

15th Annual
New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts:

Above the Noise

Saturday, February 27, 2016

9:00 am - 4:30 pm, Room 5050, 5th Floor

Minto Centre, Carleton University



New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts

Above the Noise - Allan J. Ryan

Kwey, tansi, she:kon, tunngasugitsi, bonjour, and welcome to the 15th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts: Above the Noise. As in the past, we acknowledge with gratitude the hospitality of the Algonquin people on whose traditional unceded territory we gather today.

Fifteen years ago this weekend, on February 28, 2002, we held the First New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts at Carleton. In truth, it was called a symposium for the first two years but then changed to conference, even though it soon became apparent that “conference” did not fully reflect the kind of energizing and inspiring event the New Sun Conference was quickly becoming. The theme of the inaugural conference was “Healing through the Arts”, and the presenters that year were Onondaga photographer/curator, Jeffrey Thomas; Ojibway comedian Don Kelly; Ojibway author and playwright, Drew Hayden Taylor; Inuit videographer and FASD educator, Evie Mark, with Cree writer and collaborator, Roberta Stout; Director of the White Mountain Academy of the Arts in Elliot Lake, Dr. Robert Kavanagh; and Academy co-founder, Earl Commanda, Chief of the Serpent River First Nation. The opening invocation and words of welcome were given by Carleton Journalism professor, and member of the Haida Nation, Cle-alls (John Medicine Horse Kelly). Midway through, we shared a light luncheon of Native foods while enjoying the flute music of Mohawk elder Rohahas, accompanied by Peigan drummer and dancer, Paula du Hamel. More than a hundred people from the Carleton and greater Ottawa community came out - students, faculty, government employees, high school teachers, artists, and members of the general public and the local Indigenous community.

It was an auspicious beginning. What was clear from the outset was a desire on the part of those present to not only listen, and learn how the arts could be an effective tool in the promotion of cultural and cross-cultural healing, but to learn how they could actively participate in the healing process. At the same time, there was a fervent desire to recognize and celebrate the creative achievements of the participating artists. In the ensuing years the New Sun Conference has sought to sustain these inaugural twin visions, providing an intimate forum for inter-cultural dialogue, with ample opportunity for personal engagement, while offering a space to honour the lives and works and stories of Indigenous artists across a broad spectrum of creativity. Over the years, it has been an inspiring, spiritual, hopeful, humorous, challenging and energizing space.

Among the many memorable Conference moments some stand out: the running day-long bingo game to highlight presenter Darryl Dennis's role as host of APTN's TV show, *Bingo and a Movie*; author Joseph Boyden reading from his novel *Three Day Road*, three days after it won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize in Toronto; Tanya Tagaq and her cousin Celina Kalluk conducting an impromptu lesson in the basics of Inuit throat singing; children's author Michael Kusugak's animated storytelling; members of Carleton's student Word Warriors Society presenting a Pendleton blanket to Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor to recognize his contributions to Indigenous literature; Tom Jackson's unexpected performance of his signature song, *The Huron Carol*, following his presentation; the use of Christi Belcourt's stunning beadwork-inspired mural, *My Heart (Is Beautiful)*, as a backdrop for the 2010 conference; the surprise distribution of a limited edition print, *Shining Through*, by West Coast artist/dancer and presenter Mike Dangeli, to everyone in attendance to mark the tenth anniversary of the New Sun Conference in 2011; A Tribe Called Red's joyous mid-day transformation of the Fenn Lounge into a

dance club with their infectious electric powwow music; and Joy Maclaren's striking presence wearing the distinctive blue robe she was given when she received the name, "New Sun", from First Nations elders at a Carleton ceremony in 1995.

New Sun received the name and the robe in recognition of her philanthropy and support for Indigenous education. She helped establish the New Sun Chair in Aboriginal Art and Culture at Carleton, and in partnership with the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, most notably Dr. John Osborne, funded the New Sun Conference for more than a decade. At the time of her passing in November, 2014, at the age of ninety-two, Joy had attended seven of the previous nine conferences. Like many others here today, she considered the conference a harbinger of spring, and an event not to be missed. The same longstanding commitment to the conference is found in many of those whose names appear on the back of this program, in Carleton President Roseann O'Reilly Runte, and in Elder Jim Albert, whose warm words of welcome and thanksgiving have set the tone for the conference for the past twelve years.

A distinguishing feature of the New Sun Conference is the sense of community it fosters, with attendees likening the annual gathering of the New Sun community to a family reunion. Familial connection is an apt analogy that extends to the conference presenters as well. On separate occasions they have included: film maker and actress Jennifer Podemski and her sister, actress and singer Tamara Podemski; artist and curator Gerald McMaster and his daughter, photo artist Meryl McMaster; photographer and curator Jeffrey Thomas, his son Bear Witness, co-founder of A Tribe Called Red, and Bear's grandmother, actress and playwright, Gloria Miguel; actress and writer/director Kaniehtiio Horn, and this year, her sister Olympian and Storyboots ambassador for Manitobah Mukluks, Waneek Horn-Miller.

So tangible was the sense of *communitas* and familial camaraderie at last year's New Sun Conference, that former Dean Osborne referred to the event in his weekly blog as a "love in." This was high praise indeed, especially for a conference. But these words aptly presage the theme of this year's conference, "Above the Noise", taken from a line in the song, *Let's Sing a New Song*, from Andrea Menard's latest CD, *Lift*. The fuller context for this lyrical phrase is:

What if we chose not to be shy and sang of love
What if we raised our voices high and sang above the noise

Within the context of the New Sun Conference, and mindful of the recent recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Above the Noise" has added resonance, suggesting a desire to raise the level of discourse and public conversation above the pedestrian to something more meaningful, communal and compassionate. At the same time, "Above the Noise" recognizes that all of the presenters have publically distinguished themselves in their individual creative endeavours -- from film, music, literature and painting, to education, curation and the revitalization of traditional arts. In so doing they have brought honour not just to themselves and their home communities, but to the broader Indigenous arts community and the country as a whole. In the process, they have become role models and a source of inspiration to youth -- especially Aboriginal youth -- and to people of all ages. This deserves to be celebrated, and "Above the Noise" captures this sense of celebration and hope. And on a very modest scale, fifteen years on, this may be what truth and reconciliation looks like...and sounds like...and feels like.

Enjoy the day! All my relations.

PROGRAM - 2016

- 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 **Alethea Arnaquq-Baril**, film producer and director
- 10:20 - 10:35 Nutrition Break
- 10:35 - 11:25 **Katherena Vermette**, poet, novelist and children's author
- 11:30 - 12:20 **Robert Houle**, painter, curator, critic and educator
- 12:30 - 1:30 Buffet luncheon of Native cuisine,
Fenn Lounge, Residence Commons

PROGRAM - 2016

Luncheon Menu:

- Warm bannock bread with field berry compote.*
- Wild rice mixed with roasted corn and little neck clams with a sun dried tomato vinaigrette.
- Bitter lettuce and root vegetable salad with saskatoon berries tossed in raspberry vinaigrette.
- Pan seared rainbow trout fillet topped with fried caper butter and garnished with roasted julienne fennel bulbs and yellow beets.
- Braised bison stew with wild turnip, celery root and mushroom ragout, topped with puff pastry.*
- Pan seared corn polenta with herbs.
- Sweet and spicy acorn and butternut squash with roasted rosemary yams.
- Rhubarb and strawberry crisp.*
- Pecan, butter, and fruit tarts.

* contains gluten

- 1:30 - 2:00 **Andrea Menard in concert**, with **Robert Walsh** (guitar and vocals), **Daniel Roy** (drums, percussion, vocals), **Kim Brandt** (bass)
- 2:20 - 3:10 **Waneek Horn-Miller**, Olympic athlete and Storyboots ambassador for Manitobah Mukluks
- 3:15 - 4:05 **Andrea Menard**, singer-songwriter and actor
- 4:10 – 4:30 Concluding remarks, gift basket draw, closing prayer



Alethea Arnaquq-Baril

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril is an Inuk producer and film director from Iqaluit, Nunavut, where she was born and raised. She owns Unikkaat Studios Inc., an independent production company which focuses on producing Inuit cultural documentaries and Inuktitut language productions. She is a graduate of Sheridan College, and completed four months of animation training at

the Banff Centre. She serves on the Board of the Nunavut Film Development Corporation.

Arnaquq-Baril directed her first film, *Tunnit: Retracing the Lines of Inuit Tattoos* in 2010, a documentary about her journey to explore the lost tradition of Inuit facial tattoos. It premiered at the 2011 imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. Alethea directed the well-travelled Inuit Communications Systems Ltd. (ICSL) short, *Inuit High Kick*, an Official Selection for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics program. She also directed the NFB animated film, *Lumaqjuuq: The Blind Boy and the Loon*, which was named Best Canadian Short Drama at the 2010 imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, and received the Golden Sheaf Award for Best Aboriginal Film at the Yorkton Film Festival in 2011. Her animated short production, *Sloth*, was one of fifteen films selected for Telefilm's *Perspective Canada* screenings at the Cannes Film Festival.

In 2015 Arnaquq-Baril contributed *Aviliaq (Entwined)* to *The Embargo Project*, an anthology of five short films by Canadian Indigenous women. She is currently directing *Angry Inuk*, a feature documentary set for broadcast on Superchannel. The film explores how Inuit are coming up with new and provocative ways to deal with international seal hunting controversies.

She says, "We are an oral culture, and so that means our culture and history, up until recently, has mostly been undocumented, or documented by outsiders. This is changing slowly, but there is an enormous amount of knowledge and history that needs to be documented in a short period of time, while the last elders that lived traditionally out on the land are still alive. Filmmaking is such a natural and easy way for Inuit to do this important work."

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Katherena Vermette

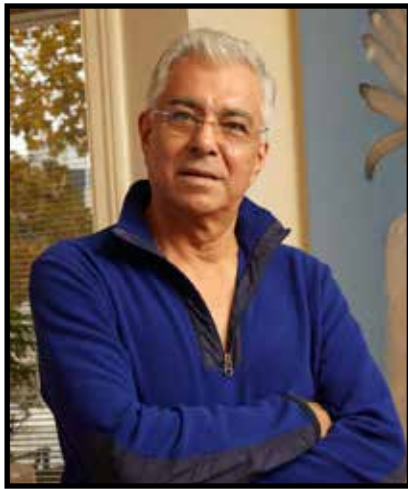
Katherena Vermette is a Métis writer of poetry, fiction and children's literature. Her work has appeared in literary magazines and anthologies across the globe. She has been a proud member of the Indigenous Writers Collective for over a decade, and holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia. Currently, she is working on projects with the



National Film Board, and finishing work on a novel, *The Break*, that will be released by House of Anansi in the fall of 2016.

In 2013 Katherena received the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry for her first book, *North End Love Songs*. The collection takes us on a journey through Winnipeg's North End, where she grew up, and where she returned to live as an adult. "Sometimes things have to be written in poetry," she says. For her, one of those things is the intricate and sometimes painful love of a neighbourhood more frequently associated with crime than with beauty. It is where a brother's disappearance is trivialized by local media and police because he is young and Indigenous. It is also where young girls share secrets, movies, cigarettes, Big Gulps and stories of love, and where a young mother full of both maternal trepidation and joy watches her small daughters as they play in the park. The collection has been described as "a book that combines elegiac and fiercely ecstatic melodies to sing of a complicated love for a city, a river, and a neighbourhood. It is deep rooted in its location, yet will reach out to readers everywhere with its harsh and beautiful tunings of growing up female in Winnipeg's North End."

When not writing, Katherena coordinates art programs in Winnipeg and lives with her family in a cranky old house within skipping distance of the temperamental Red River.



Robert Houle

Robert Houle is a contemporary Saulteaux artist, curator, critic and educator. Now based in Toronto, he is a member of Manitoba's Sandy Bay First Nation. He graduated from both the University of Manitoba (BA) and McGill University (BEd), and studied painting and drawing at the International Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria. Houle has been exhibiting

internationally for over 40 years and taught at the Ontario College of Art and Design University for over 20 years. From 1977-1980 he was Curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Houle draws upon both Western and First Nations art to address issues of European colonization. He is informed by his dual experiences with Indigenous spiritual practices and the Catholic Church, making use of Aboriginal symbols and ritual objects while combining them with Western sculptural and painting techniques along with text and photographs.

He is the author of several essays and monographs on major contemporary First Nations and Native American artists and has curated or co-curated groundbreaking exhibitions such as *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa* (1992) and *New Works by a New Generation* for the Assembly of First Nations in 1982. His work can be found in the collections of many institutions including the National Gallery of Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Royal Ontario Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney Australia, and the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

Among the honours he has received are the 2015 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, an honorary doctorate from the University of Manitoba (2014), the Canada Council Residency for the Visual Arts in Paris (2006), distinguished alumnus of the University of Manitoba (2004), an Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship (2003), the Toronto Arts Award (2001), and the Janet Braide Memorial Award for Excellence in Canadian Art History (1993). In 2000 he was made a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

Waneek Horn-Miller

Waneek Horn-Miller is a Mohawk from the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory near Montreal. She is a sports commentator for CBC and APTN, an advocate for sport, fitness and wellness, a motivational speaker and currently serves as the brand ambassador for Manitobah Mukluks, the world-famous Canadian Aboriginal footwear company. Waneek is a graduate



of Carleton University. Her prowess in water polo led to recognition as Carleton's Women's Athlete of the Year for three years from 1994 through 1997, and she played on the Carleton team that won the OUA championship in 1994-1995 and 1995-1996. In 2014 she was named to the Ravens Athletics Hall of Fame.

After graduation, she went on to win a gold medal at the Winnipeg Pan Am Games in 1999 and in 2000 she appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine as co-captain of the Canadian team at the Sydney Summer Olympics. The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport recently named her one of Canada's most influential women in sport. She served as the assistant chef de mission for Team Canada at the 2015 Pan Am Games, and in 2006 was a torchbearer for Canada at the Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy.

In her association with Manitobah Mukluks, she serves as ambassador for the Storyboot Project, a program that supports traditional artists by selling their work for art prices worldwide. She is actively involved in the running of the Storyboot Schools, where the art of mukluk and moccasin making is passed on to the next generation. A six week Storyboot School was held recently here at Carleton.

Waneek is a model of perseverance, good-natured humour, and wisdom. She encourages others to follow their own dreams, fight for their heritage, and achieve their full potential even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.



Andrea Menard

Andrea Menard is a Métis singer, songwriter, and actor who has released four award-winning CDs. Menard has performed for royalty, prime ministers, ambassadors, governors-general and even sang her song, *Peace*, to the world's NATO generals. But maybe even more importantly, she has performed empowering concerts for thousands of Aboriginal youth. She took

her one-woman show, *The Velvet Devil*, across Canada, and received a Gemini award nomination for her performance in the TV adaptation. Her jazz symphony show, *I Am Andrea Menard*, debuted with the Regina Symphony Orchestra in May 2014.

Her latest CD, *Lift*, which she co-wrote with long-time producer and collaborator Robert Walsh, was recently nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award. Her Métis heritage has a long history of bridging two cultures, and with this CD Andrea has created a collection of songs meant to bring people together. Her first three CDs received multiple awards, in both the Folk and Aboriginal music categories at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards and the Western Canadian Music Awards. Her TV special, *Sparkle*, a 70-minute holiday special, garnered multiple Gemini Award nominations. The acclaimed performer has successfully bridged multiple styles by combining a powerful voice, a folk upbringing, a theatrical background, and a glamorous jazz persona, with her Native spiritual teachings.

As an actor Andrea has starred in several TV series on APTN and TVO, including *Blackstone* and *Hard Rock Medical*, along with award winning roles in *Rabbit Fall*, *Moccasin Flats*, and *Wapos Bay*. She recently completed filming the first season of the first transgender sitcom, *The Switch*.

And she's a hell of a jigger.

www.andreamenard.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, Eric Harvie, 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. In 2013 the New Sun Joy Maclaren Adaptive Technology Centre opened in Carleton’s newly renovated MacOdrum Library.

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. In 2015 he received the inaugural Alumni of Influence Award for Distinguished Educator from the Ontario College of Art and Design University, his first alma mater.

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For photos and feedback from previous conferences visit the New Sun Conference Archive @ www.trickstershift.com

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