



RED RUNNERS

"The new objectification of Native art and identity"

Curated by: **Jason Jenkins and Luke Parnell**

June 22 to July 2, 2010 (Opening June 25, 6:30 PM)
Well and Good Gallery, 52 McCaul Street, Toronto ON



Thunderbird

Aboriginal Arts, Culture
and Entrepreneur Centre



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Red Runners is an intern, mentorship and exhibition program produced by Miziwe Biik Development Corporation (MBDC) and presented by its new venture for the arts, Thunderbird. Assistance for the program and for arts programming in general at MBDC, is provided by the Ontario Arts Council. Training support is provided by Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training.

The Red Runners exhibition was conceived by us with oversight and guidance from renowned artists Robert Houle and Bonnie Devine of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective.

The focus of the exhibition is on both accessibility and identity; accessibility was suggested by the mentors early in the exhibition’s planning stages, and identity evolved from the creative process of realizing the final form of the exhibit with the artists.

In exploring identity through accessibility you are presented with a myriad of options. Technology has streamlined those options with social networking sites where you can re-create your identity and be part of a new culture, living in a digital global village turned metropolis. Urban culture has become the new contemporary art. City infrastructure is a blank canvas in the eyes of a graffiti artist. For young urban hipsters, transforming the sneakers that they wear has evolved into a culture all of its own. Since footwear can tell a lot about a culture, as curators we wanted to develop a show that would represent a modern day Aboriginal living their reality within a concrete jungle – a real life interpretation of today’s Aboriginal urban culture.

Dealing with issues of identity, the contemporary Aboriginal artist cannot be afraid to utilize new materials and create a new vocabulary. Haida master carver Robert Davidson describes this fearlessness in the exhibition catalogue for “The Abstract Edge”:

I’m at a crossroads right now where I’ve recycled the ideas of my teachers, of the old pieces, of the old examples I’ve been studying. My challenge is to go beyond those recycled ideas and create a new vocabulary for myself...

I feel that every artist reaches a point in their creative lifetime where they want to have their own story, their own signature.

At some point Aboriginal people have to tell their own stories and describe the world they know in their own way and not be afraid to break with tradition as long as they remain respectful of those traditions.

Red Runners features fourteen Aboriginal artists of diverse backgrounds, working in a variety of media. With their participation in Red Runners they will, to coin a phrase, be allowing us to walk a mile in their moccasins. Some of the Artists were chosen for their traditional-based work and others for their contemporary outlook, though no limits were placed on what they could submit. All the works in the show are new but with reverence to the old ways. The stories they tell will be diverse and will be their own.

CURATORS: Jason Jenkins and Luke Parnell

ARTISTS:	Jordan Bennett	Jason Baerg
	Emilie Corbiere	Mike Dangeli
	Morgan Green	Louie Gong
	Ian Morven	Lisa Myers
	Tannis Nielsen	Chris Pappan
	Duke Redbird	Mervi Salo
	Rosary Spence	Bear Witness

Cover Photo: Photo by Jason Jenkins, © 2010

As ceremonial lead-in to the formal opening of the exhibit *Paris/Ojibwa*, by Robert Houle, and in homage to the Ojibwa of 1845, artist, curator and dancer Barry Ace performed a series of pow wow dances beginning at the Louvre, winding through the Tuileries Gardens, on to Cleopatra’s Needle, and down the Champs-Élysées with his final dance in front of the installation. Like the Ojibwa of 1845 he too endured the pain of dancing on concrete, cobble stone, pebbles and marble in moccasins designed for contact only with the earth.