

# INDIGENOUS MATRIX: NORTHWEST WOMEN PRINTMAKERS

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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing today, silkscreen prints have been created and used in Northwest Coast Native communities as potlatch gifts, historical documents, and a means of expressing stories, culture, and creativity. The growth and professionalization of the medium have created a strong market, thus engendering more economic freedom for many artists. In the early days, printmaking was dominated by male artists, often carvers, but in the last two decades, more women artists have contributed their passion and artistry to the medium's development.

A "matrix" in the printmaking process is the object used to hold the ink that is then pressed onto the paper. Passing along intergenerational stories and cultural practices, these Indigenous women printmakers are the matrix of their culture and, as matriarchs, are keepers of special types of knowledge. They uphold their communities' values and transfer their wisdom to the next generations of Native artists. This gallery presents the works of two prominent artists, Susan Point and Francis Dick, and a selection of stonecut prints by four Inuit artists: Angotigolu Teevee, Jessie Oonark, Myra Kukiiyuat, and Pitseolak Ashoona.

## PURPOSE

This exhibition project creates a learning environment conducive to promoting woman-centered Indigenous narratives and educating the public on histories and cultures that many institutions are just beginning to approach.

By bringing in contemporary Indigenous art within an institutional setting, *Indigenous Matrix: Northwest Women Printmakers* aids in reframing harmful historical narratives and perspectives, highlighting Native women's current lived experiences through research conducted by traditional knowledge and community revitalization efforts. In addition, this gallery will inform non-Indigenous peoples' understanding of Indigeneity and promote a space of celebration and continuance for culture and knowledge bearers.

## DELIVERABLE

This project will result in the fully formed exhibit, *Indigenous Matrix: Northwest Women Printmakers* (proposal, object checklist, labels, and installation) at Seattle Art Museum, on view June 15th 2022 through December 15th 2022, in their Native American galleries. These are sample artworks from the exhibit checklist:



**Little Circle, 1973**  
Stonecut Print  
**Jessie Oonark**  
Canadian, Inuit, born Chantrey  
Inlet 1960-1985  
Gift of the John Henry  
Hauberg Family, 2003.133

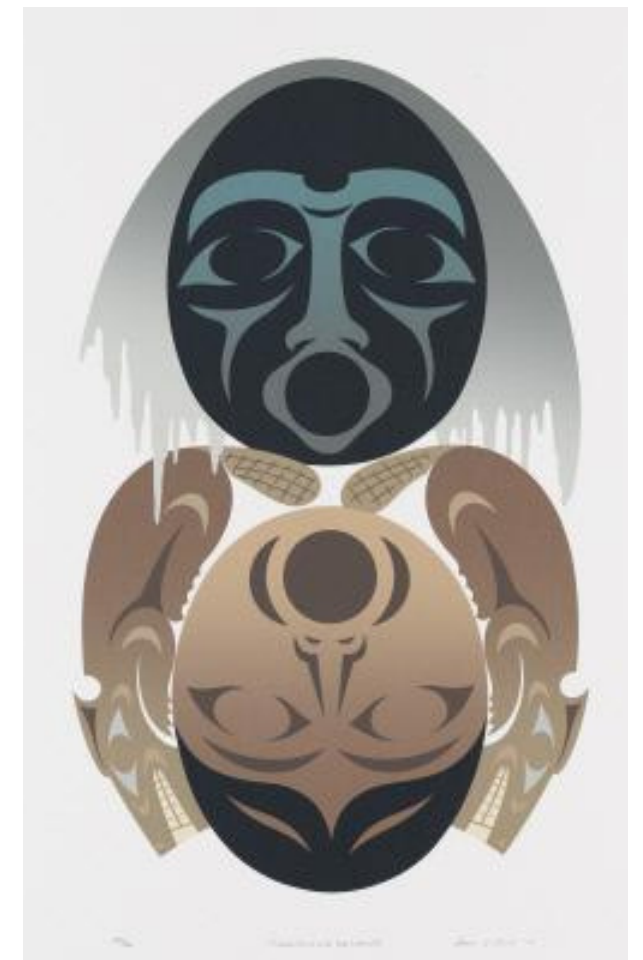


**Raelene, 1999**  
Silkscreen print  
**Francis Dick**  
Canadian, First Nations, Kwakwaka'wakw, Dzawada'enuxw, born 1959  
Gift of Simon Ottenberg, 2014.4.7

**Southwind with Mountain Beaver Woman, 2004**  
Serigraph  
**Susan Point**  
Canadian, First Nations, Musqueam, born 1951  
The Point Family, Musqueam, in honor of the 75th  
Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, 2007.52



**Northwind Returns, 2004**  
Serigraph  
**Susan Point**  
Canadian, First Nations, Musqueam, born 1951  
The Point Family, Musqueam, in honor of the 75th  
Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, 2007.52



## ACTIVITIES

### November 2021

- Conversations with the host site to establish roles, responsibilities, and processes.
- Preliminary research phase

### December 2021

- Finalize exhibit proposal
- Finalize object checklist
- Continue research based on established themes to be discussed in the exhibit.
- Meeting with thesis committee members to discuss proposal and checklist

### January 2022

- Submit exhibit proposal
- Submit object checklist
- Receive approval of submitted documentation
- Continue research

### February 2022

- Begin rough drafts of object labels and text panels
- Space considerations regarding objects
- Continue research

### March 2022

- Finalize draft of object labels and text panels
- Thesis committee meetings to discuss labels

### April 2022

- Submit object labels
- Finalize layout
- Overview presentations for Seattle Art Museum staff

### May 2022

- Installation preparation
- Finalize object labels

### June 2022

- Installation
- Staff/volunteer overview

## REFLECTIONS & NEXT STEPS

With *Indigenous Matrix: Northwest Women Printmakers*, I hope to impact the future of Indigenous peoples who work and exhibit within museums and, more specifically, art institutions. This work aids in breaking down some of the barriers that many Native peoples face when working with art galleries. *Indigenous Matrix: Northwest Women Printmakers* is the first exhibit at the Seattle Art Museum to be curated by an Indigenous-female identifying student. This project is the first step of many to aid in exhibition work becoming more accessible for emerging museum professionals and Indigenous curators. In addition, a portion of the work on display has never been publicly displayed, which will prompt a more holistic use of the institution's collections concerning Indigenous materials. In the future, due to this project, Seattle Art Museum will be a more welcoming space for upcoming curators and students from the University of Washington to approach new ideas and exploration of themes that may not otherwise come to fruition.

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