TRESPASSING
Trespassing breaks new ground as a dual-venue collaborative exhibition hosted concurrently by the Whatcom Museum and Allied Arts of Whatcom County. This exhibition brings together resources from throughout the community to present a unique and provocative collection of contemporary works by six Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian fine artists. Participating artists were invited to present works that address timely global, social and political issues — unapologetically — through the lens of their experience as both contemporary artists and Indigenous people. The resulting installation pieces, prints, paintings and drawings present fresh and stimulating commentary on a wide variety of topics and, together, offer an expanded examination of the role of Indigenous art and artists in contemporary society.

Through the works presented in Trespassing, the artists explore the cultural and philosophical relationships between the Western and Indigenous epistemologies and the effects of one upon the other. In her piece O’ Kou ni’ho Ku’i na’u, na hua, Ka’ili Chun reflects on the consequences of foreign development and tourism on the Hawaiian culture. In Hit, Tanis Maria S’eiltin examines Western aggression and expansionism through history and illuminates the environmental impacts of the cruise line industry on the Alaskan waters in Princess Slurry. Roxanne Chinook’s Save a Salmon, Spear an Indian comments on the destruction of Indigenous fishing grounds and reminds us of how the lack of understanding between cultures fuels hatred. Also interested in exploring issues of the land and resource use, Ramon Murillo presents his Toxic Totem Series as a stark reflection on the state of the environment today.

Many of the works presented here also consider the appropriation of Indigenous iconography by Western culture and how we, both individually and collectively, define the sacred or spiritual. In each of John Feodorov’s works, he uses familiar icons and images and juxtaposes them in unfamiliar ways to make us question how we create meaning. Larry McNeil’s work, Raven, places beloved cultural and spiritual images from both Western and Tlingit cultures together in startling new ways and challenges us to sort out the resulting relationship.

Trespassing documents purposeful artistic journeys into broad cultural and political landscapes as well as intimate personal terrain. With irony, humor, and spot-on commentary, the artists tackle topics such as cultural and political sovereignty, personal identity, environmental degradation, and the commercialization of the spiritual. By design, the works in this exhibition step beyond defined boundaries, challenge established norms, and attempt to redraw our world view through shared exploration and dialogue.

Rebecca Hutchins
Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Guest Co-curators
About the Artists

Roxanne Chinook (Warm Springs/Wasco)
Roxanne is an independent curator, Indigenous arts advocate, painter, and activist. She is the Executive Director of American Indian Art from the Pacific NW and earned her M. Ed. from Western Washington University and B.F.A. from Boise State University. Through her work, she celebrates her cultural connections, personal healing, and offers insights into building individual and cultural identity.

Ka’ili Chun (Hawaiian)
Ka’ili, an educator and installation artist, earned her M.F.A from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa and B.A. from Princeton University. She is a lecturer in the art department of the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa and Kapi‘olani Community College. She is known for her large-scale installations addressing issues of Native Hawaiian sovereignty, cultural identity, and examining distinctions between Western and Indigenous epistemologies.

John Feodorov (Navajo)
John is an Associate Professor of Art at Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Washington University, a combined mixed media artist and musician. Feodorov often utilizes pop culture detritus, as well as sound and video, to create what he considers contemporary “sacred” spaces in order to question ideas of spirituality, identity and place. In addition, his paintings and drawings revisit mythical iconographies and address a search for spiritual meaning and identity.
Larry McNeil (Tlingit)
Larry is a nationally recognized photographer and professor of photography at Boise State University. He has participated in a number of invitational and juried exhibitions, both in solo and group settings. He describes his work as being “about American Mythology, Raven, the intersection of cultures and finding the scared in unlikely places.”

Ramon Murillo (Shoshone Bannock)
Ramon is an educator, printmaker, and drum maker who teaches through the Allied Arts Education Project and Northwest Indian College. He earned an M.F.A. in Printmaking from the University of Oregon and a B.A. in Art Education from Idaho State University. His prints incorporate cultural symbolism and personal imagery to depict his search for spiritual and cultural identity in context of the contemporary world.

Tanis Maria S’eiltin (Tlingit)
Tanis is an independent curator, multi-media artist and Associate Professor of Art at Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Washington University. She earned her M.F.A. from the University of Arizona and her B.F.A. at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Her politically charged, large-scale installation pieces address issues of Western expansionism, cultural sovereignty and identity, and the role resources play in global aggression.
Exhibition Checklist

Roxanne Chinook
Save a Salmon, Spear an Indian
2008
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 36"
Courtesy of the artist

Roxanne Chinook
Survivor
2008
21 x 27"
Color pencil on paper
Courtesy of the artist

Ka‘ili Chun
O Kou ni’ho Ku’l na’u, na hua
2000
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

John Feodorov
Temple
2007
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

John Feodorov
Totem Teddies
1989-1995
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

John Feodorov
Sucrement
2005
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

John Feodorov
Office Shaman
2001-2005
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

John Feodorov
Collectibles Print Series
2008
Ink-jet on paper
Courtesy of the artist

Larry McNeil
Raven
1997
14 x 19"
Iris print on paper
Courtesy of Tanis Maria S’eiltin

Ramon Murillo
Dancing on the Lewis & Clark Trail
2004
18 x 24"
Photo etch, wash drawing, aquatint
Courtesy of the artist

Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Hit
2006
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Resisting Acts of Distillation
2000
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Princess Slurry
2008
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist

Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Blood for Shares
2008
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artist
Exhibition Programs

CONTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNTY: WAR, SPIRITUALITY & IDENTITY
Fairhaven Presentation Hall, Fairhaven College at Western Washington University
Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009, 5:30 p.m., FREE

Fairhaven College hosts a special program in conjunction with the current Whatcom Museum exhibition, Trespassing. Fairhaven College art professors John Feodorov (Navajo) and Tanis Maria S’eiltin (Tlingit), artist and social activist Roxanne Chinook (Warm Springs/Wasco), and University of Washington professor and social historian Dian Million (Dine/Athapaskan) come together for a stimulating moderated panel discussion and multi-media presentation to explore issues of war, spirituality and identity in the context of both cultural and individual sovereignty. Free parking is available in the lot adjacent to Fairhaven College.

EXHIBITION WALK-THROUGH: EXPLORING TRESPASSING
Whatcom Museum
Sunday, Feb. 15, 2009, 2 p.m., FREE

Join artists John Feodorov (Navajo), Tanis Maria S’eiltin (Tlingit), Ramon Murillo (Shoshone Bannock), and Roxanne Chinook (Warm Springs/Wasco) for an exhibition walk-through and discussion of their installation pieces, prints and paintings in Trespassing.

Cover, top to bottom:
John Feodorov
Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Tanis Maria S’eiltin
Ka’ili Chun

Support provided by: