

# THIS PLACE

On Treaty 1 Territory & the homeland of the Métis Nation

## CET ENDROIT

sur le territoire visé par le Traité no 1  
et la patrie de la Nation métisse

## OOMA LA PLAAS

iita li territwayr di traytii noomayroo hen  
pi iita kaa wiikichik la naasyoon lii Michif

## ÓMA ÓTA

Nistam iskonikon ká takok éko  
owikiwáw anikik Ápitawikosisának

## OMAA EYAAMAGAK

Nitam Agwi'idiwin Akiin zhigwa  
Wiisaakodewiniwag Eyaawaad

REBECCA BELMORE  
and OSVALDO YERO  
KENNETH LAVALLEE  
JULIE NAGAM  
ROLANDE SOULIERE



WINNIPEG  
ARTS COUNCIL

*THIS PLACE on Treaty 1 Territory & the homeland of the Métis Nation* officially opened to the public with a free concert celebration on September 28, 2018. This is a major public art project that builds on efforts to create awareness of the rich Indigenous cultures, peoples and heritage that are at the roots of our territory, city and province. Indigenous artists were asked to respond to the idea of *this place* on Treaty No. 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis nation, and their reflections range in concept and expression. As a place of community and gathering in downtown Winnipeg, the artworks located in this park make a significant mark in the city.

As a signatory of Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord, the Winnipeg Arts Council, as an institution, is concerned with the importance of decolonizing through public art. The form and intent of this project was shaped through Canada-wide consultation with Indigenous artists, with the Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle, as well as a Winnipeg-based gathering with Indigenous artists, Elders, knowledge keepers, curators, and scholars. These artworks, having been created by Indigenous contemporary artists, and being about *this place*, give significant and permanent voice and meaning that is defined by Indigenous people themselves.

*THIS PLACE on Treaty 1 Territory & the homeland of the Métis Nation* was commissioned by the Winnipeg Arts Council through the City of Winnipeg's Public Art Policy and with the participation of the Government of Canada.



Canada

**“ We have always been here and a city grew around and on top of us.”**

– Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette

## Sites of Visual Remedy and the Air Canada Park in Downtown Winnipeg

By Cathy Mattes (Michif, southwest Manitoba)

**Winipi Manitowapow**, now commonly known as Winnipeg, is a gathering site for the Anishinaabe, Assiniboine, Cree, Dene, Inuit, Métis, Oji-Cree, and Dakota nations. The soil and waters hold memory of sacred ceremonies, kinship development, uprising, and resurgence. The Winnipeg Arts Council (WAC) is helping to ensure Indigenous contributions and stories are represented in public spaces in ways that stake claim, help assert our presence in urban settings, and change social constructs for the better. WAC commissioned four sculptural works for Air Canada Park, located between Portage Place and Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). For this initiative, titled *THIS PLACE on Treaty 1 Territory & the homeland of the Métis Nation*, artists were asked to consider Indigenous people's contributions to the city and that Winnipeg is on Treaty No. 1 land and the homeland of the Métis. In response, Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero, Kenneth Lavallee, Julie Nagam, and Rolande Souliere created artworks that collectively share stories about Indigenous engagement with the land and ways of being with one another. The artists recognize the park as a contemporary gathering site, and a space for contemplation and learning about Indigenous histories on this land now called Winnipeg.

In *Mediating the Treaties*, Rolande Souliere considers the negotiating process and the materials valued during the signing of Treaty No. 1. Souliere is an Anishinaabe visual artist and scholar from Michipicoten First Nation, from Toronto, Ontario. Her mediums include installation, painting, screenprinting, sculpture, photography and collage. Inspired by the assisted readymade and incorporating Indigenous processes of art-making such as weaving, stacking and stitching, she activates and translates Indigenous world-views and sociopolitical and cultural issues as they pertain to colonization in her art.<sup>1</sup>

Souliere created a large-scale version of a two-headed currency coin that recognizes money as a symbol of colonial power. The artwork was inspired by the 200-year-old practice of gifting medals to Chiefs by the British Empire. These medals were given once treaties were signed and look very similar to metal coins. Souliere recognizes the act of gifting and the exchange of currency as emblems of Treaty No.1.

Metal is the perfect material for discussing Treaty No.1, as it is the material used for making currency and is an emblem of power. For many Indigenous people, money has not provided resolution, but has been used to violate Indigenous rights. Souliere utilizes the double-headed coin as a metaphor to discuss the discrepancies in the verbal and written negotiations during the treaty process. It represents how money is used to solve disputes and has been utilized to exert colonial power.

Placed on each side of the coin are portraits of Queen Victoria, Chief Miskookeneew (aka Henry Prince, Anishinaabe, Peguis First Nation) and Chief Kakekopenais (aka William Pennefather, Anishinaabe, Sagkeeng First Nation), two of the seven Chiefs who signed Treaty No.1. The three significant figures are brightly coloured and can be seen to resemble Andy Warhol's portraits of notorious public figures. At the top of the coin in large font is the wording "Treaty No. 1" and at the bottom "Turtle Island", an Indigenous name for North America. The year of the treaty signing, 1871, is on the left side of the coin, and "\$3", the original treaty payment per person, on the right.

Treaty No.1 was negotiated and entered into at Lower Fort Garry on August 3, 1871. It includes the communities of Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, Steinbach, Lunda, Grand Beach, Emerson, and Winkler, among others. The First Nations that signed on to Treaty No. 1 are Brokenhead, Long Plains, Peguis, Roseau River, Sagkeeng, Sandy Bay and Swan Lake.<sup>2</sup> The seven Chiefs representing these First Nations had strong leadership and negotiating skills and raised many issues during the signing of the Treaty. Yet the several days of negotiations were shrunk to a mere 13 lines in newspapers, omitting important components for the Chiefs and their communities.<sup>3</sup> This lack of an accurate representation of the agreed-upon terms negatively impacted First Nations in regards to their land and human rights, and diminished the Chiefs' terms. Souliere depicts Queen Victoria wearing a maple

leaf crown and draped in road barrier and hazard tape to symbolize how her government and military made passage where the Chiefs specifically told them not to go during the Treaty signing. Importantly, the colours of the tape (red, black, yellow and white) are also the colours of the Four Directions, an Indigenous framework for holistic wellbeing.

A year after the signing, each of the seven Chiefs who were signatories of Treaty No. 1 were given a large medal to be worn around their necks. These gifts and others like them were highly sought-after as they added prestige to leaders, yet the medals deteriorated shortly thereafter.

Souliere incorporated the only two archival photographs she could find of signing Chiefs. Chief Miskookenew is shown wearing a gifted medal in the photograph, while Kakekapanais is without.

Souliere acknowledges that it is important for the public to see significant First Nations Chiefs whose roles have been diminished in official Canadian historical narratives. The brightly coloured tones on Queen Victoria, Chief Miskookenew and Chief Kakekapanais emulate a beader's palette and the large beaded medallions now worn as part of contemporary powwow regalia. Souliere recognizes that "we are all treaty people, but not by choice."<sup>4</sup>

It is important to visually acknowledge the implications of treaty negotiations on Indigenous land. Souliere notes that Air Canada Park is a meeting place for many

Indigenous people. Including images of two of the seven signing Chiefs, a rare find in archives and non-existent in the public realm, is a form of cultural embedment into downtown Winnipeg. By presenting them in her work, Souliere provides an opportunity for Indigenous people to "sit there with their ancestors in the park".<sup>5</sup>

Métis artist Julie Nagam's sculptural work *Electrical Currents* exposes "Indigenous living histories that are linked to the land, water and people."<sup>6</sup> Nagam is a visual artist, scholar, and art curator working in Winnipeg. Her art mediums include installation, video and sculpture, and her explored themes embrace concealed geographies, the value of new and digital media to tell stories, and the intricacy of Indigenous ties to the land. Nagam's sculptural installation for Air Canada Park focuses on the impact of hydro electricity on human interrelationships and the implications for the natural world.

In the conceptualization of her sculptural installation and the theme she wanted to pursue, Nagam considered how the Manitoba Hydro Building is located directly across the street from Air Canada Park. The development in the 1960s of hydroelectric generating stations by Manitoba Hydro greatly impacted remote and northern Indigenous communities including Norway House, Split Lake, and York Factory, among many others.<sup>7</sup> With the influx of thousands of workers and their families came a complete overhaul of Indigenous communities to meet the needs of hydroelectric development. Violence, racism, and a

**“ In July 1885, while imprisoned by Canadian forces, Louis Riel famously said: “My people will sleep for one hundred years, and when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.” It is our belief that he was not only speaking of Métis artists but also of other Aboriginal artists of the past, the present, and to come. Riel was speaking of the sounds of Manitowapow, resonances that have the ability...to create our world.”**

- Warren Cariou and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: HighWater Press, 2011).

lack of socioeconomic opportunities reigned, resulting in societal breakdown.<sup>8</sup> The flooding of land to generate hydroelectricity impacted hunting and fishing, and created physical sickness in many. This is, in part, because the neurotoxin methylmercury surfaces with land flooding and can accumulate in fish, birds, large animals, and humans.<sup>9</sup> These were all effects that Indigenous communities that signed agreements with Manitoba Hydro could not foresee.

More recently there have been efforts to resolve past grievances and acknowledge the adverse effects of generating stations on Indigenous communities. Manitoba Hydro has attempted to foster better relationships with Indigenous communities, including collaborations and employment and training opportunities.<sup>10</sup> This has created divisiveness around the topic, as remote and northern Indigenous people are required to make decisions that will have long-term impact both on their livelihood and the environment.

Nagam recognizes that southern Manitobans who benefit from hydroelectricity are complicit in what Indigenous remote and rural communities have endured.<sup>11</sup> However, she also acknowledges that we were not given choice or made aware of the damage being done until recently. Nagam's work makes visible the complexities and tensions created around consumers, providers and those impacted by hydroelectricity. Her work is embedded in Indigenous knowledge and experiences with hydro development,

and it provides opportunities to spark dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and newcomers.

Nagam's artwork for *THIS PLACE* consists of one tall abstract structure and two smaller ones positioned in close proximity. The tall sculpture captures the blades, shaft and generator of a water turbine used to generate hydroelectricity. The shaft has laser-cut chevron designs running up and down inspired by water symbols found in Indigenous pictograph drawings. These chevron designs also emulate flowing waters. The circular disk, suggesting a generator, contains laser cut Métis flower beadwork patterns. Métis beadwork is intricate, precise and maps the land and waters. It also charts kinship, cultural practices, and our presence as Indigenous peoples on this land. The Métis floral beadwork turns the circular disk/generator into a protective shield that demonstrates how we are connected to water, land and one another.

The bases of the two smaller sculptures also depict turbine blades. On top of them are cast glass rock-like structures with engraved images that represent the path of life, which symbolizes the choices humans are faced with throughout their life. A figure with raised hands references memegwesiwak (little people of both the Anishinaabe and Cree worldviews) who live in the rocks and hold spiritual knowledge. Each pictograph provides important narratives about the land and human relationships. At nighttime, light bleeds from the tall shaft and glowing glass structures. The laser-cut Métis floral beadwork patterns on the circular

disk create shadow effects as the light transferred from the cut chevron designs on the shaft flow upward. Lit up, these symbols and designs become beacons in the night, and honour those Indigenous peoples most impacted by hydro development.

Despite the sensitive nature of this topic, *Electrical Currents* is not a confrontational artwork. The artwork is a teaching tool, grounded in Indigenous stories of place. Nagam's goal is to empower communities and kin by creating art that ignites crucial contemplation and dialogue about hydro development. She recognizes that, because those living in remote and northern communities are out of sight, they are often out of mind in urban settings. By inserting their experiences and histories into downtown Winnipeg with her art, Nagam encourages us to gain knowledge and consider those most impacted by our need for the consumption of electrical power.

*O-ween du muh waun* by Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero is grounded in Indigenous stories and experiences of self-determined gathering. The title is a Saulteaux word and translates into "we were told".<sup>12</sup> The work considers the infrastructure created in Winnipeg for Indigenous friends and families who congregate here. It acknowledges the impact of colonization, but also recognizes the ways in which Indigenous people overcome and endure by coming together.

Rebecca Belmore is an Anishinaabe artist born in Upsala, Ontario. Her mediums include sculpture, installation, video and performance. Her explored themes include water and land rights, Indigenous women's experiences, violence against Indigenous people, and the roles of artists in contemporary life. Belmore's collaborator Osvaldo Yero is a Cuban-born artist whose mediums include sculpture and installation that is politically charged and contemplative about national identity formation and boundaries created in the artistic milieu. Together they create public art that successfully humanizes public spaces and fosters well-being.<sup>13</sup> Belmore and Yero were inspired to create this work partially based on their experiences of living and working in downtown Winnipeg for two years. They express gratitude and devotion to the communities they engaged with as well as the original Treaty No. 1 signatories. They state, "Reflecting on this site, we revere the strength of longstanding relationships with place."<sup>14</sup>

*O-ween du muh waun* contributes to making Air Canada Park a more welcoming and encouraging space. The work recognizes Winnipeg as a continuous gathering site for Indigenous people, and is grounded in familiar community aesthetics. Placed on top of a concrete table are thirty overturned and stacked chairs. The chairs are familiar looking to anyone who has participated in Indigenous community gatherings. They emulate chairs found in church basements, friendship centres, and community halls. After events such as band council meetings,

weddings, and powwows, these chairs are overturned, stacked, then placed against a wall until the next time they are needed. They are familiar and resonate with Belmore, as they were popular in her youth, and present in her adult life as she engaged with Indigenous communities across Canada.

In the context of Winnipeg, the chairs may symbolize gatherings held since the 1960s when Indigenous people congregated here hoping for better opportunities. In the heart of downtown Winnipeg, people have sat in chairs similar to those represented in Belmore and Yero's sculpture to strategize remedying systemic racism, nurture youth, and partake in cultural practices that were once threatened by assimilation policies. In contemporary times, the concrete table and steel stacked chairs remind how Indigenous people gather to make streets safer in the North End, organize flash mobs in Portage Place mall in the name of #idlenomore, and march the streets of downtown Winnipeg in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls like Tina Fontaine.

The wooden and steel chairs the sculpture emphasizes are referred to as "school chairs", which adds another layer of meaning to the sculpture. These sorts of chairs were used in colonial education systems. They were present when children were stifled, abused, and removed from their homes and forced into church and government-run residential schools. To some congregating at Air Canada Park, the chairs may at first be signifiers of this painful



**“ Manitoba has always been a place of activity, change, and struggle – movements that illustrate the harshness and beauty of life. From time immemorial, ancestors of Aboriginal communities now known as Anishinaabe, Assiniboine, Cree, Dene, Inuit, Métis, Oji-Cree, and Sioux inhabited, migrated to, and settled throughout these lands. They made homes, held ceremonies in sacred spaces, and forged relationships amongst themselves and with beings throughout the environment. They established traditions that extend into today.”**

- Warren Cariou and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: HighWater Press, 2011).

past. However, their placement on the table, overturned and stacked, also asserts the resiliency of Indigenous peoples. The white ivory tower that colonial education systems helped stabilize is now turned on its head, its power diminished, its control over Indigenous communities no more.<sup>15</sup> The steel material used to make the chairs becomes the infrastructure for the corrosion of colonialism as they rust over time. As the sculpture endures the harshness of Manitoba winters, the rust will bleed onto the tabletop, emulating a map of flowing rivers. This is another way that viewers of the sculpture are reminded of the ancestors who signed Treaty No.1, as they were tributaries who negotiated in ways to assert that this is, and will always be, Indigenous land.

*O-ween du muh waun* is a catalyst for people coming together in shared public spaces. The work is a reminder of the presence and vitality of the larger Indigenous community of Winnipeg. As the ancestors did, many congregate here to partake in gatherings of various sorts. In the context of present day downtown Winnipeg, Belmore and Yero's sculpture asserts self-determination, resilience and resurgence.

Kenneth Lavalée created *The Square Dancers* to recognize the “culture, spirit and endurance of the Métis people.”<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Lavalée is a Métis, Winnipeg-based artist, whose mediums include sculpture, installation and large-scale murals. He is a socially engaged artist, and his painted works on public buildings often involve collaborators and

community participants. He is driven by traditional values of balance, order and interconnectedness. He responds to new possibilities of space and opportunities that are presented to him with tangible materials like steel, rock and wood.<sup>17</sup> Lavallee's work for *THIS PLACE* is a steel sculpture that recognizes the presence and importance of the Métis nation in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

Historically, the Métis were the offspring of First Nations women and European fur traders, and arose in west central North America during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Distinct sociopolitical structures emerged around the bison hunt and fur trade, and unique cultural practice, language, spirituality, and nationhood ideals seeped into new kinship models. Since its birth, the Métis nation has always existed in the region now known as Winnipeg. Due to discrimination policies, land loss, and poor attitudes towards the Métis, the presence and rights of the Métis often go unnoticed or unrecognized. There are few public visual signifiers of a Métis presence in Winnipeg, with the exception of several monuments for Riel, the occasional Métis flag flying, and a couple of historical sites.

Across the province, Métis towns and settlements are activated spaces of resurgence. Cultural retention and pride are often manifested in what's commonly referred to as "Métis Days". This is when Métis gather to socialize, partake in games and competitions, eat bannock and stew, and watch dancers and fiddle players at their best. The Square Dancers is inspired by Lavallee's childhood

memories of visiting his family's home community of St. Laurent during annual "Métis Days".<sup>18</sup>

St. Laurent is an archetypal Métis community that has managed to retain language, kinship ties, and cultural practices. His mother was born and raised there, and his grandparents were raised speaking the Michif language. Lavallee's sculpture depicts six dancers lined up in promenade formation. In a square dance (or "lii dans ronde" in Michif), dancers will often first present themselves by promenading onto the dance floor, one behind the other. It is at this time that audience members are introduced to the dancers, and where their uniqueness in footwork, yet collectivity as a group, is acknowledged.

Lavallee is responding more specifically to the traditional Métis dancers. These are elders who, despite all attempts to force assimilation upon them, have continued to translate Métis songs and stories through dance. Their dance steps are often softer and closer to the ground, their movements following the rhythms of a heartbeat. They are the anchors of their communities, the carriers of knowledge, and they activate space through their dance steps.

In Lavallee's sculpture the promenading dancers are larger than life. They slightly sway in the wind, suggesting they are in movement. Lavallee, who lives downtown and often walks by Air Canada Park, recognized the effects made through direct light. When the light is optimum, the shadows made off the figures will suggest that there are

more than six dancers promenading. The figures are abstract and biomorphic looking, suggesting they are of this land. At the same time, the shapes of the figures emulate the infinity symbol, an important emblem to the Métis nation. The six figures are painted a progressively darker shade of blue. Together, the abstracted infinity symbol and shades of blue reference the Métis flag, a symbol of pride to many Métis. Lavallee provides a much needed visual signifier of Métis presence that moves beyond any current narratives about historic political leaders or current day politics. His work recognizes that the Métis are a nation of whole beings with complete customs, language, sociopolitical structures, and experiences. Despite all odds, the Métis continue to dance on.

Together, the four sculptural works created for *THIS PLACE* in Air Canada Park create a welcoming and engaging space to visitors. They are layered in meaning, and prompt contemplation about Indigenous experiences on this land. They encourage visitors to gather, visit with one another, and contribute to the activation of space. The works complement one another, and present a cohesive story of Indigenous presence, and our contributions to the city of Winnipeg. While being anti-monuments, these artworks honour the ancestors and their living descendants. They assert presence in the face of absence, and provide visual remedy to downtown Winnipeg.

#### Endnotes

- 1 See [www.rolandesouliere.com.au](http://www.rolandesouliere.com.au)
- 2 See Wayne E. Daugherty, *Treaties Research Report Treaty One and Treaty Two (1871)*. Ottawa: Treaty and Historical Research Centre, Research Branch, Corporate Policy Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1983.
- 3 See [www.pc.gc.ca/apps/cseh-twih/n2\\_E.asp?-69](http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/cseh-twih/n2_E.asp?-69).
- 4 Rolande Souliere. Online interview by author. July 17, 2018.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Julie Nagam. Proposal to Winnipeg Arts Council. 2017. P.1.
- 7 See [www.hydro.mb.ca/IndigenousAgreements](http://www.hydro.mb.ca/IndigenousAgreements).
- 8 Ian Froese. "Another Manitoba First Nation claims discrimination at the hands of Hydro workers". [www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca), posted Aug. 28, 2018.
- 9 James Wilt. "Hydroelectric Projects Pose Risk to Indigenous People, Harvard Study Warns". [www.vice.com](http://www.vice.com), posted Nov. 28, 2016.
- 10 See [www.hydro.gc.ca/IndigenousAgreements](http://www.hydro.gc.ca/IndigenousAgreements).
- 11 Julie Nagam. Interview by phone with author. August 21, 2018.
- 12 Translation provided by Robert Houle.
- 13 See [www.edmontonarts.ca](http://www.edmontonarts.ca). Media Release, September 22, 2015.
- 14 Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero, Proposal to Winnipeg Arts Council. 2017. P.3.
- 15 Rebecca Belmore. Interview by phone with author. August 20, 2018.
- 16 Kenneth Lavallee. Proposal to Winnipeg Arts Council. 2017. P.1.
- 17 See [www.knnt.com/info](http://www.knnt.com/info).
- 18 Kenneth Lavallee. Interview in person with author. July 5, 2018.

## **RBOY Inc** **(Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero)**

*O-ween du muh waun (We were told)*, 2018  
Concrete, weathering steel

We chose to install this sculpture here in this place called Winipi Maniwapow, a gathering place for many nations and home to two rivers that meet.

The work is a symbol of the failed attempts to assimilate us. We were told to be more like them. It is an "anti-monument" to a forced colonial education. Instead, it speaks to knowledge that comes from culture, from tradition. The stack of school chairs on a concrete table is deliberately overturned to signify an ending, finality—like the "ivory tower" paradigm of colonial knowledge that Indigenous communities, every day, turns on its head.

*O-ween du muh waun.* The time of being told is over..



Rebecca Belmore (b. Upsala, Ontario) and Osvaldo Yero (b. Camaguey, Cuba) currently reside in the city of Toronto. Belmore is a multi-disciplinary artist whose works are rooted in the political and social realities of Indigenous communities, making evocative connections between bodies, land, and language. Yero immigrated to Canada in 1997. His work, mainly sculpture and installation, is politically and socially charged, contending with issues of national identity and playing with boundaries of kitsch and high art. Their public art commission *trace* (2014), for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, illustrates their collaborative interests. In *trace*, Belmore and Yero actively engaged Winnipeg's diverse community to create a large-scale blanket of beads from raw clay excavated from various locations throughout the city. For the past twenty years their working relationship has been mediated by their mutual interest in the material nature of art and its relationship to the body.



# Rolande Souliere

*Mediating the Treaties*, 2018  
Stainless steel, granite

*Mediating the Treaties* uses a two-headed coin to capture the ambivalence of Treaty No. 1. It addresses the verbal and written negotiations and differing and competing understandings of Treaty No. 1 provisions between Queen Victoria's (1819-1901) representatives and the seven Chiefs of Manitoba including Chiefs Miskookenew (Red Eagle or Henry Prince, 1819-1899) and Kakekapenais (Forever Bird or William Pennefather or Mann, 1816-1897/1898).



Rolande Souliere's art practice addresses Indigeneity on a local, national and international level through her use and manipulation of assisted readymade, handmade processes and abstraction. Living between Australia and Canada, countries that have significant Indigenous populations, Souliere reveals aspects of colonial histories that draw upon personal and collective histories on a global level. Souliere's well known artworks are those that employ Indigenous colours and symbolism through the use of street barrier and caution tape to comment on land claims, infrastructural intervention and economic expansion with ongoing colonial settlement.

Since 2013 Souliere has worked with Indigenous communities from Australia and Canada on her social art project *The Collage of Indigenization*. She has participated in national and international exhibitions and residencies, and has been the recipient of visual arts grants such as the New Work Grant by Canada Council in 2012 and 2015.

Souliere is Anishinaabe, born in Toronto, Canada, and is a member of Michipicoten First Nation. She holds a PhD in Visual Arts and an MVA from the University of Sydney, Australia.



# Julie Nagam

*Electrical Currents, 2018*

Glass, steel

Water is the life force or the essence of Manitoba, and the Northern section of the province is home to some of the strongest and largest hydroelectric developments in North America. In the south we consume electricity without knowledge of the land that is developed and the predominantly First Nations and Metis communities that are deeply affected. As consumers we need to continue to work towards sustainable energy consumption. This sculpture brings these issues to light using glass cast rocks with engraved petroglyphs, the Metis family floral pattern, the chevron water graphics and the abstract water turbine with the overall message that water is sacred and should be consumed and maintained with care.





Dr. Julie Nagam (Métis/German/Syrian) is the Chair of the History of Indigenous Art in North America, a joint appointment between the University of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. She is an Associate Professor in the faculty of History. Currently, Dr. Nagam is curating a public art installation for a Reconciliation Walk at The Forks in Winnipeg, and leading a team that is creating an Indigenous app for Winnipeg's art, architectural, and place-based history. Her artwork, *where white pines lay over the water*, was shown in Toronto, Ontario; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Lyon, France; Wellington, New Zealand. Her installation, *singing our bones home*, was shown in Markham, Ontario, in London, England and in Winnipeg. Nagam has commissioned work for *Nuit Blanche Manitowapow, speaking to the moon*, in Toronto in the fall of 2017, and for the Smithsonian's exhibition *Transformers* in New York, 2017-18, *the future is in the land*, which was a solo exhibition at A-Space, Toronto, and an upcoming solo at C103, *locating the little heartbeats*, in spring 2019.



# Kenneth Lavallee

*The Square Dancers, 2018*

Painted steel

Square dancing, or jigging, is the traditional dance of the Metis people of Manitoba. Performed to uptempo fiddle music and characterized by fancy footwork and limited upper body movement, the dancing continues today and remains a symbol of the resilience and optimism of the Metis people during Canada's formative years.

photo: Conceptual rendering for *The Square Dancers*, supplied by the artist.





photo: Production shot of *The Square Dancers* supplied by the artist.

Translating a primarily two-dimensional art practice into physical experiences which occupy and influence tangible space has been motivating Kenneth Lavallee's work as of late. Through public sculpture, large scale murals, kinetic sculpture and object design, Lavallee explores traditional ideas of balance, order, harmony and interconnectedness gathered from both Indigenous and Western learning and employs them in response to the environments and opportunities presented to him.

Kenneth is of Métis descent, and lives and works in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Treaty No. 1 territory and birthplace of the Métis Nation).

The Winnipeg Arts Council Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation with charitable status, charged by the City of Winnipeg to distribute funding to arts organizations and artists, to manage the City's Public Art Policy, and to champion development of the arts for the people of Winnipeg. As a pre-eminent city-building organization, the Winnipeg Arts Council focuses on the quality of life in the city and how arts and culture determines Winnipeg's reputation as a City of the Arts, both nationally and internationally.

The Winnipeg Arts Council's Public Art Program develops artwork in public spaces, facilitates community-based collaborations, integrates artists into City facilities through the Artist-in-Residence program, and organizes public events and free artwork tours.

Winnipeg's Public Art Policy was adopted by City Council in 2004 and is managed by the Winnipeg Arts Council on behalf of the City of Winnipeg.



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