



heritage, and life (as if they all aren't orle arlyhow) was a gift. But then you said you were learning from me too. This is how intimacies grow.

Understanding these intimacies means more than being collaborators or friends. Day-to-day we talked about so many subjects. Talking about our own histories and connections to our cultural histories, moving through ideas of colorization/ decolorization, working and changing the foundations of institutions, and then you had a crush, and I had a friend get sick, and work got hard, there were birthdays, and discussions of caring for ourselves and community around us, we got busy, but we always made time to check in, to talk. The talks were personal, but also every moment of them was so relevant to the work we were doing together, each of these moments may not be evident in the exhibition but they are all there. Along with the moments that belong amongst the artist and community that surrounded us, as we grow together through a mutual understanding of what it means to share space on the lands we live in whether we are Indigenous to this land, or have come to these lands outside of the context of settler/colonial histories. We grow together by learning from one another, sharing knowledge, emotions, and time, we know that each of us offers each other many gifts, and we leave ourselves open to what is given, as well as freely give to each other. We are building Sovereign Intimacies, and the exhibit shows we are not the only ones.

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project is a common understanding that there is so much to learn from each other's lineage, our life stories, the knowledge that we carry—that in the process of getting to know someone means there is possibility for transformation. The project had already begun before we even knew it. It had already captured us.

The artists presented in this exhibition offer forms of collectivity that are based on the principles of taking time, learning, listening, letting the process guide the work. Each in their own way, and through their own chosen media, have provided a space in which to consider intimacy as active, as action, and as change.

This exhibition is for us. When I refer to "us" I mean you and me, and all the artists we have worked with on this, and for our friends and family, and the communities who desire conversation between us: we who come from a lineage of people impacted by colonial and white supremacist violence. In order to emphasize the ways in which through our struggles, love and care, we build our solidarity. So for me the curatorial ethics we have built together, with the artists and through encounters with their artworks, are grounded in relations. And in the question of: how do we continue to show up for each other? It is through this intention that I believe liberation manifests in these intimacies that are sovereign.

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2. Living on the lands currently called arida it is evident that

's practice foregrounds care in how it manifests in research and apprenticeship. iris's mixed media installation, weaver girl limns two rainbows, depicts a painting of the artist weaving on a Taiwanese Atayal foot loom. The painting is framed in a Navajo loom with the foundation

When thinking about Narliush's curatorial work an immediate word that comes to mind is intuition, a curatorial approach that gives space and respects the body's capacity to know, and to bring that knowledge and vision to fruition through an intimate process with the artists. At a talk a few years ago that took place at McGill University, Narliush expressed the significance of centering an approach to curating that feels like a gathering of friends and families in the kitchen, speaking freely, openly in an environment that is comforting and warming. This approach to curating drives her ambition to create spaces where conversations can be had among many communities who have been working toward liberation and sovereignty. Among the many seminal exhibitions she has curated, like Rebecca Belmore's *Facing The Monumental* (2018), Rita Leterrière's *Fire and Light* (2017), and *Sovereign Acts* (2012, 2017, 2020), Narliush is also the founder of *aabaakwad*, a powerful gathering of Indigenous artists, curators and thinkers that focuses on an Indigenous-led conversation on Indigenous art by those who create, curate and write about it. The first iteration took place at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the second at the 22nd Biennale of Sydney. She was also the co-curator of *From Glissant: Unfixed and Unbounded*, an international event that highlighted current thinking on poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant's concept of relation. As part of *Sovereign Intimacies*, Narliush will be giving a talk on her curatorial process, vision, and future projects.

Philip is a prolific poet, essayist, novelist, playwright and independent scholar who has written many seminal works including *She Tries Her Tongue*, *Her Silence Softly Breaks*, the speculative prose poem *Looking for Livingston: An Odyssey of Silence*, the collection of essays *Blank*, and the long form poem, *Zong!*. Philip's work reveals the power of language—that there is potential for change and transformation in meaning by breaking open form and by breaking open words. There is so much to learn from Philip's work, so much to listen to, to sit with, to read and re-read, to hold close, to return to. Her words tell the stories of grief as well as joy, of memory's active presence, of loss and refusal. A line that resonates so deeply with this exhibition comes from a powerful piece by Philip entitled *Interview with an Empire*, where she writes of writing: "The struggle is to reduce the gap between the experience and the expression of that experience." Philip offers a way to enter into these conversations of intimacy and process by already informing us that bringing language to these expressions might take some time and work and from that poetry might be borne. For *Sovereign Intimacies*, Philip will facilitate a durational reading from her poetry book *Zong!* on the anniversary of the massacre of enslaved Africans on board the slave ship *Zong*, that took place in 1781. Philip facilitates this every year in order to create a space for us to remember those who have passed, but it is also to remember this event as that which "cannot be told yet but must be told."

They are designers from Peguis First Nation who have collaborated on many projects together including the Indigenous Peoples' Garden in Assiniboine Park. They implement an Indigenous worldview into their designs, and emphasize the importance of design's relation to the land. Indigenous design is modern and sustainable, and their vision is to utilize design in a way to further make visible Indigenous presence in urban spaces. As they have expressed, Indigenous design is the most innovative when it comes to thinking about the environment, and that for them it is important for these values that prioritise relations to land to be seen and implemented into the fabric of our cities. For *Sovereign Intimacies*, the Thomases will give an artist talk to discuss their respective practice, their collaboration, as well as the projects they are working on now.

Sovereign Intimacies is a group exhibition co-curated by Nasrin Himada and Jennifer Smith, in partnership with Gallery 103, with support from Video Pool Media Arts Centre. The exhibition takes place at Plug In I A from September 26 – December 20, 2020, with extensive programming that consists of online talks, workshops, screenings, and poetry readings. *Sovereign Intimacies* explores themes of cultural and community exchange between Indigenous artists and artists from the diaspora, more specifically artists who are First Nations, Inuit and Métis collaborating with artists living in what is currently called Canada who came to this land and are not part of the settler/colonial history of the country. The group show consists of pairings of artists, as well as individuals, whose work is based on process and relationship building, and for those whose work is invested in active conceptualization around topics of friendship and intimacy, who are working to build collective vision of a sovereign future.

The curatorial intention is to present not only work in a gallery space, but to focus on an extensive online public program featuring readings, talks, workshops, screenings, and other local community engagements and encounters. The aim is to construct a space where these conversations highlight collaboration and exchange of knowledge. The community is centered, knowing that this exhibition cannot respond to and encompass all the needs of future discussions, but sets the goals for the community to continue these discussions to amplify our collective voice.

She is a Métis curator, writer and arts administrator from Treaty 7 territory. She works at Video Pool Media Arts Centre as the Distribution Manager. Jennifer is the President of the board for the Coalition of Canadian Independent Media Art Distributors that runs www.cimad.com and sits on the board of the National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition and Platform Centre for Photographic + Digital Arts. Jennifer has curated exhibits and video programs for the Manitoba Craft Council, Video Pool Media Arts Centre, University of Regina, MAWA, the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library, and in 2018 was the Indigenous Curator in Residence at aceartinc.com.

They is a Palestinian writer and curator. Their writing on contemporary art has appeared in *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *Critical Signals*, *The Funambulist*, *Fuse*, and *MICE*, among others. They currently hold the position of Curator at Plug In I A.