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Preserving the Past, Colonialism and Affect: Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the Archives of Ontario, Government of Ontario Art Collection

- June 11th 2008, Prime Minster Steven Harpers issues the first national apology for Residential Schooling.[2]
- June 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is launched with a five year mandate.[3]
- June 2nd 2015, the TRC report and Calls to Action for institutions and governments are released.[4]
- Summer of 2015, Toronto recognizes the Mississauga of the New Credit as the "host" First Nation of the Pan and Parapan American Games.[5]
- May 30th 2016, Premier Kathleen Wynne issues the first provincial apology on Residential Schooling.[6]
- June 2nd 2016, two youth from Grassy Narrows First Nations were expelled from the Legislature because their "water is sacred" t-shirts were read as a sign of protest.[7] Grassy Narrows youth were in Toronto for a series of events drawing attention to industrial mercury pollution present in the ecosystem since the 1960's.[8]
- August 3rd 2016, the national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women was launched.[9]
- November 16th 2016, none of the six Quebec police officers charged with 37 complaints of sexual assault and harassment by Indigenous women will be charged.[10]

To contextualize what some have termed "the age of reconciliation", there is a history of political recognition of Indigenous issues. But also stagnation or opposition to the project of building "Nation-to-Nation" relationships. This timeline serves as a small example to demonstrate that within dialogues of "reconciliation" is ongoing colonialism or inaction. For two summers I was a Curatorial Assistant at the Government of Ontario Art Collection (GOAC), Archives of Ontario. With the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

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[1] I am a white *qallunaat* Settler from Head of the Lake Treaty no. 14 (1805) Anishinaabek Mississauga, Haudendaunee, and Wendat territory, and a first generation Canadian of Scottish and Italian descent.
[2] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prime-minister-stephen-harper-s-statement-of-apology-1.734250
[3] http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/TRC%20NE%20News%20Release.June16.ENG.pdf
[4] http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/TRCReportPressRelease%20(1).pdf
[5] http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/pan-am-games-make-headway-with-indigenous-protocol-1.3145094
[6] https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/05/30/kathleen-wynne-to-reveal-ontarios-response-to-truth-and-reconciliation-commission.html
[7] https://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2016/06/02/first-nations-teens-booted-from-legislature-after-donning-t-shirts.html
[8] http://freegrassy.net/learn-more/grassy-narrows/history/.
[9] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/missing-murdered-inquiry-launch-manitoba-1.3705293.
[10] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/police-abuse-charges-val-d-or-1.3852390.

calls to action, I became interested in using this research to explore and provide practical considerations for how this public art collection can reconcile beyond words and apologizes.

Affect is a useful methodology for guiding this research based on its awareness to feelings, experiences, and "difficult" subject matter. Within media or especially government discourses on reconciliation, there is an exclusion or hesitation towards the term "colonialism".[11] As well, government discourses of "reconciliation" have positioned Residential Schooling as synonymous with all the violence of colonialism. While Residential Schooling is an unfortunate chapter, it is merely one part in a larger history. This fixation leaves out other histories, legacies, and ongoing phenomena of Settler-colonialism such as land dispossession, environmental racism, and gendered violence to name a few.

While scholarship focusing on affect and colonialism have yet to be written, there are useful theories and theorists I will employ. Ann Cvetkovich asks "What if depression, in the Americas at least, could be traced back to histories of colonialism, genocide, slavery, legal exclusion, and everyday segregation…rather than biochemical imbalances?"[12] Further she links these legacies to "real world tangible struggles of sovereignty, land rights, and self-determination."[13] These historical legacies have a real world impact on the present day, this "political depression" is an affective response to structural oppressions like racism and colonialism.[14] Jennifer Doyle tackles similar issues analyzing James Luna's performance of "alcoholic masculine depression." She concludes that engagement with these "difficult" histories

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[11] "The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples", Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Government of Ontario, (Queens Printer for Ontario, 2016).
[12] Ann, Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 115.
[13] Cvetkovich, *Depression,* 139.
[14] Cvetkovich, *Depression,* 127.

addresses "how one gauges the past, how one narrates it, how one knows it, and how one feels it."[15] Further, Erika Doss suggests that a "critical pedagogy" is aware to how, why, and which "public feelings shape historical moments, concepts of citizenship, and understanding of self and national identity."[16] By examining theses structures, the "landscape of affect" helps with cultural understanding.[17] While affect has slowly infiltrated art history, newer pathways are being paved in discourses like archival studies. Affect is inherent in flourishing discussions of "archival ethics" as a response from "ideological shifts" and developments from other disciplines.[18]

The GOAC is a unique public art amalgam of around 3000 pieces spread across the province from the Archives of Ontario vault at York University, to Queens Park, as well as courthouses and offices around the province. It is unique in that it offers a loan program to Ministers, furthering its vast geographic range. Impressively, it is currently administered by its sole curator. An eccentric and challenging collection of this size could certainly benefit from support for its daily logistics, but also if the overseeing Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) will take the project of "reconciliation" seriously. GOAC collects all artwork commissioned by the government, but also acquires artwork through donations and contemporary art purchases. The collection's mandate is to "portray the culture, diversity and heritage of the Province, enhance the public environment of government buildings (and) promote and showcase contemporary Ontario artists."[19] Indigenous artists who are in the collection exist

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15 Jennifer Doyle. *Hold it Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 100.
16 Erika Doss. "Affect" *American Art*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (University of Chicago Press, Spring 2009), 4.
17 Doss. "Affect", 4.
18 Marika Clifor and Anne J. Gilliand "Affect and the Archive, Archives and their Affects: An Introduction to the Special Issue" *Archival Science,* March 2016, Volume 16, Issue 1.
19 "The Government of Ontario Art Collect: Public Locations Across Ontario" Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Archives of Ontario (2016).

in an apolitical, neoliberal multiculturalism incorporated into Ontario Settler-colonial definitions of belonging, identity, and territorial space. For example, works by Cree artist Shirley Cheechoo in the context of GOAC become engulfed in Ontario sovereignty—extinguishing Cree self-determination—and define her as "Aboriginal" or "Indian" under the Constitution of 1982 or the Indian Act of 1876, erasing larger Anishinaabek Cree nationhood identifications. By nature a government art collection will have limitations and bureaucratic confines. GOAC specifically has no permanent gallery space, budget restraints, and is fixed to static definition of "art objects" which is unable to collect or display new media like performance.

The collection has closer ties to the legacies of Residential Schooling, beyond simply being a public art collection of a Settler-colonial government. GOAC was founded by Egerton Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Education in Upper Canada (fig. 1) with the passing of the School Act in 1853.[20] Ryerson had secured funds to travel to Europe and purchase "master copies" to bring back to the colony. Ryerson set out to Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Florence, and Rome for his "objects of taste" completing the grand tour in 1856.[21] Ryerson's first government sanctioned art purchases were to be placed into the Toronto Normal School opened in 1852, with the addition of a Museum of Natural History and Fine Arts.[22] The collection began with a deliberate moral and aesthetic pedagogical purpose in the tradition of the "Museum of Copies" to educate the new urbanized masses with bourgeoisie ideals.[23] For Ryerson however, the continuation of this tradition, represented a Euro-centric notion of "good culture" or "high art."

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[20] Fern Bayer, *The Ontario Collection,* (Markham, Fitzhenry and Whiteside for the Ontario Heritage Foundation, 1984), 6.
[21] Bayer, *The Ontario Collection*, 6.
[22] Virgina Nixon, "Egerton Ryerson and the Old Master Copy as an Instrument of Public Education", (Concordia University, *Journal of Canadian Art History*, 2006) 95.
[23] Nixon, "Egerton Ryerson and the Old Master Copy as an Instrument of Public Education", 96.

Instead, colonial arts were cast off as creole, derogatory, or bastardizations of "authentic" Western art. The turn to Europe denied the colonies an acknowledgement of an artistic tradition, Settler or Indigenous.

But Ryerson's relationship to Settler-colonialism goes beyond euro-centric discourses on "high art". As a Methodist minister from 1826-1833 he was preaching and converting local Mississauga people at the Credit Mission.[24] Furthermore, Ryerson oversaw the development of educational institutions in the province, particularly valuing different pedagogical methods for Indigenous and white-Settler children. "Indian" children were subjected to manual labour or industrial schools which were a precursor to the nationwide campaign of Residential Schooling.[25] Exemplary, the Mohawk Institute opened in 1828 and served the nearby Haudensaunee community of Six Nations of the Grand River until 1970.[26] (fig. 2) After the 1842 Baggot Commission brought forward the "assimilative policy" and eventually the Residential School system, Ryerson was a "very influential supporter" of the industrial school model for Indigenous children.[27] Beyond cultural assimilation, epidemics, physical and sexual assault that plagued schools, the system was designed to equip Indigenous children with low-wage industrial skills.[28] A tell tale sign of where government architects of Residential Schools saw Indigenous children fitting into the future of the Settler-colony. While Ryerson was not the creator of

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[24] Donald B. Smith, *Mississauga Portraits: Ojibwe Voices from the Nineteenth-Century Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 19.
[25] "Egerton Ryerson, the Residential School System and Truth and Reconciliation", Ryerson University's Aboriginal Education Council August, 2010.
[26] "The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples".
[27] "Egerton Ryerson, the Residential School System and Truth and Reconciliation".
[28] Mary-Ellen Kelm, "A 'Scandalous Procession': Residential Schooling and the Reformation of Aboriginal Bodies," in Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), Chapter 4; Ian Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools," Histoire Sociale/ Social History Iss. 46, no. 91 (May 2013): 146-72.

Residential Schools, like many government officials he supported the programs and offered the blueprints for a chapter of national tragic history. Beyond GOAC being a public art collection, its founding ideology is directly implicated in the fabric of Canadian Settler-colonialism, and the traumas of Residential Schooling.

After the closing of the Normal School and Ryerson's museum in 1920 the collection was in administrative ruin and many pieces of the collection were lost. In 1966 Premier John Robarts revived the collection with the "Art in Architecture" program that dedicated 0.5% of new building funds to the acquisition of artwork for the spaces.[29] The first project was the Macdonald Block expansion from 1967-68 that acquired site specific pieces from a broad scope of artists like AJ Casson, Gerald Gladstone, Jack Bush, Paulouise Kanayook, and Micheline Beauchemin.[30] In the 1980's the Northern Ontario Relocation Program (NORP) established government buildings in cities like Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Moosonee, Kenora, and Dryden. Under the "art in architecture" program artworks were purchased to fill these new buildings. Many local Indigenous artists were selected, and the collection acquired works from Daphne Odjig, Carl Beam, Randy Trudeau, Roy Harvey Thomas and others. Some Norval Morriseau works were acquired through NORP but most were transfer donations through the Ontario Heritage Trust.[31] The current period includes drafting a public art policy for the government of Ontario, and the purchase of new contemporary artworks that fit within the current mandate when budget allows. Recently works have been acquired by artists such as

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[29] Bayer, *The Ontario Collection*, 275.
[30] "The Government of Ontario Art Collect: Art at Macdonald Block" Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Archives of Ontario (2016).
[31] Lani Wilson (Curator, Government of Ontario Art Collection, Archives of Ontario, MGCS), Chris Gismondi, at Archive of Ontario, 134 Ian MacDonald Blvd, Toronto, July 2016.

Bryon Hodgins, Bev Rodin, Robert Burley, Sarah Martin, Robert Houle, Steve Drsicoll, Sandra Brewster, and Sann Sann Lam. The collection's government format means that many new works purchased fall into a "decorative" category in genres like landscape or Woodland art. Most portraits in the collection are historic or contemporary government commissions either of outgoing Premiers, Speakers, or Lieutenant Governors.

The Archives of Ontario who oversee GOAC has taken few and slow institutional steps towards achieving TRC goals. The Indigenous Relations Working Group was formed in 2016 in response to the TRC report. It was delayed in its formation due to the hiring of a new Chief Archivist.[32] The working group's mandate is to increase Indigenous awareness, cultural sensitivity, and create relationships with communities.[33] The group also aims to answer calls 70 and 77: "a national review of archival policies and best practices" and for "archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system."[34] Some of their goals are to revise the acquisition strategy for records, update records resources, and engage in "participatory descriptions" for documents and photos with communities.[35] One major obstacle the group faces is a lack of knowledge about what the Archival collection contains.[36] Exemplary, are there artefacts that should be repatriated, sacred stories that should not be publicly accessible, or documents relevant to Residential Schools that need to be identified?

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[32] Desmond Wong (former Inventory and Tracking Coordinator, Archives of Ontario, MGCS), Chris Gismondi, at Archive of Ontario, 134 Ian MacDonald Blvd, Toronto, July 12 2016.
[33] Wong, July 12 2016.
[34] "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action" Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, (Winnipeg Manitoba, 2015).
[35] Indigenous Relations Working Group meeting (Archives of Ontario, MGCS), Chris Gismondi, at Archive of Ontario, 134 Ian MacDonald Blvd, Toronto, July 19 2016.
[36] Wong, July 12 2016; Indigenous Relations Working Group, July 19 2016.

While the working group is trying to meet the minimum calls of the TRC and better understand the current collection, their efforts are needed and poorly supported. Contentious promotional material using anonymous archival photographs had to be pulled, and the small group has faced hesitation about going beyond the TRC calls.[37] As well, the working group had yet to secure funding for a contract position to be devoted full time to the mandate.[38] I lay this ground work to identify the larger bureaucratic context that surrounds GOAC and the project of "reconciliation".

Affect theory and archival practices are a newly emerging field and useful for my analysis of the government art collection. Cliford and Gilliand theorize the growth of affect and archival sciences as a growing trend related to human rights, archival ethics, methodological and ideological shifts in other disciplines.[39] For example, affective archival science asks

> What is the capacity of records or the physical place of the archives to engender psychological and physiological responses in those who encounter them?… In what ways, and to what extent, do records, and the holdings of our archives capture or contain emotions and other forms of affect that were experienced by the creators or others engaged or present in the making of the records?… How should the archivist represent such affect to potential users, and how should the archivist anticipate and respond to affective responses and reactions on the part of those users?[40]

But beyond archival practices, these same questions can be used to frame an analysis of art objects. GOAC pieces can be re-read as "records" in the fabric of the Archives of Ontario and a larger collection of heritage material and textual culture.

One step towards reconciling GOAC would be remembering it's original pedagogical function and ideological connections to Residential Schools, as one symptom of colonialism. For example, how would the work *Indian Child* by Morrisseau be redefined in the context of Residential School legacies within a public art collection? (fig. 3) The difficulty behind

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[37] Wong, July 12 2016; Indigenous Relations Working Group, July 19 2016.
[38] Wong, July 12 2016; Indigenous Relations Working Group, July 19 2016.
[39] Clifor, Marika and Anne J. Gilliand "Affect and the Archive, Archives and their Affects: An Introduction to the Special Issue" *Archival Science,* March 2016, Volume 16, Issue 1, 4.
[40] Clifor, Gilliand "Affect and the Archive, Archives and their Affects", 4.

intergenerational trauma and assimilation are sanitized within the context of the collection. Canadian institutions have much work to do when in it comes to including difficult subject matter of Residential Schooling or colonialism in their programming. “Curating difficult knowledge” needs to reposition memories and documents of trauma within the public sphere.[41] These sites of curation—museums, monuments, heritage, etc—are not only texts for visitors, but site practices that are “social, embodied, and generative.”[42] These new ways of knowing, remember and emerge with the past and our social fabric when given space to curate beyond “top-down efforts by the state to encode preferred memory.”[43] In this way the erasure or inactions to reconcile Residential Schooling and other Settler-colonial traumas are part of a deliberate framing or erasing of “difficult” narratives. From the historical perspective of Residential Schooling, the piece *Indian Child* becomes a sinister reminder of Indigenous social order. Family and kinship ties, the generational transmission of cultural knowledge, access to the land and land based pedagogy were all deliberately attacked under Residential Schools.[44] The child whole and connected through epistemology, language, culture, and land becomes a historic, fictitious, or fantastical subject matter for Morrisseau in the context of colonial reconciliation.

Furthermore, the Indigenous art that is collected is positioned as decorative, apolitical, and rarely seems to confront Settler-colonialism. High market value pieces in the Woodland style like Morriseau, Roy Harvey Thomas, or Daphne Odjig lose their Anishinaabek epistemological

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41 Erica T. Lehrer, Cynthia E. Milton, and Monica Patterson. *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places.* (Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.
42 Lehrer, *Curating Difficult Knowledge*, 3.
43 Lehrer, *Curating Difficult Knowledge*, 4.
44 Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, “Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* vol. 3, no. 3 (2014): 1-25.

significances in the context of a government art collection.[45] (fig. 4) Similarly, two pieces acquired by Métis artist Christi Belcourt in 2015 lose their political and ecological significations in the sanitized context of public art. (fig. 5) Her works beautifully reimagine floral beadwork motifs in acrylic paint, connecting the water, root, and land worlds through holistic compositions of animals and medicinal plants like strawberry and tobacco. Both Odjig and Belcourt are overt about how their art practices relate to their struggles as Indigenous people either as "water protectors", traditional knowledge keepers, or the descendants of those that survived colonial processes.[46] However, beyond the artist's biography as discussed with Cheechoo, the context of GOAC reframes and sanitizes Indigenous artwork aesthetically and politically. In the public art context Odjig's celebration of Three Fires Confederacy (Odawa, Ojibwe, Potawatomi) creation and resilience, Belcourt's beadwork paintings of traditional medicines, and Morriseau's *Indian Child* become subsumed into a Settler-colonial multicultural celebration of diversity and heritage. In this reframing, the art has no space—or rather a carefully unconsciously curated space—to speak about the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples.

This sanitization becomes the most clear arguably in the reframing of Carl Beam's works. Beam became known after his work *The North American Iceberg* was the first piece of Indigenous artwork purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1986.[47] A Residential School survivor, Beam is Ojibwe and under southwestern influences broke ground in a new aesthetically

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[45] Greg Hill. "Norval Morrisseau – Shaman Artist", *Norval Morrisseau - Shaman Artist*. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006); Robert Houle. "Odjig: A Pictoral Style in Transition", *The Drawings and Paintings of Daphne Odjig: a Retrospective Exhibition*. Ed. Lauren Walker. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2007). 38 - 43

[46] Bonnie Devine. "From Resistance to Renewal: The Fine Art of Daphne Odjig", *The Drawings and Paintings of Daphne Odjig: a Retrospective Exhibition*. Ed. Lauren Walker. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2007). 17 - 31

[47] *Aakideh: The Art and Legacy of Carl Beam* (Dir. Robert Waldeck and Paul Eichhorn, 2010; 65 min.)

jarring style distinct from the Woodland school.[48] His works are incredibly cryptic, often subverting colonial archival images of Indigenous peoples, maps, and documents, while including text to create "unfinished" and "violent" compositions.[49] Even without a detailed reading of the archival images, works like *Untitled* have a chaotic and unsettling layout. (fig. 6) This piece can be read as a representation of the torn and damaged Indigenous experience, be that psychic, spiritual, legal, territorial, or economic. The work appears like specimens of evidence, evoking Indigenous being and criminality or scrutiny under the Settler-colonial state. As well, the use of archival images, digital alteration, and contemporary media like plexiglass bring the "historic" in dialogue with the present, and the future. Indigenous epistemic understandings of time and identity are non-static and non-linear like Western counterparts.[50] Residential School histories are not just history, but inform and shape the present.

One strategy for "curating difficult knowledge" and "reconciling" GOAC would be to acknowledge and reframe not just the contemporary Indigenous art, but archival holdings, and the "master copies" collection within the context of the TRC and reconciliation. For example, the most notable "gallery" public space available to GOAC is the Ontario Legislature, Queens Park. Currently on display are mostly landscapes, government portraits, and concerningly historical textbook illustrations by CW Jefferys. (fig. 7) Little to none of the contemporary Indigenous art collection is on display at Queens Park, as many pieces are at the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, in NORP buildings, or fetishistically snatched up for private offices such as Premier Wynne housing Odjig's *Roots.* But the exhibition space can be

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[48] *Aakideh.*
[49] *Aakideh.*
[50] Deborah Doxtater. "Reconnecting the Past: An Indian Idea of History". *Revisions*. Ed. Pakasaar, Helga. (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 1988). 25 - 33

reimagined and reused as an arena to act upon the work of reconciliation. If this curatorial endeavour were to be undertaken it would be crucial to curate the collection in such a way to not further erase "difficult" or "uncomfortable" Indigenous experiences or identities. A decontextualization of the original "master copies" with an acknowledgement of Ryerson's pedagogical and epistemic violence, combined with asserting Indigenous responses and representations could provide a powerful exhibition beyond clashing aesthetic differences.

The classic postcolonial methods of *hybridity* and *juxtaposition* have been utilized in museums to create dialogues across seemingly disconnected collections. Exemplary is the National Gallery of Canada, *Art of this Land* which displayed art and artifact together. In some rooms Inuit and Dene material culture were placed alongside Group of Seven landscape paintings.[51] The two objects were so drastically different aesthetically that relationships are not drawn along specific historical or formalistic grounds, but demonstrates that they existed in "separate but parallel worlds."[52] Another example is the Art Gallery of Ontario, employing similar transnational and postcolonial curatorial strategies in the renovation of the Canadian art rooms, with thematic approaches that "highlights the centrality of social, political, and discursive critiques to the work."[53] Indigenous and Settler art alongside one another create a "continuous and contingent" acknowledgement of both bodies of art, giving them the ability to evolve and claim social agency.[54] However Phillips and Anne Whitelaw are both cautious that juxtaposing

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[51] Ruth B. Phillips, *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 265.
[52] Phillips, *Museum Pieces,* 265.
[53] Phillips, *Museum Pieces,* 270.
[54] Phillips, *Museum Pieces,* 267.

curatorial strategies cannot deprive information from viewers as certain works are always privileged in museum or institutional "modes of seeing" and understanding.[55]

In light of postcolonial *juxtaposition,* I imagine a curatorial space devoted to reframing the pedagogical Ryerson "master copies" acknowledging the histories and legacies of Residential Schools, while simultaneously celebrating the existing Indigenous contemporary artwork in the collection with supporting documents and artifacts. Pairings like *Saint Michael the Archangel* beside *The Path of Life* juxtapose aesthetic, ideology, and worldview highlighting the incompatibility of Settler-colonialism (fig. 8, 9). Or rather the psychic, intellectual, and epistemic trauma that forced pedagogy like Residential Schooling would inflict upon Indigenous peoples lives, ways of being, and notions of self. As well, *Indian Child* and *Madonna with St. Elizabeth and St. John (The Medici Holy Family)* carries this dialogue through the conflicting subject matter of Indigenous children and biblical childhood experiences. (fig. 10) Western religious traditions of the sacred babe are a grim reminder of the legislated treatment of "savage" Indigenous children. *My Dad Fell* with *The Repenting Magdalene* offer more similarities than differences in their gloomy, composed, and orderly compositions. (fig. 11, 12) Even across time and culture, universal themes, experiences, or affects can generate exchange. In structure and grandeur Beam's *Untitled* alongside *St. George Killing the Dragon* positions not only Indigenous art, but Indigenous artistic critiques as equal to the mighty history painting (fig. 13). The diagonal line of sight, visual violence, and appeals to authority in both pieces are a striking likeness. And lastly, the pairing of *Untitled* with *The Supper at Emmaus* reveals a playful, seemingly incompatible spirituality order (fig. 14, 15). While Western culture may worship the

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[55] Phillips, *Museum Pieces,* 268.

sacred man on earth, Anishinaabek worldview posits all of earths holistic creation as worthy of prayer.

Another curatorial strategy that may be employed would be to acknowledge the historical past of the territorial spaces depicted or literal. Territory acknowledgements have become standard practice for most universities and some organizations, but the fight for them has been a slower and difficult practice west of the Plains in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes.[56] This apprehension comes from Settler-colonial institutions needing to acknowledge their historically difficult, morally flawed, or legally precarious claims to power. They are useful in that they acknowledge the historical processes of the space, the original stewards of the lands, as well as any treaties and agreements that pertain to the present negotiations of the space. And while territory acknowledgments are but one imperfect step in reconciliation discourses, they are useful in that they radically recontextualize spaces and our conceptions of history.[57] Thus, I believe the same can be down with artwork, specifically the hegemonic canon of Canadian landscape art. In the same way the "master copies" have an overt pedagogical and cultural ideology, what does it mean for the Settler-colonial state to be fixated on landscape art of stolen territories?

In some reconciliation discourse the phrase "we are all treaty people" is used to evoke communal ties. However this does not take into account the coercive and dishonest negotiation process that the Federal government engaged in, or the fact that large swaths of the nation are on lands never ceded or surrendered. Spaces such as Parliament Hill, the Maritimes, southern Quebec, or British Columbia are unneeded Algonquin, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, or Coast Salish

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[56] Chelsea Vowel, *Beyond Territory Acknowledgements,* http://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/#_ftn5*,* Sep 23, 2016.
[57] Vowel, *Beyond Territory Acknowledgements,* 2016.

territory. Beyond those flaws, Dr. Ruth Koleszar-Green repositions Settler-colonialism as "guest-host relations". In this way guests of these territories have *responsibilities*—not rights—to the lands that sustain them, and the hosts that have permitted them.[58] Thus curating landscape art in Canada with territory acknowledgements reposition viewers relations and conceptions of spaces. These spaces can be depicted like George Agnew Reid's *Temagami Study*, or physical sites such as *Fathers of Confederation* at Queens Park (fig. 16, 17). To accompany landscape and site-specific works with a territory acknowledgement, destabilizes their complicity in Settler-colonialism through a phenomenological reimagining of spaces *as* Indigenous, not nation-State.

There are deliberate ties to pedagogy, "civilization", affect, and colonialism present in GOAC's history. Governments and public institutions apprehension of "difficult" histories make slow progress or inaction towards social issues. However, I think even within bureaucratic restraints change can happen. Managers were very willing to allocate or shuffle funds for certain projects or research. Such as Minister Marie France Lalonde's requests for more francaphone social media content.[59] I do not see why understanding, properly cataloguing, and "reconciling" the archival and artistic holdings cannot also be achieved. It is very much within the capacity of the institution to change. However, should anything be implemented, proper due and thorough consultation needs to take place. In the wake of Oka-Kahnesetake (1990) and Ipperwash (1995), the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples released recommendations for governments and institutions and little was done to reconcile "Nation-to-Nation" relationships. I am a firm

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[58] Dr. Ruth Koleszar-Green, "Guest-Host Relations" Canadian Roots Exchange Youth Reconciliation Initiative Training, Cedar Glen YMCA, Toronto, Ontario, Oct 20 2016.
[59] Garima Sharma (Senior Manager, SSD, IPA, MGCS) Archives of Ontario, William Ormsby Boardroom, SSD Team Meeting, Chris Gismondi, at Archive of Ontario, 134 Ian MacDonald Blvd, Toronto, July 20 2016.

believer that history will continue to repeat itself unless it is changed, and I hope the TRC is not falling on deaf ears. I offer these strategies simply as an exploration of an accessible curatorial stance that could be used to reconcile and dialogue within the existing collection.

Plate List

Fig. 1

GOAC

Theophile Hamel, *The Rev. Dr. Adolphus Egerton Ryerson, DD, LL D [Chief Superintendant of Education Canada West/Ontario, 1844-76]*, 1850-1851, oil on canvas. AC# 622107

Fig. 2

"Understanding the Legacy of Residential Schools"

"The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples", Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Government of Ontario, (Queens Printer for Ontario, 2016), 18.

Fig. 3

GOAC

Norval Morrisseau, *Indian Child*, n.d., acrylic on canvas. AC# 636642

Fig 4.

GOAC

Daphne Odjig, *Roots*, 1979, Acrylic on Canvas, (each) 152.4 x 121.9 cm; 152.4 x 365.8 cm
AC# 625804

Fig. 5

GOAC (authors photograph)

Christi Belcourt, *Untitled,* 2015, acrylic on canvas.
AC# 101282

Fig. 6

GOAC

Carl Beam, *Untitled (Plexiglas Landscape)*, 1980, 186.7 x 124.5 cm.
AC# 625787

Fig. 7

GOAC

Charles William (C.W.) Jefferys, *Jacques Cartier Erects a Cross at Gaspe*, 1534 c. 1921,37.5 x 29.2 cm.
AC# 621236

Fig. 8 and 9

GOAC

Raimondo Campanile, *Saint Michael the Archangel* (after Guido Reni, Italian, 1575-1642), n.d., AC# 619786

Blake Debassige, *The Path of Life* [maquette], 1994, Acrylic on canvas, 86.5 x 71.2 cm, AC# 661754

Fig. 10

GOAC

Luigi Pmpignoli, *Madonna with St. Elizabeth and St. John (also known as The Medici Holy Family)*; after Andrea del Sarto, Italian, 1487-1530), n.d., 135.9 x 103.5 cm, AC# 622048

Fig. 11 and 12

GOAC

Shirley Cheechoo, *My Dad Fell*, 1982, acrylic, 41 x 30.5 cm, AC# 637542

Artist Unknown, *The Repenting Magdalene* (after unknown Old Master) n.d., oil on canvas, 49.6 x 37.5 cm, AC# 619790

Fig. 13

GOAC

Guiseppe Mazzolini, *St. George Killing the Dragon* (after Paris Bordone, Italian, 1500-1571), n.d., AC# 692678

Fig. 14 and 15

GOAC
Roy Harvey Thomas, *Untitled*, c. 1991, Acrylic on canvas, 122.0 x 243.0 cm, AC#661729

Artist Unknown, *The Supper at Emmaus* (after follower of Jacopo Palma il Vecchio, Italian, c. 1480-1528) n.d., oil on canvas, 153 x 203.8 cm, AC# 622042

Fig. 16

GOAC

George Agnew Reid, *Wilson Lake, Temagami, Study,* 1929, oil on board,
30.5 x 25.4 cm, AC#21126

Robinson-Huron Treaty (1850)
Cree, Ojibwa: Anishinaabek
Territory

Fig. 17

GOAC, Federick Sprastan Challener, *The Fathers of Confederation,* 1917-1919, AC#605057

Queens Park: Toronto Purchase, No. 14 Treaty (1787, 1805) Anishinaabek Mississauga, Haudenasaunee Territory

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