University of British Columbia,

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ARTH 561 – Indigenous Art: The Burning Issues?

September 5: Introduction: Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art

(Sakahàn = to light a fire in Algonquin) www.gallery.ca/sakahan

Is a large group exhibition, in a prominent national institution, where the essential criterion for inclusion is that an artist be a member of an historically constituted category of cultures, a form of display or a form of disguise? As art, does the work in the exhibition acquire critical protection, wholly or in part, from its category? Some maintain that historical boundaries must be observed and that such questions are beyond the reach of outsiders. Is a critical premise built into the idea of Sakahan, and if so how is it defined and articulated?

What might be the advantages of thinking through such issues in the light of one exhibition? Its institutional frame, curatorial filter, and the National Gallery’s gift shop may exemplify the limiting conditions that shape all knowledge.

The weeks’ topics are suggested provisionally as ways of directing our thinking about specific works, or groups of works, whether in Sakahàn or not. As such they are up for debate, or demolition. Each week one or two works from the exhibition are suggested as potential entry points for discussion.

Its time and place being significant Sakahàn does not occur in an exhibitionary vacuum. Consider the 2012 Sydney Biennale All our Relations; Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture currently circulating in Canada; and the 2013 Venice Biennale Il Palazzo Enciclopedico/The Encyclopedic Palace – all defined by their programmatic inclusivity. Amongst other precedents: Art/Artifact 1988;


Our first reading: the catalogue essays by the three curators of Sakahàn – Christine Lalonde, ‘Introduction: At the Crossroads of Indigeneity, Globalization and Contemporary Art’; Candice

**September 12: The survey and the critique – of Indigeneity, colonialism, and art as international. For this class we will all have read the curators’ essays.**

Fiona Pardington, *Ahua: A Beautiful Hesitation* 2010


**September 19  The Artist as Historian: History lesson, Memory work, and Indian Residential Schools.**

In recognition of the final meeting of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in Vancouver, and UBC’s closure on Sept. 20 to raise awareness of the IRS, we will consider two other current exhibitions - *Witnesses: Art and Canada’s Indian Residential Schools* at the Belkin Art Gallery, and *NET-ETH:Going Out of the Darkness* at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Malaspina Print Gallery, and the Urban Aboriginal Fair Trade Gallery at Skwachàys Healing Lodge.

David Garneau. 2012. 'Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation', in *West Coast Line*, #74. Reconcile This! 28-47.


September 26: The adivasi of India and Gond art in Sakahan

- Class visitors: Katherine Hacker and Steven Inglis (alternative date: November 14)

*Smoking Taj.* Venkat Raman Singh Shyam, 2009

Hacker, Katherine. “‘A simultaneous validity of co-existing cultures': J. Swaminathan, the Bharat Bhavan and contemporaneity.” In press. jpg

Garimella, Annapurna. *Aboriginalistan* in the Gallery. 71-84.


October 3: Aboriginal art - “a white thing" or contemporary art?

*Encore tranquillité.* Jimmie Durham, 2008


Jimmie Durham. 2013. 'Against Internationalism’. *Third Text.* 27:1. 29-32; and


October 10: Cultural modes or social art practice?


**October 17:**  CTG away - use the time to explore critical response in the media and online. Bring to the next class one discussion, or idea that you have encountered, with its source, relevant to the seminar’s theoretical issues.

**October 24:** Paul Chaat Smith visits the class

*Dragonfly*, Brian Jungen 2008

Smith, Paul Chaat. 2011. 'Bad to the Bone: Comanche Ultraviolence, White Supremacy, and You'. Paper presented at NAISA. (2,000 words)

Smith, Paul Chaat. 'Money Changes Everything'. 3-8.


**October 31:** Indigenous film and video

*Mun rahkistan in mun ge (Je t'aime, moi non plus)* GeirTore Holm 2005


November 7: The Work of Jolene Rickard


November 14: Absences - of weaving and baskets for example.

If such things are neither ‘art’ nor 'contemporary' does the reason lie in their materials, their technologies, or in hierarchies of value? Is there some resolution in the works considered in our October 10 class?

Laughter and Iconography    Abraham Cruzvillegas and Jimena Mendoza, 118-26.


November 21: Student presentations on research papers in progress

November 28: “