BEING LEGENDARY BY KENT MONKMAN PUBLISHED BY ACI

The Art Canada Institute is delighted to announce the release of the book Being Legendary at Royal Ontario Museum: Confronting Colonialism, Rethinking History, *created in partnership with the artist. ACI joins a suite of the publication alongside other book*

Kent Monkman

Cover of Being Legendary at Royal Ontario Museum: Confronting Colonialism, Rethinking History by Kent Monkman (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2022).

Kent Monkman, 2016. photograph by Jennifer Harris. Courtesy Harris Photo.

With Being Legendary, internationally renowned Cree artist Kent Monkman presents a new and never-before-published suite of works. The book is the companion to his exhibition at Royal Ontario Museum and is a deep dive into history's misrepresentations, including those of the museum—which stories are told, and which are left untold. Monkman's practice has long been critical of the role of museums by telling a small slice of the history of settler-land the perspective of someone who has been here since "time immemorial." Being Legendary at Royal Ontario Museum: Confronting Colonialism, Rethinking History, Art Canada Institute's latest publication, is a collaboration between Monkman, Art Canada Institute's Knowledge Keepers, and scholars alongside Monkman's art, the book explores the artist's practice and the ROM's collection. Being Legendary, in its entirety, is the curated period of great knowledge sharing, the coming age of violent genocide that continues in various forms today, and the present. It is a deep dive into Monkman's practice, the ROM's collection, and history from both Monkman and Mike Chief. Mike Chief's narrative flows as through this journey was written by Monkman's longtime collaborator Gisele Mandy. Being Legendary at Royal Ontario Museum: The Rotella Incident Report, the groundbreaking new book by Jennifer Lynn Gilmore.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

I COME FROM PÁKWAN KÍSIK, THE HOLE IN THE SKY

Kent Monkman, *I Come From pâkwan kîsik, the Hole in the Sky*, 2022.

"I come from pâkwan kîsik, the hole in the sky that connects this world to another behind the Northern Lights, the place where all my ceremonial ancestors live. You can find it in the winter sky by following the constellation of my elder brother, ohsimâkwa, the Great Lynx."
—Mike Chief

THE ROCKS HOLD THEIR STORIES

Left: Kyowat dreaper about Chimiscowsin with, carved head from indigenous homeopathy, including head of the Nanda, pachakotsiyan, Tsuchiya, Wakahatayai, and Ione Da Mitto, over the Nanda's shoulder, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 60.5 x 91.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Collection Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Right: Kent Monkman, The Rocks Hold Their Stories, 2022.

"Over time, beings of all kinds were newly made and extinguished. I marvelled at their radiance and power. For millions of year generations, seals, the Earth, compressed and conveyed their forms. Our people observed the remains, and they carved them into sacred objects, to honour the spirit of the rocks. Now, I grieve to see their bones ground out, extracted from seals's existence to become another commodity for display and trade."
Like all ancient beings, the rocks hold their stories. Long before the First Peoples—have been here since before the oldest stories. They understand pre-human beings and the horned underwater lynxes—are written in the fossils of winged creatures and ancient beings.
—Mike Chief

BATTLE OF THE PIYÉSIWAK AND THE MISIPISIWAK

Kent Monkman, *Battle of the piyésiwak and the misipisiwak* (detail), 2020.

"Wapiki, a long time ago, before you human beings, the Piety incursions Lynx and the Lynx people lived in the Great Lakes. Lynx people were very powerful. The Iroskwa battles between the piyésiwak and the misipisiwak—the Iroskwa beings and the horned underwater lynxes—are written in the fossils of winged creatures and ancient beings."
—Mike Chief

COMPOSITIONAL STUDY FOR OUR STORIES COME FROM THE LAND

Kent Monkman, *Compositional Study for Our Stories Come from the Land* (detail), 2020.

"We live in relationship with all beings. They are all our teachers, but the most powerful teachers are the land. The land is a repository of ancient knowledge which hold our knowledge. Each time a grandparent stands our stories with their grandchildren, our culture grows stronger. Each time our storytellers project new stories out into the world, our culture grows stronger."
—Mike Chief

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THE ESCAPE

Kent Monkman, *The Escape*, 2022.

"When they came to take our sealskin, they said they were taking our children to school. We knew what they meant. We knew they were taking our children to school taught our children violence and fear. We were able to hide some of our children deep in the bush. Others managed to escape. Some of those made it home. Those who did not are now the Spirit People of the Land. We have one. Always."
—Mike Chief

COMPOSITIONAL STUDY FOR THE GOING AWAY SONG

Kent Monkman, *Compositional Study for The Going Away Song*, 2020.

"I am here to tell you the truths that, for many of you, are not part of your histories. One of them begins as a cold morning of the Frost Moon in 1885. I wanted to honor a war chieftain were weaken up and were taken from the children's bedroom. Some of the children were taken to the Kamloops Residential School, the scaffold and forced to watch their relatives—our fathers, uncles, brothers, and cousins—hang that day. The men's sentences had been determined before the trial. The men had been shackled together in the back of a wagon for days. We are spoke of the abuse and alienation of our people. It is that moment, when I was a young man, I vowed to my people that I would be a bridge between western doorway and long ha song in the direction of the buffalo who wanted to be with their people. I ask you to see the Indian Residential School as a place of pain—crying out to keep moving forward and never give up. The life contained in ptyiskwak, the thunderbirds, rolled in, their rage crashing down. The rain washed over me, mingling with my tears. I felt transformed and ready to stand."
—Mike Chief

THE CURIOUS AND INCREDIBLE IMPOSSIBILITY OF KILLING SPIRIT

Kent Monkman, *Death to Legendary Hero Study for The Curious and Incredible Impossibility of Killing Spirit*, 2020.

"After all of our tears had been shed and we could cry no more, the spirit world called for us."
—Mike Chief

Kent Monkman, *Death to Legendary Hero Study for The Curious and Incredible Impossibility of Killing Spirit*, 2020.

PAULINE SHIRT (NIMIKIIQUAY)

Kent Monkman, *Pauline Shirt (Nimikiiquay)*, 2021.

"Pauline Shirt (Nimikiiquay), Knowledge Keeper, educator, singer, and founder of Kapaapinatisiwewe / Wandering Spirit School will carries the song her grandfather, Jonathan Kakegamic, composed and sang to her father. Her father he crossed over to the other side on that cold day in the Frost Moon in 1885. The song gives hope and shows a light forward for future generations."
— Kent Monkman

WILFRED BUCK (PAWAMINIKITTITICIKIW)

Kent Monkman, *Wilfred Buck (Pawaminikittiticikiw)* (detail), 2020.

"A Knowledge Keeper, Cree star expert, and member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Wilfred Buck started as a science facilitator at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre with his brother Don for many years. Wilfred and Don have been instrumental in the development of Manitoba's Children's Canada Science and Technology Whatam Gallery, and he is a storyteller and content expert in the short film Legends of the Northern Sky (2018). His book Nanabush Goes Fishing (2017) and his TEDx talk "Indigenous Knowledge: Bridging one knowledge and Other Land" (Jun 2017) is his short, heartbreaking, and hilarious autobiography. I am grateful for the deep conversations Gisele Mandy and I have had with Wilfred, and for his generous contribution to Indigenous science and knowledge, from astronomy to history to archaeology."
— Kent Monkman

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PAST NEWSLETTERS

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