

Chapter Six discusses artist Shannon Gerard's research-creation course, *Pressing Issues*, run at Ontario College of Art & Design University (OCADU), in which students created educational artist's multiples with and for a public audience after studying from pedagogical arts archives at OCADU and in Los Angeles. While the "diverse publics" sought out for these events were arts-related and thus less public than those of the APG, the research-creation events and archiving of this class—as assessed through their art—appear to have been highly fruitful. The decision to include one semester's final nano-published project (posters entitled *Counter with Care*, after Corita Kent's *Handle with Care*, 1967) within the kit for the next class enacts the forward-looking doing that Springgay asks of socially engaged research-creation. As the author also notes, this course, like many inventive approaches, has flaws that stem from its radicality. Not all of the OCADU students could travel to LA to visit arts archives, making the course exclusionary for the same reason it is innovative (169).

Concluding in Chapter Seven, Springgay discusses changes she made to her office, such as giving students access to the room when she is not on campus, as an example of how we as educators can "shift the ways in which we approached reading and studying in the academy—as something solitary and typically assigned in course work—to a practice of intimacy" (172). This practical example, like so many of the research-creation events described within *Feltness*, offers educators clear

suggestions for a more *felt* method of education. And, as with the OCADU course, these suggestions have also already found their own barriers to widespread adoption. Springgay has shown that by refusing to establish expected learning outcomes in advance nor provide quantifiable evaluative criteria such as rubrics, as is the normal educational practice, research-creation is "imponderable" to neoliberal educational administration.

As *Feltness* is a culmination of over a decade of Springgay's work, the scope of the content she presents sometimes gets in the way of showcasing *felt* as a method. I found this most often with her returns to care as a core value of feltness, which could have been developed further in its own right (130, 144). Chapters are largely organized around new examples of research-creation, which are afterward connected to current pedagogical theory, and then to feltness. With this structure, the concept of feltness and its many theoretical underpinnings read secondary to research-creation as a pedagogy. Also, the small, already intimate, size of elementary and university seminar courses eases the touch-based, collaborative, and process-oriented learning Springgay describes. The author does not comment on the application of feltness in large university lecture courses, where many students are introduced to art history and arts education as a field, and where active learning is often most challenging to implement. This is one of many possible future research areas supported by this book. *Feltness* offers a strong new work of affective-pedagogical

literature with which we can catalyze future socially engaged projects and validate ever-more disruptive grant applications.

Springgay's *Feltness* is a guiding resource for educators looking to implement or justify research-creation with respect to the social justice that such radical pedagogy can either foster or simply perform. The book makes a compelling case for the benefits of research-creation, educating as an artist-teacher, and the need to keep both practices affective and socially engaged.

Laura Ryan is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Art History & Art Conservation at Queen's University.  
—lglkr@queensu.ca

1. "Definitions of Terms," Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Government of Canada, updated May 4, 2021, <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-finance-programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22>.

---

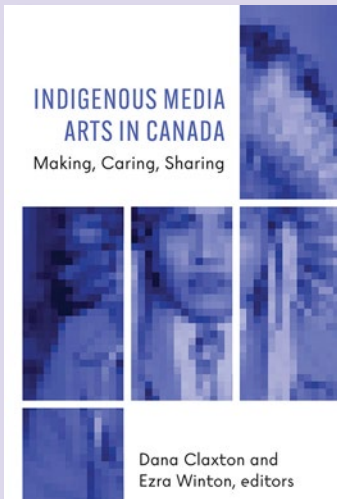
Dana Claxton and Ezra Winton, eds.  
***Indigenous Media Arts in Canada: Making, Caring, Sharing***  
Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2023

450 pp., b&w illus.  
\$44.99 (paper) ISBN 9781771125413

Migueltzinta Solis

---

In *Indigenous Media Arts in Canada: Making, Caring, Sharing*, editors Dana Claxton and Ezra Winton present a comprehensive look at landmark artworks and events within Indigenous moving image, film, and television in Canada. The book is divided into four main sections: "Decolonizing Media Arts Institutions," "Protecting Culture," "Methods/Knowledges/



Interventions,” and “Resurgent Media/Allies/Advocacy.” Focusing on artists and creators in so-called Canada, *Indigenous Media Arts in Canada: Making, Caring, Sharing* takes pains to provide context for and analysis of both Indigenous-made media and moving image, and a critical analysis of settler-made media which has negatively affected Indigenous representation. While the book does not present radically new ideas in media art, it does fulfill a need for further unpacking of the trajectories of media, video, and film in the recent past and how it has shaped our Indigenous medial present.

Contributions such as Claudia Sicondolfo’s “Sights of Homecoming: Locating Restorative Sites of Passage in Zacharias Kunuk’s Festival Performance of *Angirattut*” and Joanne Hearne’s “‘Our Circle Is Always Open’: Indigenous Voices, Children’s Rights, and Spaces of Inclusion in the Films of Alanis Obomsawin” focus on the works of creative figures important to the fields of Indigenous film, television, and media art, contextualizing them

within these fields as well as within their larger political contexts. Other contributions such as Alethea Arnaquq-Baril’s conversation with editor Ezra Winton, “Curating the North: Documentary Screening Ethics and Inuit Representation in Cinema” and “Not Reconciled: The Complex Legacy of Films on Canadian ‘Indian’ Residential Schools” offer redress to problematic films and media with in-depth, politically situated criticism, often contrasted with works that align with Indigenized and decolonized modes of media creation. The book seeks to provide a thorough historical overview of Indigenous media’s creative, political, and technological development, while also taking time to discuss theoretical and methodological approaches which resist colonial historicizing, demonstrating the editors’ desire to question the ways in which imaging has served to disempower Indigenous life and bodies. Interdisciplinary in approach, this book will be quite useful to educators and students in film, cultural, literary, and visual studies. While the volume largely addresses works realized before 2016, it does provide background on foundational issues and texts relevant to media arts today.

Indigenous contributors offer their Inuit, Anishinaabe, Métis, Hunkpapa Lakota, L’nu, Cree, and Ojibwe perspectives, among others, applying a broad range of Indigenous worldviews and voices to the subject matter. In “Indigenous Documentary Methodologies – ChiPaChiMoWin: Telling Stories,” Jules Arita Koostachin (Attawapiskat First Nation) delivers an accessible

rethinking of documentary practice grounded in her own filmmaking and scholarly practice. Settler contributors largely self-identify as such, and in some cases use their positionality to provide insight for others in positions of institutional influence, such as Claudia Sicondolfo’s contribution on the experience of Zacharias Kunuk’s film being screened without English subtitles, and Toby Katrine Lawrence’s “Curatorial Insiders/Outsiders: *Speaking Outside* and *Collaboration as Strategic Intervention*,” which may be useful to settler curators, art historians, cultural workers, educators, and anyone involved with arts programming. The aim of the book seems skewed more towards providing an understanding of Indigenous media arts and media art history for a settler audience, rather than supporting Indigenous scholars, artists, students, educators, and media practitioners who approach these topics from a lived experience of Indigeneity. While the volume makes space for Indigenous voices, the way in which those voices are presented is performing for a largely settler—or *settled*—audience, a sadly common pitfall in Indigenous and post-colonial scholarship.

“Our Own Up Here: A Discussion at imagineNATIVE,” a conversation between Dani Goulet, Tasha Hubbard, Jesse Wenthe, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, and Shane Belcourt makes important space for Indigenous self-address on recent issues in media and imaging. This contribution opens the first section of the book, “Decolonizing Media Arts Institutions,” which provides valuable insight and criticism on the

ways in which Indigenous imaging and self-imaging has been represented in film festivals, broadcasting platforms, and similar media-oriented institutions. Refreshingly not overcredited, “Our Own Up Here” is a conversation between key players in the established world of Indigenous media and film serves not only to bring these important voices to a larger audience, but also to show how Indigenous thought can unfold through collective discussion and relating. The participants’ humour, passion, and critical conversation (as they crack jokes and express themselves candidly) offers far more hopeful and helpful pathways into Indigenous methodologies of media creation, critique, and dissemination than a more theoretical text might. Through the roundtable format, the reader can learn through observation rather than through instruction—the typical academic writing form—the importance of relationship-making and keeping to the development of radical Indigenous creativity and discourse.

The contributions to the second section, “Protecting Culture,” give the volume a strong political backbone. They examine key political topics such as the Residential School System, racially motivated and gender-based violence, and other sources of historical trauma and cultural genocide for Indigenous peoples within the Canadian colonial state. In “Not Reconciled: The Complex Legacy of Films on Canadian ‘Indian’ Residential Schools,” film scholar Brenda Longfellow lays out a clear critique of how visual media across genres has narrativized the Residential School System

in Canada’s national imaginary largely for the purposes of settler consumption. Longfellow points out colonial conventions found in documentaries and fictional films on the rss which do a disservice to understanding its realities even if their intent is to illuminate them. Longfellow analyzes the production history and choices in films including *Cold Journey* (1975) and *Where the Spirit Lives* (1989) to deconstruct how the writing, characters, aesthetics, and racial/cultural make-up of the production team shaped the films’ representation of the rss, and how this in turn informed the contemporary liberal colonial discourse around reconciliation. Longfellow goes on to give in-depth thought to Indigenous-made films addressing rss legacies from a place of self-determination. She discusses Métis director Loretta Todd’s *The Learning Path* (1991) as an example of a reparative documentary which focuses on recovering lost knowledge and education post-rss. Rather than feed a settler fixation on the abuses experienced within the rss and hunger for easy reconciliation, Longfellow shows how reparative documentaries, such as Barbara Cranmer’s *Our Voices, Our Stories* (2016) and *Kuper Island: Return to the Healing Circle* (1998) by Christine Welsh and Peter C. Campbell, use visual strategies of juxtaposition to reframe rss as a narrative of Indigenous survivance and resurgence.

Part three of the book, “Methods/Knowledges/Interventions,” presents a cross-disciplinary constellation of approaches which span performance and documentary media, and outline important strategies for

medial subterfuge of colonial institutional forces in the past, present, and future—if one chooses to so categorize. Scholar and curator Julie Nagam and art historian Carla Taunton examine Ursula Johnson’s *L’nuwelti’k (We are Indian)* (2012–) and *SNARE* (2013) by Lisa Jackson, two works which bring together media and the body to express Indigenous, gendered embodiments. Their chapter, titled “Marking and Mapping Out Embodied Practices through Media Art,” provides a strong argument for performance as critical to the processes of decolonizing the body. Readers working at the crossroads of archive and performance will find valuable the chapter’s section on the Indigenous living archive, which they situate as a space where static medial elements (videos, photographs, maps, cultural objects) can be brought to life via materially engaged performance, process, and activation.

Michelle Stewart’s contribution, “The Generative Hope of Indigenous Interactive Media: Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Futurism,” addresses Indigenous-made video games and other narrative, immersive virtual experiences as they intersect with ideas of ecological knowledge. While the chapter provides a good primer on the topic and an interesting conceptual parallel between ecological knowledge and interactive media theories, the essay would have been helped by more recent theoretical contributions from Indigenous futurists such as Jason Edward Lewis, who unpacks Indigenous futurities beyond content production and representation, and addresses questions at

the intersections of contemporary Indigenous technologies and ontologies. Stewart does present useful reflections on story and space as they function in Indigenous digital creation, providing important foundational links between Indigenous worldviews and virtual worldbuilding and narrative design.

Part four of the volume, “Resurgent Media/Allies/Advocacy,” makes space for further experimentation in formal approaches to media via Indigenous creativity. Media scholar Sasha Crawford-Holland and gender studies scholar Lindsay LeBlanc highlight temporal and axiological agency and adaptability within Indigenous futurist approaches to the digital in their chapter, “‘Making Things Our [Digital] Own’: Lessons on Time and Sovereignty from Indigenous Computational Art.” Framed by a critique of the filmic trope of the ignorant savage, Crawford-Holland and LeBlanc analyze works by Skawennati and Scott Beniinaabandan, among others, in terms of their capacity to unsettle the digital and reclaim notions of the Indigenous technological.

In the concluding section, Anishinaabe filmmaker Lisa Jackson offers a thoughtful rumination on time and history, a brief but critical component which importantly troubles the often inescapable linearity and flatness of all colonial media, from film to text to mapping. In “Setting the Record Straight,” originally adapted from a social media post, Jackson states simply that Indigenous stories are not intended to be easily understood by the forces which gatekeep the highest echelons of media production, even

while these are the most important stories, the ones which endure.

Interestingly, there is scant address in this volume of social media as it relates to contemporary Indigenous imaging and self-imaging. This omission is surprising given its role in current movements such as LandBack as well as recent blockade demonstrations such as the 2020 rail blockade in Tyendinaga, raised in solidarity with Wet’suwet’en demonstrations at the time. In a book concerned with access to image and narrative production, social media as a conduit for political mobilization, particularly amongst young and emerging Indigenous artists, might have been more deeply considered. Another question left unaddressed is the role of streaming services and content creators, particularly Indigenous-run streaming services and television networks such as Red Nation Television Network and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), in current media creation and access.

The volume makes a few attempts at bringing visual art, new media, and performance into the fold, but ultimately focuses on film, cinema, video, and television. While it is understandably difficult to keep up with the speed of media production and technological innovation, the book could have made more conceptual space for the rapid evolution of digital creativities as well as the ways in which the moving image in the visual arts has a different flavour than the moving image in more commercial film and television. Nevertheless, the breadth of the contributions makes this book

relevant across many fields including film, cultural studies, critical studies, visual art, post-colonial studies, and history of media and art, demonstrating an understanding of intersectionality and interdisciplinarity within Indigenous and decolonial thought and scholarship. The contributions usually reference the political and historical contexts of producers, and thus support the editors’ desire to situate media art as a tool for Indigenous self-determination via moving image production and dissemination. That being said, in tone and approach the book is likely better suited to media studies focused on film and television. The treatment of the more creative, performative, and digital elements and concepts of media art is somewhat dry and skirts deeper phenomenological and speculative discourse surrounding Indigenous Futurities.

*Miguelzinta Solís is a queer trans Chicanx/mestizXXX interdisciplinary artist, writer, and educator. He holds an MFA in Art and a PhD in Cultural, Social and Political Thought from the University of Lethbridge/Iniskim in Treaty 7, traditional Blackfoot territory, where he is now Assistant Professor of Indigenous Art Studio. —mc.solis@uleth.ca*