Foundations
Spencer Brownstone
The Chicago Community Fund
The Danielson Foundation
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
Étant donnés, the
French-American Fund
for Contemporary Art,
a Program of FACE
Herman Goldman Foundation
The Greenwich Collection Ltd.
The Keith Haring Foundation
Puffin Foundation West, Ltd.
NYU Community Fund

Artists Space
Exhibitions
!

This booklet is published
on the occasion of the exhibition

Unholding

Pena Bonita; Demian DinéYazhi' with Natalie Diaz and Sonia Guiñansaca; G. Peter Jemison; Adam and Zack Khalil with Jackson Polys, Jim Fletcher, Kite; Alan Michelson; Native Art Department International (Maria Hupfield, Jason Lujan) and Christopher Green; Laura Ortman with Jennifer Kreisberg; Jolene Rickard; Kay WalkingStick; Judith Barry and Ken Saylor; Kathleen Ash-Milby; Diane Fraher, Athena LaTocha, David Martine and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith; Candice Hopkins; Shanna Ketchum-Heap of Birds, Zoya Kocur and Valerie Smith

November 19, 2017 – January 21, 2018

Artists Space
55 Walker Street
New York, NY 10013

Harry Burke
Assistant Curator & Web Editor

Joanna Ruth Evans
Intern

Colleen O'Connor
Operations Manager

Rachel Peddersen
Exhibitions & Editions Manager

Jay Sanders
Executive Director & Chief Curator

Jamie Stevens
Curator

Kate Temple
Director of Education

Witts
Gallery Manager

Graphic Design
Studio Manuel Raeder
Manuel Raeder and Miglė Kazlauskaitė

Exhibition Supporters:

The Friends of Artists Space, The Artists Space Program Fund, Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature



Council on
the Arts