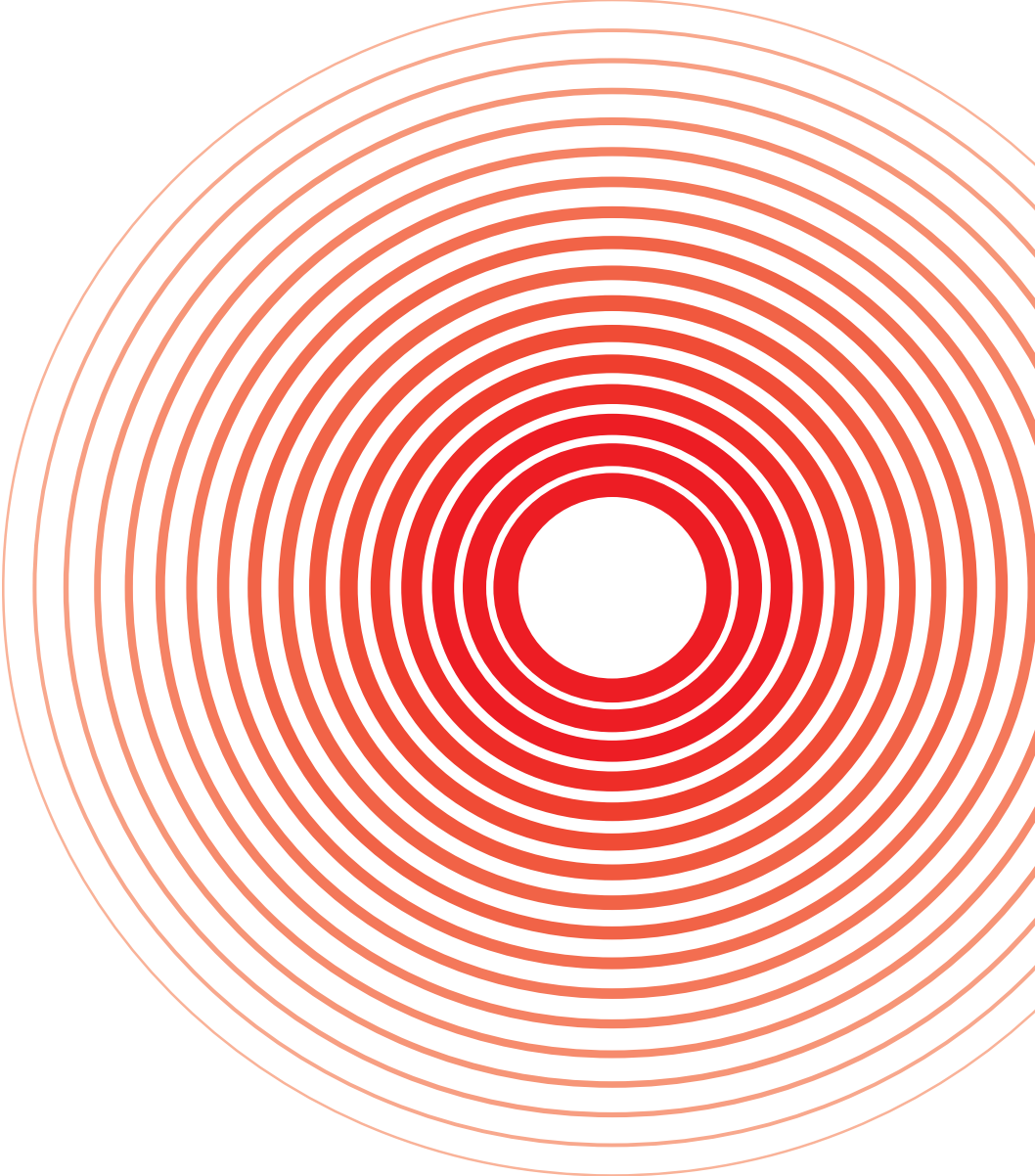


# This Is An Emergency Broadcast

June 21–August 11, 2024



# This Is An Emergency Broadcast

The radio is a tool. Through receptive listening and attention there is potential for the creation of a community of receivers. In the act of transmission, there is agency and responsibility that is at once collective and individual, that works with echoes, waves, reverberations, repetitions, cycles, and is only meaningful when received.

*This Is An Emergency Broadcast* connects Indigenous political advocacy with the forms of communication offered by community radio, countering power chronicles of state and corporate media and, in its self-determination, offering space for reignited narratives.

A project with artist and activist Marianne Nicolson (Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw), *This Is An Emergency Broadcast* occupies the Belkin space with audio recordings that clarify a history of Indigenous articulation, collective organization and opposition to colonial forces. By playing these audio recordings in the gallery – as they will be played on community radio – they are reified for audiences inside and outside remote communities. The recordings are contextualized by archival images and a reading room provides visual, audio and text sources that connect specific histories to the colonial project more widely and to a history of radio in art. In addition, Nicolson's 2018 video installation work with Althea Thauberger *Hexsa'am (To be there always)* will be installed in the gallery. Aligning with Nicolson's concept of *Ne'nakw* – or coming home – the message of protecting community connection, the exhibition seeks to articulate the state of emergency which

Indigenous land advocacy foretold in their critique of colonial oppression from the 1914 McKenna-McBride land testimony through to today.

The medium of radio is important and vital to Indigenous communities, and is part of a larger project anchored to *Ne'nakw*, in which Nicolson considers the implications and meaning behind Indigenous community radio in both the set up and programming of CKYO 91.1 FM Gwa'yi Radio and other community-based Indigenous community radio stations. Through *Ne'nakw*, Nicolson asked that the Belkin work with her over a period of time to ask how we can support Indigenous practices in a non-extractive way. Through a process of decolonial exploration, the goal is to return cultural capacity to community through art as a form of repatriation and restitution. Tangible physical objects have a concreteness in terms of repatriation, but how can cultural returns be approached? In struggling with the intangible, radio can be a tool to share culture in and across community.

Radio has been a forum for political discussion, expression and for notification of social and political emergencies. Distinct from social media's potential for digital social isolation and framed within the historical use of radio broadcast to coordinate and communicate Indigenous land rights, *This Is An Emergency Broadcast* expresses a voice from past broadcasts into the contemporary emergency of climate change and the rise of totalitarianism.



Kwakwaka'wakw chiefs at Alert Bay as part of the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission testimonies, 1914. Collection of the Royal BC Museum Archives, Commission Album

**1914**

## **McKenna-McBride Testimony**

The Indian Reserve Commission and the Department of Indian Affairs were created in the 1870s to address Indigenous land claims and the conflict that was developing between bands and provincial governments. In 1912, BC Premier Richard McBride and federal commissioner Joseph McKenna, as a joint provincial and federal effort, set up the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, also known as the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission, “to adjust the acreage of Indian Reserves in British Columbia” by visiting each First Nation community in the province and consulting with the people about the amount of land they required for their communities.

The Commission travelled around British Columbia from 1913 to 1916, meeting with Indigenous bands and listening to testimonies about the land, its history and its significance. In 1914, delegates of the

McKenna-McBride Royal Commission met with Johnny Scow (Kwikwasut'inuxw), Copper Johnson (Haxwa'mis), Dick Webber and Dick Hawkins (Dzawada'enuxw) and Alec Morgan (Gwawa'enuxw), as well as with all the Kwakwaka'wakw chiefs, to establish the land base of the Kwakwaka'wakw group of nations. During this visit, the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw chiefs submitted to the Commission detailed lists naming their lands.

The Commission recommended the removal of approximately 47,000 acres valued at roughly \$1.5 million from reserve lands province-wide and the addition of 87,000 acres valued at only \$445,000. In so doing, the Commission removed valuable reserve lands while appearing to grant more – yet less valuable – land. The majority of the requests for recognition of the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw lands were denied. In response, the communities affected formed an Action Committee to lobby the federal and provincial governments. In spite of these lobbying efforts, the federal government adopted most of the Commission's recommendations nationwide in the 1920s, enacting numerous discriminatory laws.

**Audio:** Testimony by Chief Owahagaleese, 1914, from the McKenna-McBride testimonies, read by Valeen Jules

**Valeen Jules** is a queer birth worker and wood carver from the Nuuchahnulth and Kwakwaka'wakw nations. Jules has been known to friends as “the doula that never leaves,” “the eagle soaring above” and “the only top at the table.”

**1927/1945**

## **North American Indian Brotherhood**

In 1945, Andrew Paull (Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh) established the North American Indian Brotherhood after leaving his role as business manager at the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, a position he had occupied since 1942. The organization acted as a government lobby group working to secure political rights for Indigenous people, with a focus on challenging the problematic restrictions of the Indian Act and maintaining the status of Indigenous people. In 1927, an amendment to the Indian Act had made it illegal for Indigenous people to hire lawyers, fundraise or bring land claims to the government; the Brotherhood advocated against these amendments and would have a hand in the revision of the Indian Act in collaboration with prominent activist figures like Reverend Peter Kelly (Haida).

In 1948, when the Indian Act was due to be revised, the Brotherhood convened in Ottawa for an annual convention where they met with Prime Minister Mackenzie King and members of the joint committee tasked with revising the Act. In 1951, the Indian Act was revised, removing the problematic 1927 ban on legal representation and the Potlatch Laws. The North American Indian Brotherhood eventually faded with Paull's passing in 1959. This image is from the North American Indian Brotherhood's 1945 convention in Ottawa.



The North American Indian Brotherhood Convention, Ottawa, 1945. Collection of the Shingeauck Residential Schools Centre. Photo: Jane E. Mundy

**Audio:** Excerpt from Andy Paull and Reverend Peter Kelly, *Joint Committees, 16th Parliament, 1st Session: Special Joint Committee on Claims of Allied Indian Tribes of BC*, vol. 1, 1927, read by Salia Joseph

**Salia Joseph** is from the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and Snuneymuxw First Nations on her father's side and is British and Jewish on her mother's side. She is a graduate from the UBC Critical Indigenous Studies program. Joseph is the executive director of The Snichim Foundation, a Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh language revitalization non-profit, and co-owner of Host Consulting Inc., a public art consultancy focused on elevating work by Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh artists.



Union of BC Indian Chiefs First Conference, Kamloops, 1969.  
Collection of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs archive

## 1969 BC Chiefs Conference (Union of BC Indian Chiefs)

In 1969, the Canadian government, led by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien, proposed the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, commonly known as the *White Paper*. One of the most contentious proposals of the paper was the removal of Indigenous status, a decision that sparked widespread outrage amongst the Indigenous communities. The *White Paper* proposal was a pivotal moment that galvanized Indigenous leaders in BC, leading to their 1969 Chiefs Conference meeting.

On November 17, 1969 in Kamloops, a meeting attended by over 150 chiefs and representatives from 144 bands led to the creation of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). In 1971, they officially responded to the *White Paper* with the *Brown Paper*,

formally known as *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper*. Just a year before in 1970, the Indian Association of Alberta under the leadership of Harold Cardinal (Cree), released *Citizen Plus*, commonly known as the *Red Paper*, also in response to the *White Paper*. Both these counter-proposals to the *White Paper* were critical of the government's attempt to erase Indigenous identity. These groups saw the arrival of the *White Paper* as a vital moment for organizing and pushback.

This image shows the 150 chiefs and representatives from 144 bands, with the banner reading, "B.C. Chiefs Conference" on top and below, "United we stand, Divided we perish," a sentiment that guided the meeting while reflecting the nationwide state of emergency for Indigenous bands.

**Audio:** Excerpt from *Citizen Plus (Red Paper)*, 6.6 *Indian Control of Indian Lands*, 1970, read by Charlene Dawson

**Charlene Mary Dawson** is Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw from Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet) and has been an Indigenous rights activist since the 1970s. She participated in the The Red Power movement's 1978 Longest Walk protest from San Francisco to Washington, DC and was part of the Native People's Caravan in 1974 that protested the living conditions on reserves brought on by the Indian Act. She currently resides in Gwa'yi with family.



George Manuel confronting Pierre Trudeau outside the Vancouver Four Seasons Hotel, 1981. Courtesy of the Pacific Tribune Photo Collection, Simon Fraser University. Photo: Josh Berson

**1981**

## **Union of BC Indian Chiefs Mobilized Constitution Express**

Constitution Express Protests were a series of movements in response to the process of the patriation of the Canadian Constitution, which had begun in 1980. George Manuel (Secwépemc), then president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), and other activists mobilized a nationwide protest, with protesters

boarding one of two trains chartered by Manuel and destined for Ottawa. The trains left Vancouver on November 24, 1980, stopping at multiple locations along the way where they informed and rallied people to join the protests.

When the trains filled with nearly 1,000 protesters arrived in Ottawa, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau did not acknowledge them. In a bid to gather international support, a number of the protesters continued on to New York, presenting their case at the headquarters of the United Nations. They then travelled across Europe, garnering international notice for the movement. In 1982, the Canadian government under international pressure agreed to meet with the movement's Indigenous leaders. In a March 16, 1983 conference, the Canadian Constitution was amended to include Section 35, which recognized the existence and title rights of Indigenous people in Canada.

**Audio:** Excerpt from George Manuel, *Legacy of our Forefathers*, 1980, from the archive of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, read by Doreen Manuel

**Doreen Manuel** (Secwépemc/Ktunaxa) comes from a long line of Indigenous oral historians and factual storytellers. She is an award-winning filmmaker and educator, the principal owner of Running Wolf Productions and the director of the Bosa Centre for Film and Animation at Capilano University.

1990

## The Mohawk Resistance

The Mohawk resistance began on July 11, 1990, and lasted for 78 days, ending in an outbreak on September 26, 1990, with many Mohawk civilians injured and arrested by Canadian Armed Forces. The September 26 crisis marked the culmination of a long conflict in the area. The Seminary of St-Sulpice, which had laid a royally-sanctioned claim to Mohawk land, had sold this land by the Second World War to the European settlers who formed the community of Oka. This settlement that was situated on the lands of the Mohawk people included an important area known as The Pines.

In 1959, a portion of The Pines was rented out by the City of Oka to a golf club, and in 1989, the golf club proposed an extension into an area of The Pines that held the Kanehsatà:ke cemetery. This proposed expansion sparked the 78-day blockade, which was erected by the Kanehsatà:ke people, later joined by the Mohawk Warrior Society – established in 1970 as a result of the earlier unsanctioned building of the golf club. The police were deployed to the site of the barricade, but the protesters refused to take it down.

In July 1990, Indigenous communities across Canada joined or created their own blockades in solidarity with the Mohawk people, who had also blocked the Mercier Bridge leading into Montreal. The blockade of the Mercier Bridge sparked even more vitriol from the neighbouring Oka community, who led a racist march calling

for its removal along with threats of violence to Mohawk warriors. On August 14, 1990, the Canadian Armed Forces were deployed at the request of Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa. After much deliberation that led to the re-opening of the Mercier Bridge on September 26, 1990, the Mohawk warriors surrendered and the Armed Forces stormed the barricade, injuring civilians and taking them into custody, not all of whom were released the following day.

**Audio:** Quotation from Minnie Garrow (Wolf Clan, Kanien'kehá:ka), from *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, 1993, read by Christine O'Bonsawin

**Christine O'Bonsawin** belongs to the Abenaki Nation of Odanak and is an associate professor of history and Indigenous studies at the University of Victoria, located on lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Territories. Her scholarship takes up questions regarding Indigenous rights and the appropriation and subjugation of Indigenous peoples and cultures in Olympic history.

**Image:** A member of the Mohawk Warriors stands facing a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, 1990. Photo: Jacques Nadeau, *Le Devoir*

## 2012

### Idle No More

The Idle No More Movement was initiated in November 2012 by Saskatchewan activists Nina Wilson (Kahkewistahaw First Nation, Treaty 4), Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum (Big River First Nation, Treaty 6), Jessica Gordon (Pasqua First Nation, Treaty 4) and Sheelah Mclean. The group organized in order to protest Bill C-45, which was introduced in October 2012 by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. This bill, if passed, would have violated treaty and land rights, thereby infringing upon the established rights of Indigenous people to self-govern their lands, air and waterways. The bill would have undone many of the hard-fought constitutional rights of Indigenous communities.

In October 2012, a tweet from Jessica Gordon with the hashtag #IdleNoMore set in motion social media as a vehicle for gaining international recognition and support for the movement, with demonstrations taking place across Canada through protests, marches and flash mob round dance circles. In December 2012, Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence, concerned with how Bill C-45 would affect her community, began a hunger strike to protest the federal government, further drawing attention to the Idle No More demonstrations and lobbying happening at the time. These demonstrations led to Harper inviting Indigenous leaders from across the country to a meeting on January 11, 2013, with many leaders from Manitoba refusing to attend and boycotting

the event. While the Harper government refused to officially acknowledge Idle No More, the movement unquestionably opened space for conversation with Indigenous leaders. Idle No More continues to advocate for Indigenous communities through its grassroots network; the movement organizes events such as Cancel Canada Day, rallies around ongoing land rights disputes and educates people on Indigenous history and movements.

**Audio:** Reflections from Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum on the Idle No More movement's legacy, *Eagle Feather News*, 2017, read by Kala Hunt

**Kala Hunt** is Kwagwł from the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples. Her ancestral names are Mamxuyu'ogwa and Hawilwalal. Through her studies and work she is an advocate for Indigenous human rights and wellness. She is passionate about continual learning of her culture and justice for Indigenous peoples within what we now know as Canada.

**Image:** Dancers during the Idle No More protest, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, 2013. Photo: Sean Kilpatrick, Canadian Press



## Marianne Nicolson and Althea Thauberger

*Hexsa'am (To be there always)*, 2018  
3-channel video installation with sound  
Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin  
Art Gallery, purchased with support from  
the Canada Council for the Arts and the  
Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation, 2019

Marianne Nicolson and Althea Thauberger's *Hexsa'am (To be there always)* uses still and moving images and multi-channel sound to position the viewer in the middle of calls and responses across time. The largest projection presents the land as the principal character: the camera moves over the water toward the mountains, crouches in grasses where harvests once took place, is embraced by the remaining forest. Set at an oblique angle, the next largest projection cuts from archival photographs to video, grafting together the echoing histories of Gwa'yi. The third projection toggles between images of written text and the faces of listening elders. The projected images situate viewers to witness a remarkable event: the relay of words of resistance over the space of a century. Young community members are shown speaking the 1914 testimonies of their ancestors, Johnny Scow (Kwikwasut'inuxw), Copper Johnson (Ha'xwa'mis), Dick Webber and Dick Hawkins (both Dzawada'enuxw) and Alec Morgan (Gwawa'enuxw), as well as all the Kwakwaka'wakw chiefs. They recite the words through a radio phone – a

technology that allows for the communal sharing of information equally among all members of the community. Between these two screens – as younger members speak to their elders the words of their shared ancestors – we feel the charged signal pass through us: of the continuous presence on and enduring concern for the land in which we feel immersed. The artists' use of the radio phone that connects the speakers and the listeners is an important choice, a technological analogy to the values and principles of governance based on the sharing of information with all members of the community.

—Lorna Brown

**Marianne Nicolson** (Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw, b. 1969) is an artist who works as a Kwakwaka'wakw cultural researcher and historian, as well as an advocate for Indigenous land rights. Her work seeks to uphold a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw worldview through contemporary mediums and technology. Nicolson holds a BFA from the Emily Carr University of Art and Design (1996), an MFA (2000), MA in Linguistics and Anthropology (2005) and PhD in Linguistics and Anthropology with a focus on space as expressed in the Kwak'wala language (2013) all from the University of Victoria. Her practice is multi-disciplinary, encompassing photography, painting, carving, video, installation, monumental public art, writing and speaking. Following Nicolson's *Hexsa'am: To Be Here Always*, a 2019 project with the Belkin that functioned as research, material, media, testimony and ceremony to challenge the western concept that the power of art is limited to the symbolic, *This Is An Emergency Broadcast* is another moment to amplify Indigenous tradition.'

**Althea Thauberger** (Canadian, b. 1970) is an interdisciplinary artist, filmmaker and educator based in Vancouver. Rooted in sustained collaborative research and practice with groups or communities, Thauberger's work investigates relationships between people and structures such as the state, economies, social codes, histories and traditions through aesthetic and institutional power relations. Born in Saskatoon, SK, she received a BFA from Concordia University and an MFA from the University of Victoria. Her work has been widely exhibited both nationally and internationally including at Presentation House Gallery, North Vancouver (2005), Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2006), Vancouver Art Gallery (2008, 2011) and the Musée d'Art Contemporain Montréal (2017), among others. She was shortlisted for the 2004 Sobey Art Award and the recipient of the 2011 VIVA Award. Alongside an active research and artistic practice, Thauberger has taught at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria and Concordia University. She is currently Associate Professor of Visual Art at the University of British Columbia.

## On the Outdoor Screen

*Nuxalk Radio*, 2021

video

3 m 9 s

Written and directed by Banchi Hanuse;  
produced by Lantern Films  
Courtesy of Lantern Films

Written and directed by Banchi Hanuse and produced by Lantern Films, *Nuxalk Radio* documents a day in the life of 91.1 Nuxalk Radio, a community radio station established in 2014 with the slogan, “Lhulhamktulhs ala ts’ktaliwalh alh ti s-kulhulmcilh t’ayc n wa sulutilh ats (Broadcasting the laws of the lands and waters).” Broadcasting from the Nuxalk village of Q’umk’uts’ (Bella Coola) and online, Nuxalk Radio was founded to help keep the Nuxalk language alive through broadcasting news, local events and emergency messages relating to floods, forest fires, industrial disasters and tsunamis. Co-founder and station manager



*Nuxalk Radio* (still), 2021, Written and directed by Banchi Hanuse; Courtesy of Lantern Films

Banchi Hanuse outlines its overarching goal as the promotion of the Nuxalk language to “increase the fluency of semi-fluent Nuxalk language speakers, inspire new Nuxalk language learners, raise the prestige of the Nuxalk language and reaffirm the fact that the Nuxalk language is relevant today. Nuxalk Radio contributes positively to physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being while also asserting Nuxalk Nationhood by raising up our Nuxalk ancestral government, reclaiming and reoccupying our territory and promoting stewardship of our homelands.” *Nuxalk Radio* is the recipient of the Vancouver International Film Festival’s Sea to Sky Award and the Yorkton Film Festival’s Documentary Arts and Culture Golden Sheaf Award.

**Banchi Hanuse** is co-founder and station manager of Nuxalk Radio, a community radio station based out of the Nuxalk village of Q’umk’uts’ (Bella Coola). Hanuse holds a BA in First Nations Studies from UBC and has worked at the National Film Board as a production assistant and project coordinator.

*This Is An Emergency Broadcast* is made possible with the generous support of the Audain Foundation, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and our Belkin Curator's Forum members.

As a complement to the exhibition, *When Daylight First Came to Our World*, a graphic story by Gord Hill with accompanying texts by Marianne Nicolson and Midori Nicolson, will be published and distributed. The publication is part of the project *Mirrored in Stone*, commissioned by Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society in partnership with the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation, directed by Marianne Nicolson and facilitated by Althea Thauberger. *Mirrored in Stone* was one of the two hundred exceptional projects funded through the Canada Council for the Arts New Chapter program. The project was additionally supported by the British Columbia Arts Council Youth Engagement Program.

We actively acknowledge that the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery is situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the x̣ṃəθḳ'əyəm Musqueam people.

## **Programs and Events**

For details, visit [belkin.ubc.ca](http://belkin.ubc.ca)

To arrange an exhibition tour for groups and classes, email [belkin.tours@ubc.ca](mailto:belkin.tours@ubc.ca)

### **Listening event with Lorna Brown**

Saturday, June 22 at 2 pm

### **Conversation with Marianne Nicolson and Jordan Wilson**

Saturday, August 10 at 2 pm

### **Closed gathering with Marianne Nicolson and community guests**

Sunday, August 11

\*Please note that the Belkin will be closed to the public on this date; we apologize for the inconvenience



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ARTS COUNCIL  
An agency of the Province of British Columbia

THE | **AUDAIN FOUNDATION**



MORRIS AND HELEN **BELKIN ART GALLERY**  
[belkin.ubc.ca](http://belkin.ubc.ca)

1825 Main Mall | Vancouver BC V6T 1Z2  
x̣ṃəθḳ'əyəm | Musqueam Territory  
Open 10–5 Tue–Fri | 12–5 Sat–Sun  
Closed Mondays and Holidays | 604 822 2759