

**IN DEFIANCE**

## *In Defiance*

Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde  
digital C-prints, 2016

The sexualization and exploitation in the images of women in mainstream society disregard the rich cultural existence that Indigenous women have maintained through traditional knowledge, social roles, and power. This objectification of women demonstrates that in Western society there is a lack of understanding of, and relationships to, traditional teachings. It is time to push the continuum of these teachings forward to expose vulnerability, to celebrate sensuality and to reclaim eroticism through the matriarchal body.

To this end, I originally conceived of "Squaw," a series of photographs of Indigenous women in response to the derogatory usage of the word. Each woman was invited to stage a portrait reclaiming her natural sovereign powers of eroticism, sensuality, and vulnerability. Together, these women deconstruct and challenge mainstream ideas around sexuality. Their photographs dismantle negative stereotypes of First Nations women and portray more authentic truths of diversity, power and respect, through this project, each woman has found voice and a safe platform to stand In Defiance through the expression of her most private and sensual aspects.

I would like to thank my mentor in photography, Ellie Dion and all the women who bravely took part in the project.

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## IMAGE KEY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33



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# AMANDA ENGEN

**Dene Tha'/Métis**  
*Transcendence*

As Indigenous women we rise up the mountainside. We acknowledge the struggles life presents us, but to remain silent about violence will only continue to hurt our bodies, minds, and souls. To heal our hearts we must speak up, speak out, and share our truth. No longer will our voices be silenced by idle threats forcing us to remain quiet.

Alone we climb up the mountainside in search of our own voices. This is never an easy journey. We long to hear the wisdom of our ancestors speak through us from deep within our hearts - like a whisper in the wind. At times it takes us decades to hear them, but to know they are there is calming.

As Indigenous women we rise to transform our inner spirits. We are strong where silence has no more room to stay buried within our souls. Let us come together to climb the mountainside and stand strong, united, and proud. Only truth can set us free, because power, manipulation, and control is only hurting our spirits. No more. That is enough.

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# NIKKE GOODWILL

**Nuu-chah-nulth/Dakota Sioux**

# ANONYMOUS

## *Reflecting on ASsets*

Kiss my ass,  
boys who called me fat  
when I had a 26" waist.

Kiss my ass,  
men who pinched my cheeks  
when you should have pinched my cheeks.

Kiss my ass,  
girls who wanted proof  
when I was the evidence.

Kiss my ass,  
women who painted masks  
and taught me how to apply them.

Kiss my ass,  
or I'll bite your tongue.

# BEE

## Maternal: Lkwungen/Quw'utsun'/Lummi Paternal: Irish/French/Euro descent

My name is Bee. I am Lkwungen, Quw'utsun', and Lummi on my maternal side and mixed-Irish/French/Euro descent on my paternal side.

This project came at a time when I was newly living with a chronic and invisible illness that had fully come to surface. It has touched every part of my life, my being.

I do my best to embrace the beauty and power of fragility, healing, and accepting the differently abled and paced lifelong journey that I am on. I wanted to share a brief moment in everyday life as a Coast Salish two-spirit re-connecting with sexuality in a crip\* body and what it means for me to be held

by nature  
by lover  
by teachings  
by forest spirits.

Surrounded by the magic of Devil's Club, it was a change of seasons and the rain fell from the brightly clouded sky and I felt grateful.

\*Crip= reclaiming of "cripple" as an inclusive term for all who live a differently abled and paced life.

# CARRIELYNN VICTOR

## Stó:lō Coast Salish

### *Fisherwoman*

Cleaning a salmon, fresh from the river. Some days beautiful feels like the way the sun touches my wet skin, catching glints of fish blood after a long day on the river. I wish to encourage diversity in the ways we see beauty. I wish to share how beauty is more than a perfect set of eyelashes or flawless hair.

In this photo I am cleaning a fish to share it with my family, an act I have been taught is beautiful. From the fish that gave its life, to the gesture of sharing, all the way to the strength that fish brings to our bodies when we eat it, there is beauty. There are many ways to not only be seen as beautiful, but also many ways to project beauty.

# KELLI CLIFTON

## Gitga'ata Nation *Reflection*

The ocean has always made me feel powerful. As a coastal woman, it is where I feel a strong connection to the land while remaining completely self-aware. When approached by Lindsay to take part in this photoshoot, I knew that in order to reveal my true self I would need to be surrounded by salt water waves. To me, this photograph is about feeling confident and beautiful while reflecting the beauty of your surroundings.

# TUY'T'TANAT - CEASE WYSS

Skwxwu7mesh/Stó:lō/Hawaiian/Swiss  
*En Ha7lh Skwalewans (My heart is lifted)*

I am a medicine gatherer of mostly Coast Salish descent. My upbringing has been focussed on indigenous medicines and walking through forests all of my life. Ceremonial Activism has helped me define myself as an empowered indigenous knowledge practitioner. My relationship to Mother Earth and to myself as an indigenous woman will not be compromised by others views of what is sacred and what is taboo.

I respect myself, my spirit, my body, and my mind. Sexuality and being sexy have been given negative connotations for women and I have stood up to those negative views and continue to allow myself to look and feel beautiful in my own unique ways. Our collective mother is beautiful and sexy. There is nothing wrong with feeling empowered in how we look and how we dress. This is a basic human right. I am a Lifegiver and I feel beautiful.

# LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE

Iroquois, Mohawk Nation

*Portal*

“Sacred Fire, bring me home to the wild, connect me to the dark womb, where all creation is born. Light the inner knowing and truths that glow from within”.

Portal is an image that reflects how I experience and embody my sexuality. Fire is the divine energy that teaches me to establish a deep relationship with myself and this deep connection to my spirit is where the erotic lives within me. The tantalizing fire dances and lures for a deeper understanding of the life, death, life cycle of life. Fire creates a portal back to my home... back to my heart and soul.

# ROBYN KRUGER

## Syilx, Southern Interior Salish, Okanagan Nation *Extravagant Rhapsody*

What is the ideology behind the perpetuation of sexualization of Indigenous women in Canadian Society? Public displays and misrepresentations made by the media promote violence against Indigenous women and devalue Indigenous women's cultural roles. The media also promotes and normalizes the dehumanization of Indigenous women.

The photo art process extricates, enlightens, and empowers Indigeneity for the artist. Her contribution is an offering to the creation of the public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. The discourse may promote discussions for social change and humanize, beautify, and acknowledge the Indigenous women's concerns about their presence in Canada. She asks "Why am I here?" This is a taunting rhapsody to awaken the masses. It is time to make progress on this issue. We've had enough.

# SABRINA WILLIAMS

## Nuu-chah-nulth *Remembrance*

This is what I hope for all our children: ties to land and culture will be mended through ancestral teachings and through invoking the inherent genetic memory that has been the root of our survival. I also hope that they will have the will to carry on despite the anguish and pain of a colonial world imposed upon us.

In the 1950's, my grandmother Pearl Clutesi, one of the Robinson Girls (as they were fondly called) led by George Clutesi and members from Tseshah Nation danced for the Queen at Wawadit'la (Mungo Martin at Thunderbird Park on Belleville Street). Today, I bear witness to triumphant acts of remembering and honouring the legacy of our ancestors. To dance and to sing is integral to cultural survival, renewal and rebirth. It is our breath, it is our healing and it is our promise we make to unborn grandchildren.

In this image, Lindsay has captured all that I hold dear: the healing that is to be found in remembering and passing on the teachings embedded in song and dance; and the profound love of a mother and child.

Kleco Kleco!

# KEILAH LUKENBILL-WILLIAMS

Nuu-chah-nulth (Tseshah, Kyuquot)/Quw'utsun' (S'amuna')  
*I return, resting in our mother's hands*

I return to rest in your hands  
fertile with knowing,  
the unbroken bloodline  
of thousands of years of story  
pulses within them.

In the mist of your riverstone-green breath  
settled, nestled in moss and mist  
my bones, blood, sinew shift  
shape, once displaced, for now I am home.

We've been stripped  
our bodies stolen, eclipsed  
I begin to lift heavy bandages  
the skin is raw, I emerge and place my Self upon you.

The wound is deep,  
far deeper than the flesh  
and my fingers are thirsty roots  
searching in soil to draw in healing waters.

I return, resting in our mother's hands  
I am held, reclaimed  
and in her embrace  
I hold firmly to what was always mine.

# TEYOTSIHSTOKWÁTHE DAKOTA BRANT

## Mohawk Nation, Ohswé:ken Territory

My vision for this photoshoot was to explore my power and to involve myself with self-discovery. My grandmother, "Mama" Eleanore Mae Brant, was a survivor of the Mohawk Institute Residential School; she left school at age 14 with an education and career opportunities limited to cooking, cleaning, and sewing. By age 15, she was pregnant with her first child and married to my granddad who was 9 years older. She lived to raise 9 children, and countless more as an adopted mother. Her own self-discovery began when she decided she wanted to go back to school to become a nurse. Only after she took care of everyone else was she really able to begin her own self-discovery. It makes me appreciate the life I have and the freedom I have to navigate my own self-exploration.

My Mama was always excited to hear about my travels, my education, anything that was new. She wanted me to live my life to the fullest and she never made me feel confined by the same limitations she was. In fact, she went out of her way to make barriers seem as though they didn't exist for me. I still wonder if she even knew they were there.

Mama passed away in 2010, one month before I was crowned Miss Indian World and traveled the world as an ambassador for Indigenous Nations. I received a towel that belonged to her from the give-away at her 10-day Death Feast, and I used it to wrap my Miss Indian World sash to keep it safe and to take her around the world with me in spirit. This photoshoot for me was about formally breaking those limitations my Mama had lived with; she can be free now.

# AMANDA BIRD

## Mikisew Cree

*Knowledge Written in Stone, Blood, and Bone*

*Prayer for the Whole of Creation as One*

Grandmother

I honour you by living from my heart

I honour you by speaking my truth

I honour you by trusting the wisdom of my body

I honour you by nurturing myself so that I may nurture others

Grandfather

I honour you by embracing my healthy warrior, the one who loves  
fearlessly

I honour you by living with intention and purpose for the good of all

I honour you by respecting, supporting, and protecting

Grandmother

I honour my spirit in form and the Grandmother and Grandfather  
within me

I live in gratitude for our Great Grandmother Earth and our Great  
Grandfather Sun

I pray for the balance of all that is and the remembrance of what I am  
to become

# ISOBEL CLUTESI

## Nuu-chah-nulth

Deciding to do this project took a few months to fully commit to because I considered my family, my children, my nation, and most of all my father. What I really committed to was the essence of what it meant to me. I was born in Port Alberni, BC. I lived on a reservation off Somass River called Tse-shaht. We lived behind an old residential school. I used to run around in the forest. To me it was a place where I felt I belonged. It brought a sense of safety, of well-being, of not being alone. I grew up in a time when we were going to become survivors. So, to feel safe anywhere this was the place.

Participating in this Squaw project was fascinating. I did not think I would feel so comfortable. It was like reclaiming my innocence. Being a survivor, I became quite ashamed of my body and who I thought I was. At an early age I was an alcoholic, uneducated, and violent. I struggled with my sexuality and became a young mom.

When Lindsay presented this opportunity, I thought about what it would mean and how we are standing for those we lost to addictions and violence and for those who went missing. As women, we are the lifegiving force for Naas, our Creator. As women we are, like all of creation, to be respected, cherished, and honoured. This project gave a different perspective to my life and healed a part of my sexuality - to love what was created by Naas, the one who gave me life, and to cherish being a woman, a life giver, and to find purpose in my life.

The project brought forth the awareness of the attitudes that are still carried by those who continue to shame us. I am not an object or something to be objectified but I am a soul, who teaches, dances, and works with children. I am an artist, and a beautiful woman who lives in the gift of each day. Sober 26 years, away from violence, teaching traditional dance, and working towards having an education. I am a proud Nuu-chah-nulth woman.

*(continued)*

I was so happy when I did this shot with my daughter, Nicole, and granddaughter, Aiyanna. On that morning, I dropped something off at my daughter's and she asked where I was going. When I told her about the project with Lindsay, she asked if she could come. What I didn't know was that she and my granddaughter were going to become a part of it. If something was healed in me, it was the connection that I could have a relationship with my daughter. She encouraged me to go through with the project, and I felt as though she was proud of me. Her words guided me into healing deep wounds set off by the words instilled by residential schools. Words that were malicious, hurtful, and very damaging.

My relationship with my daughter and her becoming a mother brought me to a deeper meaning of womanhood and what it means to connect to who we are as three generations. This experience gave me the hope that when my granddaughter grows to become a young woman, those malicious words are going to be further away. I have never felt more honoured. I gained the courage to heal these wounds through becoming connected to my daughter's courage to love, to raise her child differently, and to tell me it is okay to be a woman.

# KELLY AGUIRRE

## Nahua/Mixtec/Welsh/Russian *Tonantzin*

Tonantzin has many aspects. She is a matriarchal term of honour and respect in Nahuatl and a name for our Mother Earth – mother, grandmother, lady, provider, nourisher. She is connected with goddesses like Chicomecoatl (Seven Snakes), a feminine form of Maize, one of the many gifts my ancestors shared. She is also connected with Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, most revered incarnation of the Virgen Maria in Mexico. It is told that her vision appeared to an Indian man, Juan Diego, at Tepeyac on the grounds of a destroyed temple to Tonantzin in 1531. She asked him in Nahuatl to build her another in that same sacred place. For the Christians this would be a church. She imprinted her image on his tilma, his robe, as an enduring impression of her power.

Guadalupe is a complex figure, both Indigenous and European, somewhat like me as a woman of mixed-blood. I see in her the sexualized violence of the Conquest alongside Malinche, the disgraced so-called race traitor. Yet, I also see in her the tenacity of my ancestors who found ways to practice their beliefs under colonial rule by integrating Christian imagery and concepts in their ceremony, though this was a Christianity that did not hold women at its centre and divided our being, our maternal capacity from our sexuality.

Many of our women have Maria in their given names, like my Abuela Cipriana, who was a highly regarded traditional curandera but also lived a short life marked by all the gendered struggles of poverty. Maria/Guadalupe/Tonantzin is for me a symbol of birth and rebirth, sustenance, survival, and dignity. Tonantzin is the dignity that Indigenous women must claim for ourselves. My Abuela was an aspect of Tonantzin. I am an aspect of Tonantzin. We are all aspects of Tonantzin.

# EDDI WILSON

## Métis

my voice is dusty, my feathers charcoal  
your wings are rusty, stained crimson and gold  
you're the owl, i'm the crow  
you're the pieces of me  
i don't show.

your owl eyes my crystal ball  
our silent wings bring nightfall

when your big round eyes are worn and tired  
don't worry  
my wild wiles are so hardwired  
i'll find the shiny fragments spilled from your chest  
gather them  
bring them back to the nest.  
when our oil slick wings turn dull and gray  
don't cry, wish or bother to pray  
with my talons so strong and so tender  
i'll carry you far  
far away

hey small owl, beautiful bird  
our wings are paper, but our song more than words.  
shapeshifter  
little sister  
you're in my marrow, my veins  
my ferocious free spirit has you to blame

my four dimensional shadow reflects her intricate feathers  
we're hunted and starved but she's wise  
and i'm clever  
sundown at high noon will be your first clue  
be grateful  
be careful  
we're coming for you.

*(continued)*

To my ancestors, mother, aunts, sisters, friends, lovers, and all the women who have contributed to the development and acceptance of my multidimensional identity. We are all branches of the same tree, feathers of the same wing, and raindrops of the same cloud. I stand in strong solidarity with you eternally as we climb together, soar together, and use our collective power to float gently through this world, taking it fearlessly by storm when necessary.

# NADIA (SA'AN N'AHN GU'AS) SALMANIW

## Haida

*Sa'an n'ahn gu'as: singing girl*

Face turned up to the sky  
no shame for this body, this skin  
I feel alive, in tune, connected with everything in me and around me  
The water pours down  
spraying my face, my neck...playing with the waves of my hair  
bringing healing energy, bringing acceptance for this body, this face,  
these curves  
for my beauty, my strength, my power.

I stand firm  
grounded, rooted in Spirit  
I am free

# NATU BEARWOLF

**Wet'suwet'en nation, Gitumden clan, house of Anasaski**  
*WILD*

Moving with aggressive sensuality, Wild owns her body. She has no shame in her passionate endeavors. She is the predator and you are the prey. Wild takes no prisoners.

# EMILEE GILPIN

## Saulteaux-Cree/Métis

When I learned about this project and the intent behind challenging indigenous women to reflect on and speak about their sexuality, I had so many truths unfold. I thought of my sexual feminine power and the beautiful experiences I have had. I also thought about experiences which broke me, as I learned in hard ways that we are left so much on our own to navigate the realms of our sexuality. I remembered being young and exploring myself the first times, feeling ashamed and that I needed to hide the urges I didn't understand. I reflected on the growth that has occurred, from a curious girl to a woman who is more self-aware.

In the photo, I picked up the flowers to represent the sacred aspect of my sexuality, one which has not always been understood or respected. I believe we are sacred and that our experiences of sex, both alone and with others, are sacred. In a time of great forgetfulness, this is a remembering that needs to be fed over and over again and it is one I am trying to cultivate now, as I walk forward with scars and stories and a hopeful heart.

As we were taking photos, the neighbouring dog, Henry, came bounding over and sat near me. There was something comical, natural and intrusive about his presence. I fed him oranges from my hands and welcomed him. Whether he was a reminder not to take things so seriously, a reminder of the organic nature of our sexual explorations, or a reminder of the ways in which our journeys are so innately connected, I wasn't sure. But his presence was light and one of companionship.

This image captures my vulnerable strength, one that I am not ashamed of. I am soft, passive, feminine, and serious. It is a rough and hard world and as women, we are exposed to so much: judgment, shaming, hyper-sexualization, exotification, taking, and devaluing of our sacredness. I have been lost, terrified, vulnerable, full of regret and confusion, both selfless and selfish. We are imperfect beings, navigating our own paths. In these steps to come, I wish for the wisdom to be gentle with myself and others; to honour my spirit, and to be able to gracefully journey from a state of vulnerable warrior strength. I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in a project which gives both voice and self-expression to women from all walks.

# ERYNNE M. GILPIN

## Michif (Saulteaux, Cree-Métis)

The first sexual act in this life is the act of being born.

We enter the world carried on a current of water, body and body. From the land that is our Mother. Birth is a representation of sexual power, strength, remembrance and ceremony. When fostered by cultural voice, language and song, it is a vibrant act of Indigenous governance.

Collectively, our first birth is from our Original Mother. Kā wee ooma aski.  
Do we remember the act of being born from her?

Pikisiwiw. She remembers as she goes back. To her. A mindful return, and in turn, re-birth. The red river flows out of women. Women out of the land. To me sexuality is sacred. It is raw, organic, connected and original. It stems from our relationship to the Land, our Mother. And is reflected in our relationships with ourself, spirit and one another.

I chose to represent the sacred birth from Kā wee ooma aski.

A reflection on the photo-process:

We met early in the morning and shared visions over coffee, talking through our nerves. We arrived at the site and smudged with sweetgrass. We found an owl feather. It was time. I slowly took off my clothes and stood naked in the cool air. I stepped into the mud and began to rub its thick fragrance over my body. I immediately felt safer in the mud. Stronger. I tied my sash around my waist. Red River. We began.

I brought important visions into my mind - birth. strength. sacred. gratitude. connection. People passed by as we worked. Later on, deep into the process, a white man walked by and proclaimed "my dream come true!", as if this entire co-creative experience was for him. Lindsay asked for privacy and he immediately responded with "No! This is a public place, and you shouldn't even be here..." It was the perfect representation/contrast of the sacred Indigenous feminine and the white man's violent extraction, objectification and violence. We ignored him and vented later on.

The experience itself was so incredible. I have never felt so strong. So beautiful.

Nitataminan for this experience.

It felt like an honouring.

I felt re-birth.

# ROSEANNE SUPERNAULT

## Métis/Cree

I am wild,  
It's been said.

I eat dirt. I smoke cigarettes. I'll fuck you in the woods, and hold no regrets. I cry. I dance. I'm amused that you're ashamed of hard ons and wet cunts.

But I'll sing you to sleep with an off tune lullaby and draw pictures on your back at night.  
I'll read your natal chart, tell you about your signs, and find your sensitive spots with it. I'll teach you how to make a woman climax. But I'm scared that you'll hurt me with it.

I learn fast and memorize well. I am educated by the college of life.  
And I may not see all of my friends every day, but they are imprinted on my soul; I protect them like they are my kin.

Fuck with them.  
I dare you.

I'll ruin you while wearing a pretty smile on my face and no one will know the better.

I'll call you on your shit. I can't stand a fake. Not pretty girls with make-up, and spray tans who revel in their beauty. That's not a fake, you fool. They don't scare me. I call many my friends.

But I despise the two-faced, the ones who think they can destroy me then turn around and act like my friend. I see you from a mile away.

And still, I'll hold you in your darkest hour, even after you've stabbed me in the back... Then pull the knife out and lay it back on the ground where it belongs.

I'll heal your wounds while mine are bleeding.

Like I said. Wild.

# INEZ LOUIS

## Stó:lō/Métis/Ojibway

I arrived in Winnipeg to perform for a music festival the day after the city had marched in the streets after Tina Fontaine's body had been found in a garbage bag on the bank of the river. I was horrified that these #MMIW cases kept happening over and over. To my dismay, my hotel was a stone's throw from where Tina's body was discovered. I was terrified every night in my room repeatedly checking the locks on the door and the windows. I lay awake in bed, vulnerable and scared. Why was this happening?

In my music and stage presence, I promote positive expression of healthy sensuality and sexuality for Indigenous women to reclaim their rightful identities as women. This is my current journey in life. In the hotel room, I questioned myself. The very messages I fought against in my family and community - "cover up," "don't ask for it by dressing that way," "don't wear makeup or you will be judged as a dirty Indian girl" - were coming back to me and I wanted to hide any attention I would attract to myself or any other potential #MMIW victim in an effort to protect our existence. But, what is our existence if we cannot be ourselves in a safe and nurturing society? It all looped back to the colonial environment we are living in. I was so frustrated. I was angry. I was enraged. I was crushed. I felt defeated.

For this photoshoot, I chose to expose the darkness that was churning inside of me and the emotional rollercoaster that I was on. I wanted to make people feel the discomfort I was experiencing. This photo shows that part of me is stronger to be vulnerable, honest and proud of who I am. Vulnerability allows me to grow. On the left side of the picture, I am terrified, angry, defensive, and ready to snap. The vulnerability on this side is my undoing.

I hope to make your skin crawl with this picture, but I hope it inspires you to work towards lightness from the darkness that #MMIW sheds on all our lives. We can rebuild with extra love and kindness.

# SACHA OUELLET

## Haida

When Lindsay approached me about the project I was both honoured and a little terrified. I have had a long and complicated relationship with my body, sexuality and confidence.

Being a survivor of sexual assault I have a very sordid and arduous relationship with my own sensuality. I have been triggered more times than I can count by sexual experiences with loving and respectful partners, simply because the act of sex, and the motions that lead to sex are directly connected to traumatic events that have led me to hate my body, and view it as a prison instead of my home.

Examining my body and sensuality in this way was a very important healing tool. For the first time I experienced that my body and my sexuality could be an enriching and fulfilling entity, and that loving myself would give way to unpacking some seriously painful memories. I fought long and hard with the idea of being completely candid about the reality of my body, but in the end I sought comfort from the ocean. A place I found safety, a place I went when my anxieties bubbled over. A place my ancestors fished, paddled, and washed themselves in traditional Lekwungen territory that dates back to 500 AD called ɛKwatsechɛ. The ocean was a womb for my insecurities, a safe blanket all around me, covering the places on my body that hatred had been etched into by my abusers, and at times – myself.

That day I found healing in the water, I washed away so much pain and guilt. I broke down the preconceived ideas I held about my body, the way it looked and the way it held me captive for so long.

In the time and space that passed between that day and now, I have grown and learned to love myself even more - but there were moments that I let my fears take hold, thinking I 'was wrong to love myself.' I worried that the photos would look ugly despite Lindsay's undeniable talent. But seeing the consequential photos is cathartic, and quite relieving. I am beyond pleased to say that Lindsay's vision met with mine in a magic and profound way, and the images of my body that were conceived by us are a beautiful reflection of how much love and beauty can be found in healing.

I am endlessly grateful for the opportunity to love myself and my body, and explore the ancestral healing that is possible when we honour the women in our world, and the nature around us. Ha'waa to Lindsay, and all the women who participated in this revolutionary vision.

# SARAH HUNT

## Kwakwaka'wakw

My body is not only a site of defiance, written on the skin and carried in my bones, but is also a site where I struggle for self-determination as I express myself in ways that are often contrary to colonial expectations. As a Two-Spirit woman, I seek to live and love in accordance with the laws of the water, land, animals and ancestors to whom I am accountable. Through my extended kinship network of rebels, resisters, and change-makers, I am reminded of our collective strength to hold one another up and to hold ourselves up.

As an Indigenous academic, I often feel my mind is being mined for the kinds of knowledge that others deem relevant, viable and measurable. Here, I seek to make visible the ways we embody our self-determination as Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people, vibrantly resisting the colonial metrics that attempt to box us in as we live far beyond, outside and beneath imposed ideas of how we come to matter.

Gilakas'la.

# NIKKE GOODWILL

Nuu-chah-nulth/Dakota Sioux

# KELLI MORNINGBULL

## Blackfoot

### *AAKII (Woman/Queen)*

Sex. Sexy. Sexual. Sexuality. Sensual. Sinful. Squaw.  
 Sexuality is feared like a black unknown.  
 Feared in a way that our lives can not be seen, let alone heard.  
 Racially spewed words spit in the face of our appearance.  
 Behind closed doors many cry in shame.  
 Never to be heard and never to be seen for who we really are.  
 Resilient but scarred.  
 Indigenous women are not even human to the majority population.  
 Colonization has changed how we see our women.  
 Discarded and washed away.  
 Murdered, Missing and taken for granted.  
 But who cares?  
 I care. I am worthy and so is she.  
 Broken at best but not defeated.  
 Our bodies are sacred, a temple of love.  
 When I look at the ocean, I see a strong and powerful woman, both mysterious and intense.  
 Water is life, and without water there is no you, me or them.  
 Creation comes from within and creation is a beautiful thing we take for granted.  
 The time is here to claim our throne, to toss away the empty rhetoric.  
 To prove to our own selves that we are beautiful, we are needed, but most importantly, we are wanted.  
 My mother once told me women were once the keepers of the tribe, held in high regard just like a queen.  
 I am a daughter first, a mother second, and one day a grandmother at last.  
 Aakii in Blackfoot has two meanings: woman and queen.  
 I am a woman and I am most definitely a queen.  
 Oki, niitaniko Pokaakii (Hello, my name is Little Woman)

I was given this amazing opportunity to showcase my own being, my own resiliency. I was scared but excited at the same time. As I get older the less afraid I feel to show my own self. At times, I feel shamed by ones I thought cared only to be shot down when I prevail. To be in this project has helped me to find my own sexuality and to not feel shamed or afraid.

# MARGARET BRIERE

## Shíshálh Nation - Two-Spirit

### *In Body*

I am a Two-Spirited Woman from Shíshálh Nation. My life for the past five years has been about healing from Historical Trauma. Through extensive mind-body therapy, I have unlocked unimaginable doors and gifts, and my true sense of self has surfaced. I have come to pursue my soul's calling and passion through art. I have been a professional artist for the past three years and an artist in my soul my entire life.

The image before you is an expression of my sexuality through a transformation symbol. The vision of this symbol came spontaneously during a conversation with Lindsay. I had a memory of working with Medicine Horses where I learned about how animals bring messages from the Spirit World. The first image appeared as just my face, one half not painted and the other half painted. When this split presented itself, an image of a Turkey Vulture appeared which symbolizes transformation. All of this appeared very quickly. I was deeply moved and only then felt grounded in being a model for Lindsay's project.

The image of my bare chest and hands down facing forward is the intentionality of revealing the level of openness in expressing sexuality as a Two-Spirited Indigenous Woman. The water symbolizes an honoring of Women's life giving abilities while it also cleanses us spiritually in ceremonial practices. The location was in a public area of the urban centre in Victoria BC, where you would not typically see nakedness in this form. Breaking the status quo and re-exploring my sexuality through photo art has made me feel completely free to be the Indigenous, Two-Spirited person I am today.

# KIM PAQUETTE

**Cree**

*Cowichan Valley*

My name is Kim Paquette, my paternal grandmother was Cree from the Lesser Slave Lake area in Northern Alberta. Being an admirer of Lindsay's artwork, I was honoured to be asked to be part of the project. The photoshoot was a very positive experience for me. The request occurred after I had returned to the island following an emotionally trying year in Vancouver. When I look at the photos, I remember the heaviness of the previous year and the healing in starting to shake that heaviness off. I also see and remember being filled with hope and a deep gratitude for being back on the island and for all the things and people that carry us through when times are hard. Being amongst the trees in nature has always been a gift and solace for me. The rain that day was fitting, as it was quite literally a cleansing away of the previous year's turmoil.

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## HANA GORDON

Métis

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## MADELAINE MCCULLUM

Cree/Métis

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## ALETHIA

Chippewa/Southern Ojibwe/Scottish

*"A native woman of mixed ancestry" in Ojibwe  
wiisaakodewikwe*

# NICOLE MANDRYK

## Anishinaabe/Irish/Ukrainian

Boozhoo, my name is Nicole Mandryk, I am an Anishinaabe, Irish, and Ukrainian kwe. I was born and raised on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen, Esquimalt, and Wsanec peoples. I participated in Lindsay's 'Squaw' project as a form of healing to reclaim a part of my sexuality I suppressed due to being sexually assaulted three years ago. Lindsay created a safe space to reflect on recreating the part of my being which was taken, in turn supporting my journey of coming to fulfill my internal world of well-being and wholeness. I want to thank Lindsay for creating this project and for giving Indigenous woman an outlet to express themselves outside the gaze of a colonial lens.

Miigwech.

# SIONNON PHILLIPS

## Migmaw/Polish/Irish/Ukranian *Seasons*

My old apartment rooftop  
I used to sit upon it and play my guitar down to the busy downtown streets below  
There lived a season of which was sprung and fallen in this place  
A honeybee in the centre of the hive with the ebb and flow of a thundering tsunami  
In this lifetime I will bear yet another thousand faces  
Yet this one I lay to rest, amongst a sepia sky and the seagull nests  
And to her hungry skin I bid farewell