


Exposure: ***Native Art and Political Ecology***

This exhibition presents the work of artists who address the long-term effects of uranium, a toxic mineral used for nuclear weapons and power, on Indigenous communities in the United States and around the world. Indigenous artists from **Australia, Canada, Greenland, Japan, French Polynesia (Tahiti)**, and the **United States** with American Samoa and Guam combine tribal knowledge with visual art to address nuclear exposure issues in their communities and globally, from World War II through the present. Nuclear testing, nuclear accidents, and uranium mining have repercussions today on the health, culture, and environment of Indigenous lands and people, including increased rates of cancer, endangered reproductive health, transgenerational damage, and forced migration. Artists in *Exposure* bring to the forefront the disastrous consequences of radiation exposure on a personal, humanitarian level.



APY Art Collective

(Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara/Luritja, Australia)

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY Lands) are located in remote Central Australia in the far northern tip of South Australia. The APY Art Collective is a group of eleven Indigenous-owned and governed enterprises. Located on the APY Lands they work with a united vision and voice on strategic business initiatives and collaborative artistic projects. Their vision is to increase the capacity of APY art centers and their work in APY communities. The art collective ranges in artistic forms from painting, traditional *punu* (wood) carving, weaving, textiles, new media, and digital photography. Mimili Maku Arts was the founding art collective of the organization, and they work alongside families and friends from other APY communities to develop regional large-scale artistic projects.

Carl Beam

(Ojibway/Canadian, lived and worked in Canada, c. 1943-2005)

The work of Carl Beam investigates the tension between Western and Indigenous relations. His artwork *The North American Iceberg* (1986) became the first by a First Nations artist to be purchased by the National Gallery of Canada for its collection of contemporary art, opening the door for more First Nations artists to be represented in institutions that previously excluded them. Beam attended the Kootenay School of Art in 1971 and later graduated with a BA from the University of Victoria in 1974. Between 1975 and 1976 he did graduate work at the University of Alberta, but left over a debate around his thesis work on the southwest American artist Fritz Scholder, who created art within the gap between “Aboriginal” and “Contemporary” art. Beam focused his art practice on painting, printmaking, and sculpture, but was not limited to those media. Through his collage and photo transfer techniques, Beam addressed the ways in which his personal memory connects with issues related to the historical brutality of the environment. This layering technique allowed him to rethink the ways that histories are told.

Jane Benale

(Diné, lives and works in Forest Lake, Arizona, b. 1935)

Jane Benale focuses her work on textile arts, using color and material to comment on the ways in which uranium mining has negatively affected her community and Indigenous communities as a whole. She states that “Sheep is Life,” and when that source of life is tainted with harmful materials, everything relying on it is impacted.

Klee Benally

(Diné/Arizona, lives and works in Arizona, b. 1975)

Musician, traditional dancer, filmmaker, and activist Klee Benally has produced numerous documentaries and facilitated strategic planning for social and environmental justice campaigns, integrating his creative work with Indigenous activism. His group Blackfire, which he founded in 1989, won best rock group at the Native American Music Awards. Benally worked nearly all his life at the front lines in struggles to protect Indigenous sacred lands. He provides strategic planning and direct-action training with Indigenous Action Media and is currently the national coordinator for Clean Up the Mines, an advocacy group calling upon Congress to prioritize passage of the *Uranium Exploration and Mining Accountability Act*, to remediate thousands of hazardous abandoned uranium mines throughout the United States.

De Haven Solimon Chaffins

(Laguna and Zuni Pueblos/Virginia, lives and works in New Mexico)

The uranium mine at the base of Paguete village, the Laguna Pueblo home of De Haven Solimon Chaffins, directly informs the themes of her practice, such as loss, resilience, and the duality between life and death. Chaffins attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico and received an Associate of Fine Arts degree in 1990; she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts, University of New Mexico in 1995.

Kunmanara “Karrika Belle” Davidson

(Pitjantjatjara, lives and works in Australia, c. 1942-2017)

Karrika Belle recalled camping as a young mother in the bush near Warburton with her first son and other Anangu when the atomic bombs were exploded at Maralinga. She and many others became very ill and were picked up by the Native Patrol truck and driven to Warburton mission where sick Anangu were lying in every building including the school classrooms. After this catastrophic event, she began to make art and become an activist in communities affected by nuclear colonialism. She was a founding member of Irrunytju Arts and Chair of Ngaanyatjarra Media. She lived with her family in Irrunytju, Australia where she worked as a painter, translator, and producer of short documentaries about local culture.

Mariquita “Micki” Davis

(CHamoru/Georgia, lives and works in Los Angeles, b. 1982)

When Mariquita “Micki” Davis was six years old, she moved from Guam to Georgia. Across that distance, and through the medium of photography, she was able to connect with her family in Guam. Davis now works in film and video, using these media to connect personal, familial, and communal memory. She is the co-curator of Pasifika Transmissions, a monthly learning series that invites Indigenous artists to visit the archive of the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum of Long Beach. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including at the Institute of American Indian Arts, Honolulu Biennial, Vancouver Art Gallery, University of New South Wales Galleries, and Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, as well as in the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF) and Guam International Film Festival. Davis received her BFA from the University of Georgia in 2006, and her MFA from the University of California, San Diego in 2011.

Bonnie Devine

(Anishinaabe/Ojibwe, lives and works in Toronto, b. 1952)

Bonnie Devine’s work emerges from personal memories and the narratives that surround them, detailing colonial histories that have contributed to the erasure of the Anishinaabe and exploring issues surrounding land, environment, treaty, history, and narrative. In 2021, Devine received a Governor General’s Award in Visual and Media Arts for her “impactful art practice, commitment to bringing forth an Indigenous voice, [and] contribution to revisionist research and post-secondary education—particularly for Indigenous students.” In 1997, she earned an AOCAD with Honors in Fine Arts with an emphasis in sculpture and installation from the Ontario College of Art and Design University. In 1999, she graduated with an MFA from York University. She currently teaches at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto, where she is the founding chair of its Indigenous Visual Cultural Program.

Joy Enomoto

(Kanaka Maoli, African American, Japanese, Caddo Indian, Punjabi, and Scottish, lives and works in Hawai'i)

Joy Enomoto engages with issues of climate justice, plantation genealogies, and the memory of violence within land and seascapes. Concerned primarily with issues impacting Oceania, she communicates these ideas through drawing, printmaking, fiber art, and photography. Enomoto has a BA from University of California, Berkeley in English, and is currently pursuing a BFA from University of Hawai'i, Manoa in photography.

Solomon Enos

(Kanaka Maoli/Hawai'i, lives and works in Hawai'i)

Solomon Enos works with a wide variety of materials and applications including oil painting, book illustration, outdoor murals (painted and glass mosaic), and mixed-media sculpture. Using science fiction narratives, Enos's art expresses his aspirational vision of the world at its best. His work touches on themes of ancestry and identity, the human relationship with the Earth, and the future of Hawai'i, its people, and its resources.

Kohei Fujito

(Ainu/Japan, lives and works in Japan, b. 1978)

Kohei Fujito uses traditional Ainu designs and combines them with industrial design and modern goods, connecting the past with the present. Through these strategies, he discusses the Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown and its destruction of the environment around it. Fujito was commissioned to create a symbolic monument for the International Festival of Indigenous People (Italy) in 2017 and his work *Ikupasuy* was added to their collection. He was raised among artisans, including his father, Takeki Fujito, an internationally respected wood craftsman.

Gunybi Ganambarr

(Yolngu, lives and works in Australia, b. 1973)

Through his sculpture and *yidaki* ("didgeridoo") music, Gunybi Ganambarr combines traditional themes and images with contemporary materials and interpretation. While he creates art to propel the viewer into the future, Ganambarr uses Yolngu tradition to guide his artistic decisions; today's Yolngu artists are particularly known for their contemporary translation of sacred designs on barks and *larrakitj* (memorial poles). The found material that Ganambarr uses has a direct link to mining and industry, forming a reflection on the erosion of Aboriginal land rights. Ganambarr was awarded the Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Artist Award at the Gallery of Modern Art at Queensland Art Gallery and, in 2011, won the West Australian Indigenous Art Award. His mentors include renowned artists Djambawa Marawili and Wanyubi Marika.

Pat Courtney Gold

(Wasco/Oregon, lives and works in Oregon, b. 1939)

A basket weaver and fiber artist, Pat Courtney Gold grew up on the Warm Springs Reservation in the mid-Columbia River area of Central Oregon. Like countless thousands of Indigenous youth in the 19th and 20th centuries, Gold was federally mandated to attend a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, where her hair was cut and she was made to wear a standard uniform, part of a program to assimilate into American culture. She went on to earn a BA in mathematics and physics from Whitman College, after which she began a career as a mathematician and computer specialist. In 1991, Gold studied and helped revive the making of Wasco sally bags and twined root-digging bags through the Oregon Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program. This work started her career in understanding fiber arts and preserving her cultural heritage through artworks that comment on contemporary life and environmental degradation.

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner

(Marshallese-Majol/Hawai'i, lives and works in Marshall Islands, b. 1989)

The creative practice of poet and activist Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner explores her culture's rich storytelling methods and the way they intersect with evolving issues, including climate change and the legacy of nuclear testing, that threaten the Marshall Islands. She examines these themes through poetry and performance, while also engaging in community organizing through the Marshall Islands-based nonprofit Jo-Jikum, dedicated to Marshallese youth and environmentalism, which she co-founded. Jetñil-Kijiner is currently serving as Climate Envoy for the Marshall Islands Ministry of Environment and pursuing a PhD in Pacific Studies at Australia National University. She received a BA from Mills College in Oakland, CA and an MA in Pacific Island Studies from the University of Hawai'i, Mōnoa.

Oki Kano

(Ainu/Japan, lives and works in Japan, b. 1957)

A popular Japanese and Ainu musician, Oki Kano specializes in playing the traditional Ainu *tonkori*, a 4-5 stringed traditional Ainu instrument made from deer tendons, which he applies to reggae, dub, and other styles. The tonkori was used by Ainu shamans to communicate with spirits that control the wind, rain, and other natural phenomena. Although he trained in visual arts at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, Kano later took up the tonkori, applying his visual art skills to how he adorned his musical instrument. Kano is featured in the film *Ainu Mosir* (2020), currently streaming on Netflix.

Jessie Kleemann

(Kalaallit/Inuit, lives and works in Copenhagen, b. 1959)

Jessie Kleemann is a poet and visual, performance, and theater artist who works with traditional Inuit themes to explore Kalaallit identity, tradition, and relationships to land and language. She uses materials such as blubber, beads, and rope, as well as the Arctic landscape and her own body, to combine traditional and experimental materials and practices through which she interrogates Indigenous and colonial histories and the complexities of memory, commodification, spirituality, and violence they hold.

Alexander Lee

(Hakka/Tahiti, lives and works in Tahiti, French Polynesia and New York, b. 1982)

Alexander Lee addresses Polynesian myths, his own Hakka Chinese roots, and the colonial history of Oceania, where the US and France carried out extensive nuclear test explosions and which is now at risk from rising sea levels. He addresses the danger of these tests using his personal memory, popular culture, and history in a rich symbolic visual language. He earned his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2002, his MFA from Columbia University in 2002, and his MPS from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University in 2004. In 2000-2003, he received the Lew and Edie Wasserman Scholarship Award and the Dean's Fellowship at Columbia University in New York. In 2008-2009 he was awarded the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop Fellowship.

Hilda Moodoo

(Pitjantjatjara/Australia, lives and works in Australia, b. 1942)

Hilda Moodoo first came to prominence for her land rights activism in the 1970s, a movement that led to the Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act in 1984. This legislation moved most of the land of Maralinga Tjarutja, a former atomic bomb test site, to Anangu Traditional Owners. Moodoo was a founding member of the Aboriginal Oak Valley community, established under the 1984 act.

David Neel

(Kwakwaka'wakw, Canada, b. 1960)

For over 30 years, David Neel has explored his knowledge of traditional northwest coast Native art, his interest in history, and the implications of past and present. He is a photographer, printmaker, and sculptor who comes from a lineage of artists. His grandmother, Ellen Neel, was an important silkscreen printmaker in the community and was credited with introducing this printing technique to northwest Native artist communities. His father, David Neel Sr., was a popular Indigenous carver. Neel Jr. first became interested in Indigenous sculpture when he observed and photographed them in his community. He later apprenticed under Kwakwaka'wakw artists Wayne Alfred and Beau Dick.

Kunmanara “Jeffrey” Queama

(Pitjantjatjara/Australia, lived and worked in Australia, 1947-2009)

Kunmanara Queama represented historical events that have lasting effects today. Using traditional Aboriginal dot painting techniques he depicted the image of a mushroom cloud, referencing the nuclear explosions called “safety tests,” set off by the British on Pitjantjatjara land between 1955 and 1963. In response, Quema was a part of a generations-long fight for restitution.

Yhonne Scarce

(Kokatha/Nukunu peoples, lives and works in Australia, b. 1973)

Yhonne Scarce uses glass and photography, as well as archival research and family history and memory, to reference the ongoing effects of colonization on Aboriginal people. Her glass artworks invoke the crystallization of desert sand following the nuclear tests carried out by the United Kingdom in South Australia from 1956 to 1963, which contaminated soldiers, Aboriginal populations, and the surrounding land. In 2003, she was the first Indigenous student to graduate from the University of Adelaide with a major in glasswork, and in 2008 was the inaugural South Australian recipient of the Qantas Foundation Encouragement Award.

Bolatta Silis-Høegh

(Inuit/Greenlandic, lives and works in Copenhagen, b. 1981)

Through multimedia collage and installation, Bolatta Silis-Høegh explores the identity of Greenland and the idea of modernization. She confronts ecological issues head-on, focusing in particular on Greenland's suspension of its ban on uranium mining in 2013. Kuannersuit, which is Silis-Høegh's homeland, is situated in the “pantry” of Greenland, the only area where agriculture is possible on the arctic land. It is also home to large uranium deposits. Lifting the ban on uranium mining made it possible to expand agricultural profits, at the cost of threatening the traditional livelihoods and environmental safety of many citizens of Greenland. Silis-Høegh graduated from the Aarhus Academy of Art in 2006. She belongs to a legacy of prominent artists in Greenland: her mother and brother are visual artists and her father is a photographer and videographer.

Adrian Stimson

(Blackfoot/Canadian, lives and works in Canada, b. 1964)

Adrian Stimson is an interdisciplinary artist whose work spans painting, performance art, video, and sculpture to reimagine colonial history and identity construction. As an artist from the Blackfoot Nation, Stimson places heavy emphasis on the image of bison as a symbol of the destruction of the traditional way of life, as well as its survival and cultural regeneration. Stimson earned a BFA with distinction from the Alberta College of Art and Design and an MFA from the University of Saskatchewan.

Ivinguak Stork Høegh

(Inuit/Greenlandic, lives and works in Nuuk, Greenland, b. 1982)

Ivinguak Stork Høegh represents her photographs through digital collage, combining images of traditional Inuit culture and the westernized world, centering her Inuit identity as she explores themes of exoticism, colonialism, addiction, care, and nationalism. Høegh was trained at the Aarhus Kunstakademi, Denmark as a graphic and media artist.

Dan Taulapapa McMullin

(Samoa, lives and works in New York, b. 1953)

Dan Taulapapa McMullin uses visual art, film, and poetry to discuss ideas around the body, colonialism, climate change, exoticism, and queer histories. McMullin identifies as *fa`afafine*, a person of the third gender in traditional Samoan culture. They studied conceptual art at California Institute of the Arts, leaving before completing the program to pursue a career in television in Los Angeles. Their film *Sinalela* won the 2002 Honolulu Rainbow Film Festival Best Short Film Award; another film, *100 Tikis*, was the opening night selection of the 2016 *Présence Autochtone* in Montreal and was an Official Selection in the *Fifo Tahiti Film Festival*.

Mallery Quetawki

(Zuni/New Mexico, lives and works in New Mexico, b. 1985)

Mallery Quetawki is a visual artist whose practice centers Indigenous ways of knowing with western science and medicine, to create better pathways of communication between scientists, traditional practitioners, and Native communities. Her areas of research focus on abandoned uranium mines and the ensuing health issues within Indigenous communities. Quetawki received her BS in biology with a minor in studio art in 2009 from The University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She is currently the Artist-in-Residence with the Community Environmental Health Program at the University of New Mexico-College of Pharmacy.

Jerrel Singer

(Diné/Arizona, lives and works in Kintáńí Dook o oostííd Biyaagi, Flagstaff, Arizona)

Jerrel Singer was raised near the Grand Canyon, with a philosophy of reciprocal care between humans and the land. He works in painting and drawing to render images of the daylight and nightscape colors and shadows of the Navajo Reservation and of the Southwest, creating abstracted yet recognizable scenes of desert, sky, and clouds.

Anna Tsouhlaraskis

(Diné/Greek, lives and works in Colorado, b. 1977)

Anna Tsouhlarakis works in sculpture, installation, video, and performance to challenge and redefine the boundaries of aesthetic and conceptual expectations within Native American art. She received her BA from Dartmouth College with degrees in Native American Studies and Studio Art and her MFA from Yale University in Sculpture.

Will Wilson

(Diné/California, lives and works in New Mexico, b. 1959)

Will Wilson combines digital media, traditional photographic processes, and installation practices to explore themes of environmental activism, colonial photography, the possibility of cultural renewal, and the intersection of environmental and racial justice. He has won many awards including the Native American Fine Art Fellowship from the Eiteljorg Museum in 2007, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award for Sculpture in 2010, and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for Photography in 2016. He received his BA in Studio Art and Art History at Oberlin College in 1993, and his MFA at the University of New Mexico in 2002.

Exposure: Native Art and Political Ecology

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Exposure: Native Art and Political Ecology was organized for the Museum of Contemporary Native Art, Santa Fe, by the following curators:

Dr. Kóan Jeff Baysa (Ibanag), iBiennale Director

Satomi Igarashi, Chief Curator, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art

Nivi Christensen (Inuit), Director, Nuuk Art Museum

Erin Vink (Ngiyampaa), Assistant Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Tania Willard (Secwepemc Nation), independent curator

Manuela Well-Off-Man, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Native Art

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