

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual  
New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts:**

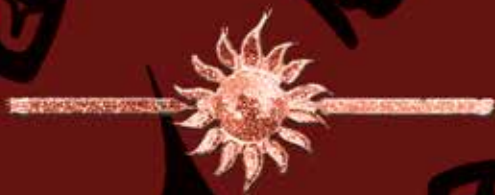
# **TRAILBLAZERS**

**Saturday, March 2, 2013**

**9:00 am - 4:30 pm**

**Room 5050, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**Minto Centre, Carleton University**



# TRAILBLAZERS

KWEY

Kwey, tansi, she:kon, tunngasugitsi, bonjour, and welcome to the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Trailblazers. As in the past, we acknowledge with gratitude the hospitality of the Algonquin people on whose traditional unceded territory we gather today.

Exciting, creative, innovative, inspiring, amusing, enlightening, even wondrous. These words, in various combinations, have been frequently used to describe the artistic achievements of today's presenters. They are not words we have encountered much in recent news stories about Aboriginal peoples, but they have regularly appeared in feedback from those who have attended the New Sun Conference over the past decade. Perhaps the mainstream media is missing something.

This year's conference, on the theme of Trailblazers, seeks to honour those individuals within the Aboriginal arts community whose radical acts of imagination, coupled with a dogged determination, have broken new ground in the fields of haute couture, literature, film, music, and the visual arts, ensuring an active Aboriginal presence in a global cultural landscape that has, until recently, all too easily acquiesced to an Aboriginal absence. Their fearless acts of imagined inclusion have opened doors and built bridges that have, in the words of the late Ojibway artist Carl Beam, allowed us to "dream ourselves as each other." As mentors and sometimes unwitting role models, today's presenters engage with the world through their respective artistic media, refracting indigenous realities in ways both lush and luminous, dark and disturbing, comic and clever, heartfelt and cautiously hopeful. The spectrum of symbols and imagined experience they employ is as broad and diverse as the communal stories they celebrate.

Carleton University's ongoing support of the New Sun Conference into its second decade reflects its commitment to incorporating indigenous knowledge and pedagogy into the life of the university. In this regard, I am indebted to President Roseann O'Reilly Runte and Dr. John Osborne, Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, for their continued commitment to indigenous teaching and learning, and especially to New Sun (Joy Maclaren) who has quietly provided support and encouragement for Aboriginal education over several decades, not only to Carleton but to numerous institutions across this country. Without such personal acts of kindness and generosity there would be no New Sun Conference.

Indigenous pedagogy is distinguished by several characteristics, among them: an emphasis on subjective, experiential learning; on storytelling, moral teachings and personal relationships; and on the importance of the arts and ceremony in attaining balance in life. Personal experience is privileged in both writing and research, where “writing from the heart” often provides a much needed emotional context for considered reflection and critical analysis.

One of the most potent qualities of Indigenous pedagogy is its transformative potential. For the past eight years this room, Minto 5050, has been transformed into an intimate, sacred space of indigenous learning through the prayers and cleansing practices of Elder Jim Albert, and the positive energy and personal gifts that each of you brings with you today. Over the years, and over the course of the day, not a few lives have been transformed. It is both a healing and redemptive space and a space of infinite possibility.

Holistic learning is also germane to the notion of indigenous pedagogy. This is perhaps best reflected in the teachings of the medicine wheel which seek to maintain balance among its four quadrants, representing the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional domains of our lives.

On this day, we will all be immersed in an experience of holistic learning where each of these four quadrants will be activated and energized – by the richly patterned wearing apparel of Dorothy Grant, the detailed fantasy landscapes of Daniel Heath Justice, the compelling stage and screen characterizations of Tantoo Cardinal, the public celebrations of visual arts curated by Gerald McMaster, and the evocative musical voicings of indigenous experience by Lucie Idlout.

No doubt, in the midst of stimulating our five physical senses – sight, sound, taste, touch and smell – a sixth sense, our sense of wonder, will also be animated. It can be argued that our sense of wonder is at the very heart of the medicine wheel encompassing all four quadrants.

Exciting, creative, innovative, inspiring, amusing, enlightening, even wondrous. Most assuredly! Today we embark on a journey of discovery and delight in the company of artists who have broken new ground and blazed new trails, enriching our lives along the way, and helping us to better understand what it means to be both Canadian and indigenous in this country.

Enjoy!

All my relations,

Allan J. Ryan

## PROGRAM - 2013

- 8:30 - 9:15      Registration, Coffee/juice/muffins
- 9:15 - 9:30      Welcome, **Allan J. Ryan**,  
New Sun Chair in Aboriginal Art and Culture
- Opening prayer, Elder **Jim Albert**
- Welcoming remarks, **Roseann O'Reilly Runte**,  
President, Carleton University
- 9:30 - 10:20      **Dorothy Grant**, haute couture fashion designer
- 10:20 - 10:35      Nutrition Break
- 10:35 - 11:25      **Daniel Heath Justice**, author and educator
- 11:30 - 12:20      **Tantoo Cardinal**, stage, film and television actress
- 12:30 - 1:30      Buffet luncheon of Native cuisine,  
Fenn Lounge, Residence Commons

## PROGRAM - 2013

Menu:

- Warm sunflower bannock bread
- Three sisters salad plate (roasted corn, mixed beans and yams)
- Greens and wildflower salad with saskatoon berries and rose petals garnished with slivers of smoked salmon
- Wild rice pilaf
- Rosemary needle and shallots with sautéed mussels
- Maple roasted root vegetables
- Mashed potatoes in bacon drippings with fresh herbs and clay salt
- Lakota venison stew (with wild turnip, onion and wild mushroom)
- Pan fried catfish
- Wild mushroom pie
- Baked apple, and strawberry and rhubarb pies, with berry compote and maple crème fraiche

1:30 - 2:00 **Lucie Idlout** in concert with Derek Downham

2:20 - 3:10 **Gerald McMaster**, curator and visual artist

3:15 - 4:05 **Lucie Idlout**, blues-rock singer/songwriter

4:10 – 4:30 Concluding remarks, gift basket draw, closing prayer



## Dorothy Grant

Dorothy Grant is an internationally renowned fashion designer and artist who was the first to combine traditional Haida designs and ceremonial wear with contemporary fashion. The driving force behind her clothing designs is “empowerment, pride and feeling good about oneself”, and using fashion to share Northwest culture with a broader audience. Her ability to maintain a successful business while remaining true to her artistic vision is one of her most impressive achievements. Her *Feastwear* and *Gold Label* designs in cashmere, silk, wool and leather include a range of clothing for men and women ranging from gowns and tuxedos to skirts and shirts. In conjunction with the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, she launched her *Red Raven* line of ‘everyday wear’ items. Ms. Grant is the recipient of numerous fashion design and business awards as well as a National Aboriginal Achievement Award. In addition to clothing North American dignitaries and celebrities, her garments are part of the permanent collection of several museums and galleries including the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver.

[www.dorothygrant.com](http://www.dorothygrant.com)



## Daniel Heath Justice

Daniel Heath Justice is a talented writer and academic. As an Associate Professor of English at the University of British Columbia, he serves as Chair of the university's First Nations Studies Program. Originally from Colorado, he lives in the traditional territory of the Musqueam people on the campus of the university. His work includes *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*, the Indigenous epic fantasy *The Way of Thorn and Thunder: The Kynship Chronicles*, and the co-edited anthologies *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* and, with James H. Cox, the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*. Current projects include a cultural history of badgers, a short volume on why Indigenous literature matters, and a new dark fantasy series.

Photo by Brad Fowler, Song of Myself Photography



## Tantoo Cardinal

An accomplished and celebrated actress, Tantoo Cardinal is known for her steadfast authenticity in bringing to life complex and diverse Aboriginal characters and working to dispel stereotypes. Her performances on stage and in both film and television have helped blaze a trail in an industry where few roles for Aboriginal women previously existed. Her 80 plus credits include *North of 60*, *Shattered*, *Legends of the Fall*, *Dances With Wolves*, *Black Robe*, *Loyalties*, *The Education of Little Tree*, *Luna*, *Spirit of the Whale*, *Unnatural & Accidental*, *Sioux City*, *Silent Tongue*, *Smoke Signals* and *Mothers & Daughters*. In Ottawa she most recently appeared in the National Arts Centre production of an Aboriginal *King Lear*. A founding member of the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company, she serves as an inspirational role model to aspiring youth. In 2010 Ms. Cardinal was inducted as a Member of the Order of Canada for her outstanding contributions to the arts. Other honours include the Harvard University Sun Hill Award for excellence in Aboriginal film making, and four honorary doctorates.





## Gerald McMaster

Gerald McMaster is an artist, curator, educator and senior arts administrator. He earned an MA in Anthropology at Carleton and holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam.

From 1981- 2000 he served as Curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. From there he was recruited by the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC and worked on major projects there for six years before returning to become Curator of Canadian Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. He has numerous publications and has represented Canada on major international boards, initiatives and art juries. As an artist, his work can be found in major national and international collections.

Among other honours, he is a recipient of a National Aboriginal Achievement Award and is an Officer of the Order of Canada. He currently divides his time between Ottawa and Philadelphia.



### Lucie Idlout

Lucie Idlout is a singer/songwriter from Nunavut. A blues/rocker with a gravelly voice, she has performed across Canada and throughout Europe, as well as hosting the talk show, *Buffalo Tracks*, for APTN. She released her first album, *E5-770, My Mother's Name*, in 2004. The title refers to the Canadian government practice of identifying Inuit by disc numbers instead of their names, a government program that ran from 1941 to 1978. Although she had already garnered national and international attention, it was when she opened for The White Stripes at their concert in Iqaluit in 2007 that the media truly began to take notice.

Her second album, *Swagger*, was released in 2009. The album includes "Lovely Irene", which was later reworked with a children's choir and renamed "Angel Street" – a song which powerfully calls attention to the issue of domestic violence. Lucie divides her time between Nunavut and Montreal.

[www.lucieidlout.com](http://www.lucieidlout.com)

## New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Backgrounder

Since its beginning in 2002, the New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts has brought together in a public forum individuals from various First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities, as well as from the non-Native community. Presenters have included those with expertise in photography, painting, sculpture, film making, acting, dance, musical performance, curating, arts education, architecture, literature and the culinary arts. Themes such as “healing through the arts,” “transforming traditions,” “engaging authenticity”, and “inspiring resilience” have been explored in a collegial and communal atmosphere that encourages dialogue on important cultural and artistic issues. The conference honours, and seeks to raise public awareness of individuals whose work affirms contemporary Aboriginal experience and contributes to increased cross-cultural understanding. All conference presentations have been videotaped and archived on DVD in the Carleton University Library.

**New Sun:** Continuing the legacy of her father, who was given the honorary name of “Old Sun” in 1962 by the Blackfoot Nation in Alberta, Joy Maclaren was given the name “New Sun” in 1995 by elders from the Blackfoot, Mohawk and Ojibwa nations at a special naming ceremony at Carleton University, to recognize her commitment to promoting Aboriginal culture and education across Canada. Her distinctive blue shawl, with its New Sun design in gold and copper sequins, was presented to her at that time. In 2011 she was given an honorary doctorate by Carleton University and made a Member of the Order of Canada in recognition of her philanthropy and ongoing support of post-secondary education.

**Allan J. Ryan** was appointed as the New Sun Chair in Aboriginal Art and Culture in 2001. The first of its kind in Canada, the Chair is situated in the School of Canadian Studies at Carleton. It was made possible through the support of the New Sun Fund, administered by the Community Foundation of Ottawa.

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For photos and feedback from previous conferences visit the New Sun Conference Archive: [www.trickstershift.com](http://www.trickstershift.com)

Centre for Aboriginal Culture and Education (CACE):  
[www.carleton.ca/aboriginal/](http://www.carleton.ca/aboriginal/)

**THANKS TO  
ALL THE PRESENTERS AND VOLUNTEERS  
AND THE FOLLOWING:**

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**JOHNNY EL-ALAM:** conference web design, Tantoo Cardinal film collage

**ANNA EYLER:** website synopses of all conference presentations

**CLASSIC FARE CATERING:** gourmet luncheon

**PETER MACDONALD, NUTSHELL MUSIC:**

sound, lighting, and performance ambiance

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**NEW SUN:** generosity, inspiration and financial support



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