

institutional work, but continue well beyond those confines. A second ceiling-mounted piece, *When I close my eyes, deep down, I know this is the answer...* (2023) again contrasts colonial knowledge with traditional teachings in a similar vein to *In Plain Sight*. Appearing possibly as a skirt, a lodge or a tee pee, coded meanings are layered through-out the piece. Nestled in a corner of the gallery, *It really is a circle...* (2023) presents a wardrobe for an Indigenous artist-educator entangled in the questions of relationality and lived experience while working as part of an institutional Indigenization process. The perplexing situation is perhaps best expressed by one of the shirts whose bold lettering inquires of the institution and the viewer, “what are you willing to allow.”

Both Judy and Katherine have a clear passion for beading and other methods of ornamentation, as evidenced by the incredible beadwork on many of their works, as well as a deep love for the people who form their social circles and help guide them through their lives. To return to the relational aspect of curating this exhibition, all the art in *mâmahohkamâtowak* was discussed and chosen in conversation between myself, the curator, and Judy and Katherine in order to convey the importance of their working relationship over the years. The exhibition is, thus, about relationality, conversation and adornment, considering all aspects of being in a holistic manner. The adornment transcends boundaries, past human bodies to include animals, trees and even buildings. The works are placed in all six directions, on all walls of the gallery, on the ceiling and the ground, calling diverse knowledges into an institutional space for a brief moment.

JUDY ANDERSON is nêhiyaw from Gordon First Nation, SK, Treaty 4. Her current work is created with the purpose of honouring people in her life and nêhiyaw intellectualizations of the world. Anderson is Professor with the University of Calgary, Department of Art and Art History.

KATHERINE BOYER (Métis/Settler) is a multidisciplinary artist, whose work is focused on methods bound to textile arts and the handmade. Boyer’s art and research encompasses personal family narratives, entwined with Métis history, material culture, architectural spaces (human made and natural). Boyer is Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba, School of Art.

JESSIE RAY SHORT’s practice involves uncovering connections between the nuanced history of Michif communities. They explore diverse topics including space and time, Indigenous and settler histories, Michif visual culture, personal narratives, spiritual and scientific belief systems, parallel universes, electricity, aliens and non-human being(s).

Cover

mâmahohkamâtowak: Judy Anderson and Katherine Boyer, artists’ performance (with Isabelle Forsythe-Ryno), September 19, 2024. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Inside (from top)

Right: Katherine Boyer, *The Tree Line*, 2024. Seed beads on smoked moosehide, 2x4’s, poplar and birch plywood, cyanotype linen, bulldog cotton twill, hand-dyed wool, tree tags. Left: Judy Anderson, *Exploit Robe (Going Pro)*, 2022. Size 10 Czech beads, traditionally tanned moose hide. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Right: Judy Anderson, *As she walked down the hallway, she unintentionally... Indigenized*, 2023. Moose hide, copper jingles, steel hoops, sound. Left background: Katherine Boyer, *The Story of Ovie and Fwin*, 2024. Tyvek, oak. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Judy Anderson, *As she walked down the hallway, she unintentionally... Indigenized (detail)*, 2023. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Katherine Boyer, *Meet you Across the Medicine Line*, 2020. Seed beads on stroud cloth, cedar and fir 2x4’s, chord. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Katherine Boyer, *Mother Berries (detail)*, 2019. Seed beads on white stroud cloth. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Judy Anderson, *In Plain Sight (detail)*, 2024. Size 11 Miyuki and Czech seed beads and copper beads, canvas tarp, ribbon, rocks, fur felt hat, leather, glass jars, copper rivets, shell hair pipe, smoked moose hide, copper pipe, wooden stools. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Back Cover

Katherine Boyer, *Meet you Across the Medicine Line*, 2020. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Judy Anderson, *When I close my eyes, deep down, I know this is the answer...*, 2023. Broad cloth, rocks, tobacco, wooden bowl, copper strapping. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

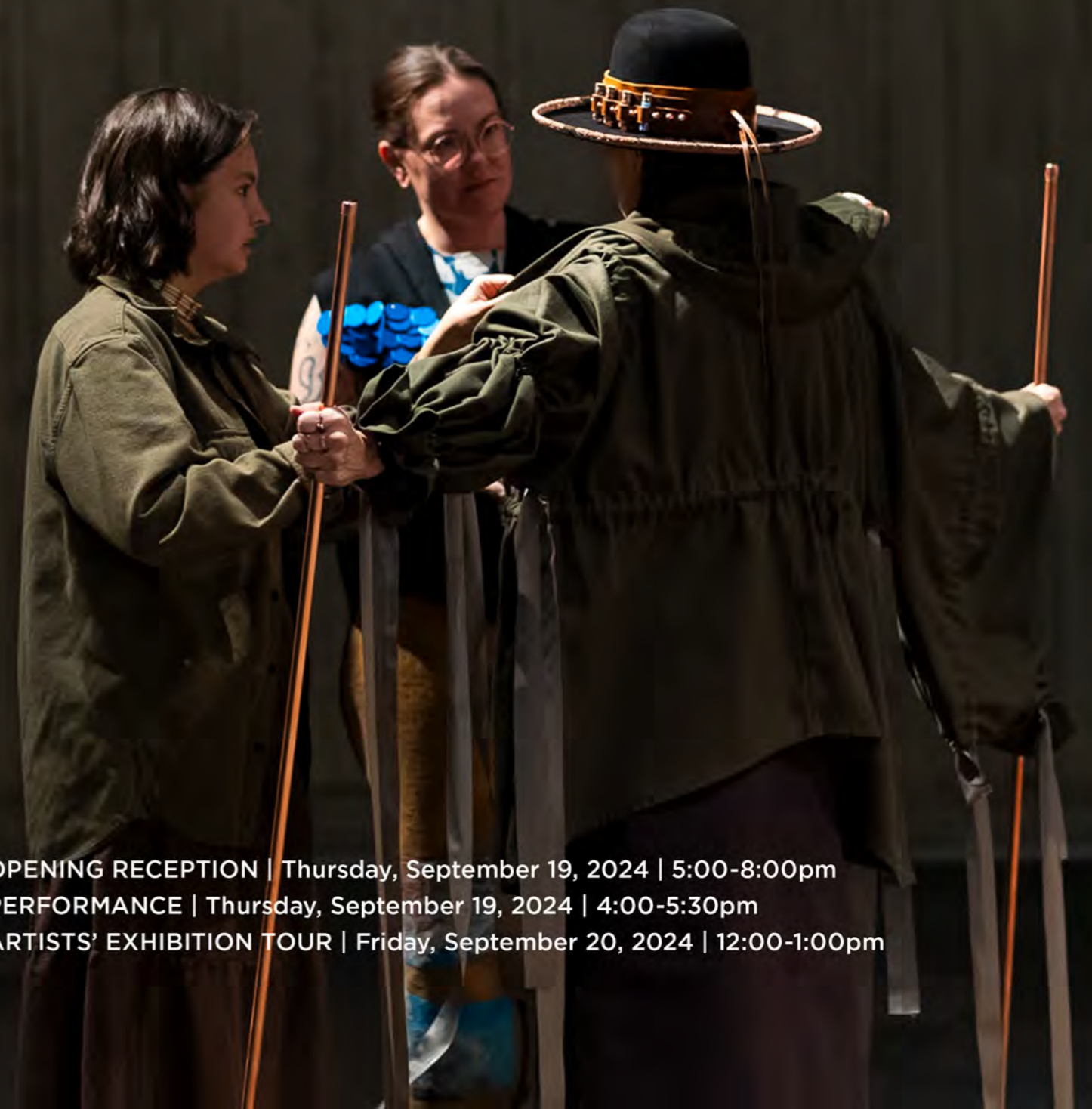
Katherine Boyer, *The Story of Ovie and Fwin (detail)*, 2024. Tyvek, oak. Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary. Photo: Andy Nichols, LCR PhotoServices.

Curated by Jessie Ray Short

mâmahohkamâtowak

JUDY ANDERSON and KATHERINE BOYER

Nickle Galleries | University of Calgary
September 19 - December 14, 2024



OPENING RECEPTION | Thursday, September 19, 2024 | 5:00-8:00pm

PERFORMANCE | Thursday, September 19, 2024 | 4:00-5:30pm

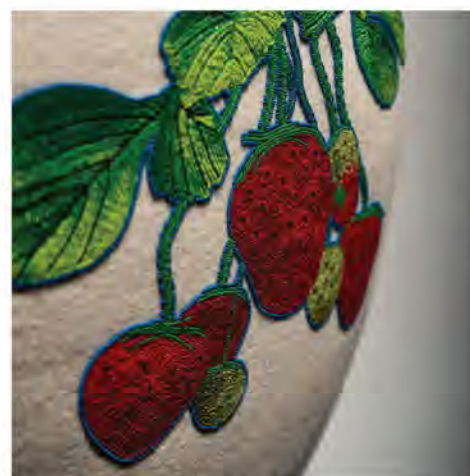
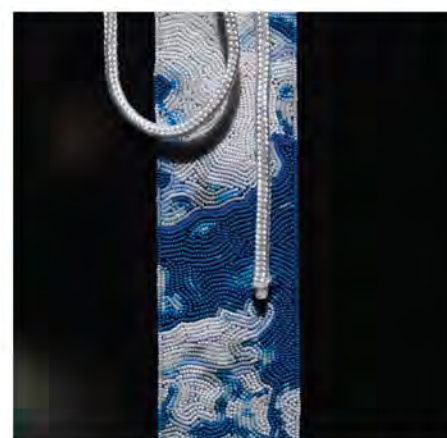
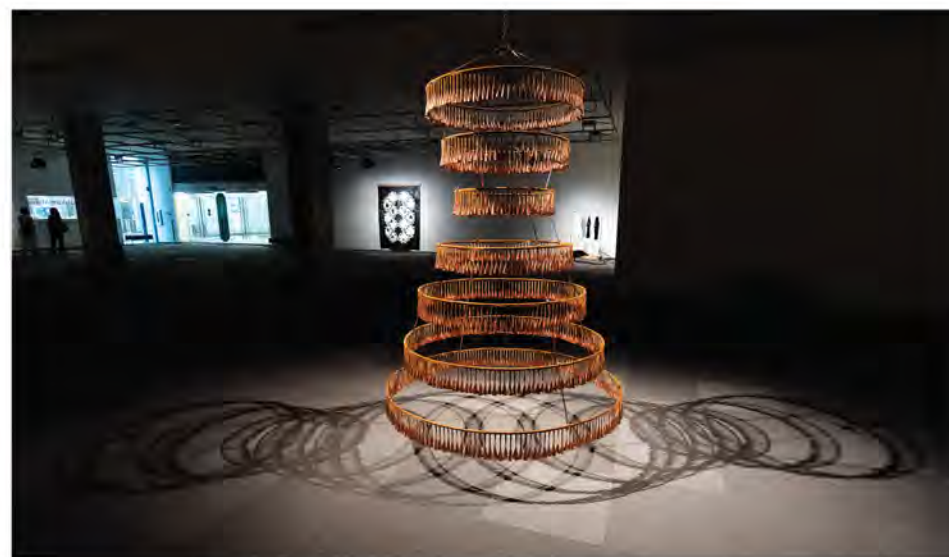
ARTISTS’ EXHIBITION TOUR | Friday, September 20, 2024 | 12:00-1:00pm

On behalf of Nickle Galleries at the University of Calgary, it is a pleasure to share the remarkable artwork of Judy Anderson and Katherine Boyer curated by Jessie Ray Short. *māmawohkamátowak*, a Cree word that refers to working collaboratively, is a beautiful metaphor for the artists' relationship with each other as well as their broader relationships with kin, non-human kin and the land. Drawing on a variety of materials and techniques (including beading, carpentry, performance, cyanotype and sewing) their work encourages reflection on the many facets of colonialism, gender politics, and identity.

The exhibition emerged as part of a broader initiative to 'Indigenize' Nickle Galleries—a critical process that is difficult to define. Describing a three-part spectrum of Indigenization in the Canadian academy, Gaudry and Lorenz¹ note that most institutions have focused on inclusion, rather than reconciliation and decolonization. With *māmawohkamátowak*, the Nickle attempts to take some small steps beyond inclusion. We strove, for example, to work with Judy, Katherine and Jessie collaboratively, to build consensus, and embrace an interpretive strategy that respects and makes room for difference. Hence, rather than offering 'definitive' texts and labels (a long-standing colonial prerogative), Short provides a relational account about the creation of the works and Judy and Katherine's deep friendship. Other strategies included mounting Anderson's *Exploit Robe (Going Pro)*, 2022 and animal pelt series (*August, Rhys, Mom, Brenda, Connor, Jenny, Carmen, Ruth, Katherine*) directly onto the gallery's mid-century brutalist cement walls. This evocative, admittedly surface gesture juxtaposes knowledge systems and their respective places in the academy. The twelve art works in the exhibition effectively call and respond to each other, making room for knowing and not knowing. They engage senses often ignored in museums—the smell of tanned moosehide, the sound of sanding, the gentle chorus of jingles and textures of skin, fur and beads—senses closely linked with memory and experience. As Judy noted, community and non-community members will understand and connect with the work differently.

A performance, presented at the exhibition opening, involved the artists working together, dressing each other, and walking through the exhibition. They animated the beaded garments included in Judy's *In Plain Sight*, 2024 and Katherine's *The Tree Line*, 2024, challenging normative museum display practices. The culmination of the performance was marked by Judy and Katherine climbing a flight of stairs and pausing on the second floor of the gallery, overlooking the space and the gathered visitors. It was a powerful moment of redress and reconciliation. *māmawohkamátowak: Judy Anderson and Katherine Boyer* is a beautiful, evocative exhibition that Nickle Galleries is honored to facilitate.

1 Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 14(3), 218-227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180118785382>



Transformative relations through creative conversations

by Jessie Ray Short

The art of *māmawohkamátowak* is a conversation between art, territory, materials, communities and people. Featuring the works of Judy Anderson and Katherine Boyer, the exhibition is an exploration of Indigenous identity, relationality, and decolonial strategies through creative practice. The exhibition's title, a Cree word defining the idea of co-operation as "they work together," sets the tone for the collaborative spirit and shared vision that permeates the show. As artists from nēhiyaw (Cree) and Métis backgrounds, respectively, Judy and Katherine draw on their work together, their deep cultural connections and long-standing friendship to bring together a body of work that reflects their intertwined artistic practices. To fully ground the relational nature of *māmawohkamátowak*, a brief story about how I became involved. Just before being approached to curate the exhibition, Judy Anderson joined myself and a group of artist colleagues and friends who were singing in a private room at a karaoke club. In between songs, Judy and I were catching up on our lives, which involved our respective creative practices, having known each other for the better part of a decade. As we shared images and ideas behind new pieces in our practices, I was fascinated to see that we had each been coming up with novel, wearable artworks, each of which included not only an item of clothing to be worn by the artist, but a performative action that would occur with the display of the work in question. It was at this point that Judy explained to me how her long-time friend, colleague and former mentee, Katherine Boyer, an artist with whom I have also worked with in the past, had been working on a new piece alongside her that also included wearable artwork meant to be animated through performance as part of the exhibition being developed for the Nickle Galleries at the University of Calgary.

Sometime later, I was officially approached to curate *māmawohkamátowak*, which reflects the evolution of each artists' individual practice, yet is also in response to and deeply influenced by the connections that they maintain through their twelve-year friendship. The result is *māmawohkamátowak*, a hybrid survey exhibition of past works from each artist, centered around two new installation pieces of wearable art activated through a collaborative performance by the artists at the exhibition opening. Katherine's *The Tree Line* (2024) and Judy's *In Plain Sight* (2024) are multifaceted, demonstrating what Leila Timmins terms "the gifts of being well adorned"¹ wherein elements of the installations are briefly transformed into the clothing for the body by their makers before being re-installed. Each piece constitutes an engagement with the symbolic gesture of creating, embodying and transfiguring their art within a formal gallery space, as an activation of the interrelatedness of all the work in the gallery.

In developing their wearable art installations, Judy and Katherine reflect on some key questions about the complexity of self-representation, while also attempting to subvert the expected perception of being "Indigenous" artists.² *In Plain Sight* is a work of many layers, some of which are hidden from view with purpose, that honours the importance of traditional teachings that guide Judy's life. The top layer and items placed alongside it are transformed into a shirt, skirt and robe for Judy before being reinstalled in its layered configuration on the ground. The perceptive and informed eye may understand glimpses of the information to which Judy is referring. However, the information is coded and cannot be understood unless

1 Timmins, Leila in Dana Claxton et al., Dana Claxton, First edition. ed., Scotiabank Photography Award: Dana Claxton, (Göttingen. Germany: Steidl, 2021), 8.

2 Judy Anderson, Personal Communication, Aug 29, 2024.

in possession of a specific kind of knowledge that is typically not accessible in a formal educational institution like a university. Thus, the knowledge is present, yet hidden in plain sight. Katherine's installation, *The Tree Line*, includes partial framing for a room mid-construction. The floor fans out in a pattern mimicking the rays of the sun spilling through an ethereal window. Katherine draws upon Rebecca Solnit's consideration of the interplay between elements that takes place within trees³ as they convert, in Katherine's reading of Solnit, "captured light and air and water"⁴ into an important material to make the homes which protect us from these same elements. Simultaneously, the woodworking skills are an homage to both Katherine's father and the gesture of queering hardware stores and construction materials in general. A pair of intricately beaded chainsaw safety chaps are hung, casually, yet intentionally, over part of the exposed framing, recognizing the labour implied in the project. Katherine's upbringing "under a heavy canopy of blue"⁵ acknowledges the overwhelming presence of prairie sky in her life, reflected in the swirling patterns so lovingly adorned on the chainsaw chaps.

Moving further into the gallery, tracing the path of Judy and Katherine's initial performance, the viewer may note the conversation between other pieces, expressed through common elements. Each artist's work is reflective of their lived experience, personal and creative interests, and the relationships that have provided the context for all elements combined. Another new work by Katherine, *The Story of Ovie and Fwin* (2024), is a lovingly crafted Tyvek quilt that blurs the boundaries between fabrication, crafting and construction. The quilt visually expresses a story of love, grief, and freedom, about two very important people in Katherine's life, nicknamed Ovie and Fwin. Questioning the boundaries between self and other, Katherine's video work *blurthebinary* (2021) shows the artist attempting to sand two trees together with a beaded sanding strap that reads, in binary code, the title of the work. Through the process of sanding, the work also considers strategies that deconstructs gendered language, binary thinking, and a dichotomous experience of identity that the artist regularly grapples with. *Pockets to Hold: Penitence and Resistance* (2019) is another type of dichotomy, a boundary between the meaning of a word and the speaker, created by the wall pockets that would traditionally adorn Métis homes and hold whatever the maker might need kept in a particular spot. The gift of adornment is continued in *Meet You Across the Medicine Line* (2024) and *Motherberries* (2019), each beautifully beaded and crafted work holding stories and memories about key people and places in their stitches.

Judy's interests in working with hides and furs, honouring the animals that provide them and the people they represent in her life, while also questioning the intersections of institutions and Indigenous peoples in relation to her life outside the academy. *Exploit Robe (Going Pro)* (2022) grounds one of the important relationships with Judy's oldest son, Cruz. In this work she recreates one of his burners (a large and elaborate graffiti piece), an honouring of his transition from youth to adult and his growing self-expression as an artist in his own right, into intricate beadwork while also honouring the Moose whose hide provides the canvas for this marker of time. Close by *As she walked down the hallway, she unintentionally...Indigenized* (2023) hangs from the ceiling, the copper jingles, moose hide, steel hoops and recorded sound of the jingles in movement propose the more holistic possibility for multisensory institutional "Indigenization." Another counterpoint, *August, Rhys, Mom, Brenda, Connor, Jenny, Carmen, Ruth, Katherine* (2023) is a series of furs, hung together, embodying important relationships, some of which have arisen through

3 Rebecca Solnit, *Orwell's Roses* (New York: Viking Press, 2021), 59.

4 Katherine Boyer, personal communication, Aug 30, 2024.

5 Katherine Boyer, "The Foreground is Blue," *FOLD*, no. 01 Land and Memory (nd). <https://thisisthefold.org/viewpoints4>.