



CARL BEAM

Life & Work

By Anong Migwans Beam

ART
CANADA
INSTITUTE
INSTITUT
DE L'ART
CANADIEN

SEQUENTIAL

...where he was held
until his death. His name means *One Who Yawns*. J.G.
See also APACHE; MILES; NELSON APPLETON.
GERRY, GEHR ih, EL-
ERIDGE (1744-1814), was
Vice-President of the United
States from 1813 to 1814.
He was born at Marble
head, Mass., and was gra-
uated from Harvard Col-
lege. Gerry was a signer of
the Declaration of Inde-
pendence, a delegate to the
United States Constitution
Convention, and a member
of the United States House
of Representatives from
Massachusetts for four years.
In 1797, he was sent to
France to establish diplo-
matic relations with that
country. Gerry served as
governor of Massachusetts
from 1812 to 1817. See
also GERRYMANDER; XYZ
AFFAIR.

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PREFACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND

This remembrance of my father and his art was written at my home in M'Chigeeng First Nation, a part of the Three Fires Confederacy, and the Anishinaabek Nation; in the adobe house that he built in his grandfather's potato field; on land chosen and handed down through our family since the 1836 Manitoulin Treaty and within the Robinson-Huron Treaty with the Crown of 1850, blessed with sweet sugar maples and rich soil, and nestled in a valley between three lakes on Mnidoo Mnising, Manitoulin Island.



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I use a collage working method as a way of interpreting the world—which is not a stationary viewpoint but is moving all over the place.¹

—Carl Beam

Carl Beam was my father. In the voices and tenses that I use throughout this book, I have sought to reflect the fact that I had a close, loving, and secure relationship with him. Although this is a story about him and his art, I find myself in a curious place in the telling of it: in some parts I am a character in the narrative, and in others I am a distanced, objective voice recounting my father's life and work.

When I speak about his art, a third-person voice allows for critical distance between the artist "Carl" and me—an art historian, arts administrator, painter, printmaker, and paintmaker. At times, though, I find that a first-person voice more accurately reflects the nature of the conversations in which "my father" shared his thoughts and artistic concerns with me. I don't think he would mind this fluctuation. In fact, I expect he would have wanted all who approach his art to bring with them their personal perceptions. In this way, they can be deeply engaged participants in making and discovering meanings, and critical observers deciphering and decoding the images through contextual, art historical, colonial, and social filters, among many others.

In writing this book, I wanted to respect my father's working method of collaging—a creative strategy that aligned with his interest in semiotics, or the study of signs and symbols. I use my own voice, as well as the voices of curators, scholars, and, of course, my father. By including his words—his diary entries, his musings, his reflections on his own work—I have integrated his essence into this story about him. These perspectives are all juxtaposed to give a multi-dimensional, dynamic portrait of my father's life and art.



Carl and Anong Migwans Beam, n.d., photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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LEFT: Carl Beam, *Autobiographical Errata*, 1997, photo emulsion, watercolour, and ink on paper, 104.1 x 74.9 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Various Concerns of the Artist*, 1984, coloured etching, artist proof, 116.8 x 76.2 cm, Gallery Gevik, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

He often told me that he made his art for thinking people. He challenged his viewers to grapple with the ideas he treated in his work, to wrestle with his complicated visual language, and to question what they saw and thought until many possible meanings emerged from the confrontation, as if shape-shifting before eye and mind. I hope this book will help people begin to understand how to think through my father's work.

Anong Migwans Beam
October 2023



BIOGRAPHY

Carl Beam (1943–2005) was a painter, printmaker, ceramicist, and performance artist who challenged assumptions about First Nations creativity and the style and content of Indigenous art. Through his work, he reflected on contemporary experiences of the peoples of Turtle Island. By 1985, Beam was in the vanguard of a movement that exerted pressure on the Canadian art establishment to include neglected perspectives in exhibitions and publications. He was the earliest First Nations artist to have work purchased by the National Gallery of Canada as contemporary Indigenous art. Beam's artistic career reflects his commitment to confronting stereotypes and prejudices.



He was a catalyst for change, propelling Canada to come to terms with its colonial and racist past.

EARLY YEARS AND NAMES

How many words would I need to describe the power of absence, or the state of "no word," and how much power would there be in a "written" word in comparison to a "spoken word" and a "remembered" word?

–Carl Beam, spontaneous poetry inscribed on an untitled artwork in the Carl Beam Archives, National Gallery of Canada

Carl Beam was born on May 24, 1943, in the M'Chigeeng First Nation, also called West Bay, on Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay, an arm of Lake Huron. The world's largest freshwater island, Manitoulin is known to the Anishinaabe as Spirit Island. It marks the heart of Turtle Island (North America) and is the home of the Great Spirit, Gitchi Manitou. Manitoulin Island is a sacred place for the Ojibwe, and for many other North American First Nations; it is where great Anishinaabe leaders have been buried for millennia.



Carl Beam; his mother, Barbara Migwans; and his baby sister, Marjorie, on Manitoulin Island, 1946, photographer unknown.

For the young Beam, Manitoulin Island was a place where he felt grounded by his ancestral history. Carl was taught by his mother, Barbara Migwans, and others in his community, and he also learned by interacting with the natural environment and by discovering the history and legends that animated the land. But this home was also a place of unsettling disruptions. His childhood, marred by chaos, was a product of distress and of abuse, addiction, and the social disjunction that results from the breakdown of families and communities. As an adult, Carl recognized that the dysfunctional environment in which he grew up had traumatized him. In later life, he wanted to suppress memories of childhood pain, yet at the same time, he honoured the teachings he had absorbed during his early life, and he had no fear of mining his past for creative material, no matter how painful or disturbing. Trauma required an artistic response.

Carl was the first child of Barbara Migwans and Edward Cooper, who were engaged when he was born. Edward, a U.S. Army soldier stationed in Philadelphia, had deserted to marry Barbara, daughter of Ojibwe West Bay Chief Dominic Migwans and an Ojibwe-Mohawk woman from Sturgeon Falls named Annie Commanda. When the priest who was to preside over the wedding secretly notified the military police, Cooper was returned to his



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regiment, and the marriage never took place. It was the middle of the Second World War, and Edward was sent to the front lines soon after. He was captured and interned in a prisoner-of-war camp in Bad Soden, Germany, where he died in 1945.



LEFT: Barbara Migwans and Maime Migwans, Carl Beam's mother and aunt, c.1942, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Dominic Migwans, Carl Beam's grandfather, c.1950, photographer unknown.

Widowed, Barbara eventually gave all her children the surname of her subsequent partner, Dallas Beam. My father recounted to me stories of physical abuse he endured at the hands of Dallas. I believe his grandparents, Dominic Migwans and Annie Commanda, were aware as well, as they took him into their home and raised him with their family until he entered Spanish Residential School, and during the summers after. Dominic was Chief of West Bay at the time, and Annie was an Ojibwe-Mohawk woman from Sturgeon Falls in Northern Ontario. They raised their grandson as "Carl Edward Migwans," and his name is registered as such on the roll at his home reserve. As a young adult, Carl took on both surnames—Migwans and Beam.



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Carl also had an Ojibwe name, Ahkideh—meaning “brave, courageous, or strong-hearted.” This was given to him by Elders in the community to honour the near mystical relationship he was said to have with his spirit animal, the bear. When Carl was a young boy, his grandfather Dominic shot a bear that was menacing the community. Other children were afraid of the animal, but Carl astonished everyone by crawling up to it and playing with it. Later, when he was around thirteen years old, Carl also fought off a bear to protect his younger siblings. When the animal neared their home, Carl moved his brother and sister to a high shelf in the cabin, where they stayed while his mother tended her trapline. Carl then held a mattress against the door as he fought the creature back with a kitchen knife. Eventually, he threw the knife into the bear, where it stuck. Neither the knife nor the animal was ever found.



Carl Beam, *Time Warp*, 1984, acrylic on linen, 304 x 1219 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Bears later figured prominently in Carl’s artistic iconography, where they signified either his alter ego or a subconscious manifestation of himself. In his largest painting, a 12.2-metre acrylic on linen titled *Time Warp*, 1984, a handwritten inscription recalls a dream conversation he had with a bear. He remarked at the time that dreams of bears bring good luck, “but only if you aren’t afraid in the dream.”¹

GARNIER HIGH SCHOOL

Autobiographical Erratum #502: Here I am as [a child] with a gun in each hand with a John Wayne complex. I’m sure... and the bottom 3 pics are some of the subsequent nightmares and hardships visited upon me, the artist, as a sentient human being.... But I believe I can see the folly of all this, including mine, or maybe, especially mine, you never can tell.... Sure, this is sheer poetry.

–Carl Beam, c.1988



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Garnier High School, also known as the Spanish Indian Residential School, n.d., photographer unknown, Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Montreal.

Carl's mother, Barbara, was determined to send her son to elementary school, as she had not been given the same opportunity. Barbara had wanted to be a teacher, but as the eldest daughter in her family, she was not allowed to attend school and instead had to help raise her younger siblings. To provide her son with the best educational opportunities, she sent him to the all-boys Garnier High School in Spanish, Ontario, on the northern shore of Lake Huron. Also known as the Spanish Indian Residential School, Garnier was the only residential institution in Canada run by the Jesuits. Carl began boarding at Garnier when he was ten years old.

Garnier was infamous for its appalling conditions and the abhorrent abuse and neglect suffered by its students. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) showed that more than a third of the Jesuits who were "credibly accused" of sexually abusing minors worked in First Nations communities or at Garnier as teachers, prefects, cooks, and coaches.² The abuse that students endured there was not isolated; it is now clear that violence permeated the residential school system across Canada. The forced separation of children from their communities was part of a mandate to assimilate Indigenous populations, and it was cited by government agents to justify unimaginable cruelty.³ In his art, such as *Survivor of Education*, n.d., Carl sheds light on these



Carl Beam, *Survivor of Education*, n.d., photo emulsion on canvas, 40.6 x 50.8 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

issues. His experiences at Garnier were formative in his lifelong questioning of Western-based systems of knowledge, religion, and hierarchies of power.

The abuse Carl suffered at Garnier was cultural as well as sexual. His mother tongue, Anishinaabemowin, was banned, and Carl and his classmates were forbidden to speak it. Later, he said, "It would have been easier if they [had] told me I was going to jail. I could have understood and survived it better."⁴ When students returned home to Manitoulin Island for the summers, no one talked about their experiences. Even as the abuse continued, it was too much for Carl to acknowledge.

In his first act of rebellion against an educational and social system he regarded as antiquated, stifling, and harmful, he dropped out of Garnier in grade ten. He enrolled in correspondence courses and earned his high school diploma in the late 1950s, ahead of his former classmates.

A QUEST FOR SELF-DISCOVERY

Adrift after leaving school, Carl began to look for work. He held a series of labour and construction jobs, and through the 1960s, he worked on Toronto's Bloor-Danforth subway line, and in British Columbia on a hydroelectric dam project and on a gang fighting forest fires. The hydroelectric dam project nearly killed him. While he was standing on a cement roof cap that was being placed on a moving turbine, the crane operator's grip on the controls slipped, causing Carl to topple into the mouth of the turbine. When he came to, he found himself miraculously resting on a thin shelf of rebar—the only thing preventing him from plummeting into the rotating blades below. He was able to climb to safety, and when he returned home, he discovered that he had been presumed dead.

In the mid to late 1960s—years marked by precarious, sporadic employment—Carl began to paint in his spare time. Experimenting with various representational styles and modes, he embarked on a quest of self-discovery and healing, and searched for an authentic creative



View looking south through the east leg of the wye connecting the University line with the Bloor-Danforth line, between Museum station and Bay station, June 27, 1963, photographer unknown, City of Toronto Archives.

voice. Carl also married his first wife during this decade and had five children: Clint, Carl Jr., Laila, Veronica, and Jennifer. The marriage was later annulled.

By 1970, Carl had learned that he was eligible for job-related skills training through the federal government's Canada Manpower department. He enrolled in a drafting program at the Kootenay School of the Arts in Nelson, British Columbia, and chose commercial art as his one elective. He found the course entirely satisfying—so much so that in his second year (for which he obtained a scholarship), he switched from the drafting program to fine art.

Later, Carl transferred to the University of Victoria, where he studied literature and ceramics. One of his teachers was Frances Maria Hatfield (1924–2014), who was herself a student of the famous British potter Bernard Leach (1887–1979). She ignited in Carl a lifelong love of Japanese ceramics, an interest that contributed to his earthenware practice in the early 1980s and early 2000s.



LEFT: Creator unknown, Tea bowl (chawan), mid-nineteenth century, earthenware, white slip decoration, black glaze, raku type, seal of "Murasakino," 9.3 cm (height) x 11.8 cm (diameter), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Carl Beam working on clay and slips on the hood of a blue station wagon, 1981, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Carl earned his bachelor of fine arts degree in 1974. Later that year, he enrolled in the University of Alberta's master's program. He wanted to write a thesis on the work of American artist Fritz Scholder (1937–2005), a member of the Luiseño tribe who often claimed he was "not Indian."⁵ Carl was deeply influenced by Scholder's thinking on "the new Indian art." In 1970, Scholder had advocated for an Indigenous form of expression that was "influenced by what is happening today." He pointed out that a contemporary Indigenous art could and should be influenced by all contemporary trends. "For the first time," he asserted, "Indian artists have realized that they do live in the whole world, not only the Indian world."⁶ But even as he called for young "Indian artists" to embrace the contemporary, Scholder equally urged them not to lose sight of their heritage.

Carl was inspired not just by Scholder's advocacy for a new "contemporary but... very Indian" art form,⁷ but also by his paintings, lithographs, and etchings, which depict contemporary Native Americans and their living conditions. By adapting Western Pop art styles, Scholder challenged his audiences with surprising, startling images, such as *Indian with Beer Can*, 1969. But Carl was told by one of his professors that Scholder's art was not a topic worthy of academic study. Offended by what he heard as a racist put-down of a unique voice advocating for a new visual paradigm of Indigenous artistic expression, Carl abandoned his studies in 1977 to become a full-time artist.



LEFT: Ken Rosenthal, *Fritz Scholder*, 1987, gelatin silver print, 23.7 x 23.5 cm. RIGHT: Fritz Scholder, *Indian Power*, 1972, oil paint on canvas, 173.2 x 203.7 x 3.8 cm, Denver Art Museum.

A CAREER IN ART

Carl Beam's decision to devote himself fully to art was an incredible leap of faith, considering that artists of Indigenous descent were few and far between in Canada in the 1970s. Kick-starting his career, he participated in his first group exhibition at the Emily Carr Centre in Victoria in 1975.

As an Indigenous artist, Carl bristled at being pigeonholed as a follower of his Ojibwe contemporary Norval Morrisseau (1931-2007), who, through his Woodland School, was bringing Indigenous art and artists to the forefront of the Canadian cultural landscape. Other Woodland School members included Daphne Odjig (1919-2016), Carl Ray (1943-1978), Joshim Kakegamic (1952-1993), Roy Thomas (1949-2004), and Blake Debassige (1956-2022).



LEFT: Daphne Odjig, *Pow Wow Dancer*, 1978, acrylic on canvas, 91 x 86 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Carl Ray, *Beaverman*, 1977, acrylic and ink on paper, 60.9 x 76.2 cm, private collection.

The popularity of their work had left most collectors and appreciators expecting that art created by an Indigenous person would be—had to be—a painterly expression of cultural teachings set down in a Morrisseau-esque mode.

Although Carl respected the Woodland School style, he did not feel it gave him creative latitude to explore his emerging voice. Instead, much like Fritz Scholder, he gravitated to contemporary Pop art modes—such as the “Combines” of Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), mixed-media works by Jasper Johns (b.1930), and silkscreen methods popularized by Andy Warhol (1928-1987). He was especially drawn to pieces that were collage-based, and that he had been exposed to during his formal training. In his art, Carl began combining found objects with painting, collage, prose, and poetry to produce

richly layered image fields, engaging the viewer as a dynamic and active agent in the process of meaning-making.



LEFT: Jasper Johns, *Map*, 1961, oil on canvas, 198.2 x 314.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, 1962, silkscreen ink and acrylic paint on two canvases, 205.4 x 144.8 cm (each), Tate Modern, London. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

For early works such as *The Elders*, 1978, a commission for the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation in M'Chigeeng First Nation, Carl worked from reference photographs, bringing together portraits, landscapes, and images of a flying eagle, and affixing an eagle feather to a painted backdrop. Later, he would integrate photographic material into his compositions using a solvent transfer technique inspired by Rauschenberg's lithographs. Through collage, Carl found an elastic mode of expression that aligned with his emerging interest in semiotics (the study of signs and how they create and convey meaning), which he explored while pursuing his MFA at the University of Alberta. Semiotics helped him process the conflicting (and, he felt, often ridiculous) viewpoints and knowledge systems that were rolling over him as a student.

In 1978, Carl attended the National Native Artists Conference on Manitoulin Island. There he met Elizabeth McLuhan, Roz Vanderburgh, Beth Southcott, Tom Hill, and other scholars and curators who would be instrumental in encouraging alternative modes of contemporary Indigenous art beyond the Woodland School. Carl was not a traditionalist whose iconography was rooted in tribal ritual and symbolism, or in transformation and personal development. Instead, his evolving personal style, breaking from a racist paradigm, adapted innovative modes of representation. The contrast between Morrisseau's *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975, and Carl's *The Elders*, 1978, shows the degree to which he had distanced himself from the Woodland School movement.



LEFT: Norval Morrisseau, *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975, acrylic on cardboard, 101.5 x 81.2 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *The Elders*, 1978, mixed media, 120 x 160 cm, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Carl's path was an unconventional and creatively courageous one for an Indigenous artist to pursue at that time, and yet, it was his own-informed by Western-based art movements, styles, and modes that he co-opted to express a different take on modern indigeneity. As he later noted, "I wasn't initially screwed by my own talent or anybody saying I was a natural. I was absolutely an unnatural."⁸ But he was well on his way to finding his own voice—one he would continue to hone over the coming decades.



Carl Beam, *Untitled (Buffalo Shields)*, 1979, watercolour, 58.4 x 81.3 cm, Gallery Gevik, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

FAMILY AND AN EXPANDING CREATIVE PRACTICE

Carl Beam met his future wife, Ann Weatherby (1944-2024), during a trip to Toronto in August 1979. An American who was raised in Fairmount, New Jersey, she arrived in Canada as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War and became a landed immigrant in 1967. When she met Carl, she was living in Toronto and was an active member of the local art community, teaching at the progressive Three Schools of Art. Ann first saw Carl's art while working as a medical illustrator at the University of Toronto's Instructional Media Services. He had left pieces there for the consideration of collectors Levi Courier, a researcher in the Institute of Medical Science, and Dr. Bernhard Cinader, who headed the university's Department of Immunology.⁹ When Ann asked whose work she was looking at, she was told that the artist would be in the office the following day. From the moment Ann and Carl met, they were inseparable.



LEFT: Ann and Carl Beam's wedding photo, taken at Camel Rock, north of Santa Fe, October 24, 1979, photograph by Ann and Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Ann Beam with her and Carl Beam's daughter, Anong, n.d., photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

On October 24, 1979, two months after they met, they were married in New Mexico. As Ann states, "Right from the beginning, we travelled a lot."¹⁰ The two shared a profound respect and appreciation for each other and their individual artistic practices, and they collaborated often and occasionally exhibited together. As a result of Carl's career trajectory, Ann became his general archivist, tracking sales of his works and their locations, and documenting many of their personal and professional discussions about contemporary art.

Ann and Carl returned to Toronto for my birth in December 1980. When I was eight months old, our family headed back to the American Southwest, first settling in Arizona and then finding a small adobe house in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico, just north of Santa Fe. This "land of enchantment," as my parents referred to our new home, allowed them to explore their Indigenous roots as creative artists and ceramicists while also tuning in to the ancient mystical, creative energy they felt there. My mother later remembered:

This is where we connected with Native American pottery techniques, which were to become an all-consuming "buzz" for the next several years. We were living on the high desert plateau of northern New Mexico, near the northern pueblos... and right on top of the ancient Anasazi world.¹¹



Carl Beam, *Black Snake Pot*, n.d., glazed stoneware, dimensions unknown, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. While living in the American Southwest, Beam created several vessels like this one, whose form and decoration are inspired by similar blackware made by potters of the Santa Clara Pueblo.

Works by Ann and Carl were quickly embraced in the more accepting art markets of Santa Fe and Taos, and the couple were able to freely pursue their creative endeavours. They became interested in Native American pottery styles, particularly Santa Clara blackware and hand-building techniques.

Although Carl painted primarily large-format watercolours while in the Southwest, this was also a prolific period for him and Ann in the production of pottery pieces. They dug their own clay and searched for slips, paint stones, and temper. They also visited the hot springs near Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, where the famous Apache war chief Geronimo had retired to heal his wounds and gather strength. The site so deeply affected Carl that images of Geronimo found their way into many of his prints and paintings throughout his career.

In the summer of 1981, Carl and Ann relocated to Manitoulin Island, Ontario, where they worked and held pottery workshops. A year later, their ceramics drew the attention of Jerry Brody, the curator of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico, for their “idiosyncratic” imagery. The couple also exhibited their pottery at the Museum of the Southwest in Midland, Texas. In the fall of 1982, my parents once again returned to the Southwest, to Black Canyon City, Arizona, where they continued their pottery practice using the distinctive red earth of the region. They also researched Navajo loom weaving, a technology and tradition they later brought back to Manitoulin Island.



Carl Beam, *Geronimo*, 1985, glazed earthenware, 28.6 x 27.9 x 4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

GAINING CRITICAL RECOGNITION

In the early 1980s—a period of travel and heightened creativity—Carl’s work was included in two landmark exhibitions: *New Work by a New Generation*, 1982, a cooperative project of the World Assembly of First Nations, the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, and the Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, curated by Robert Houle (b.1947); and *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Man*, 1982, presented at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art (now the Thunder Bay Art Gallery). Both exhibitions challenged the prevailing notions of so-called Indian art. Carl’s work—which took a new approach to urgent contemporary themes and issues facing Indigenous peoples—was a natural fit.

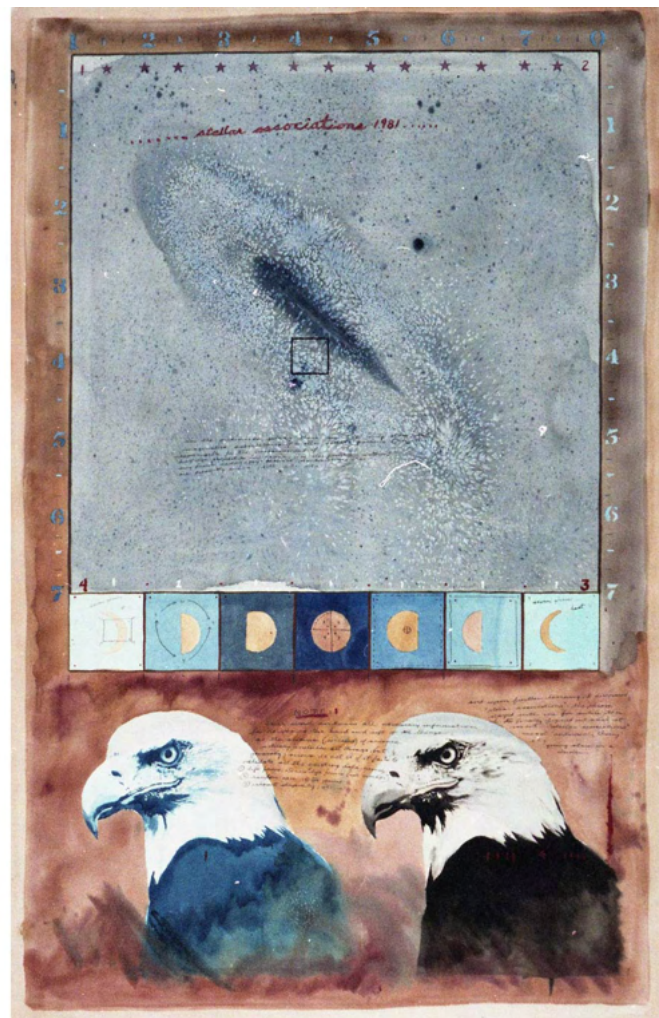
The pieces shown in both exhibitions established Beam as a visually strong artist whose ideas found form in a decidedly contemporary mode. In *New Work by a New Generation*, he exhibited *Stone Geometry*, 1980; *Buried Images*, 1980; and *Stellar Associations*, 1981. For *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art*, he exhibited his painting *Renewal*, 1980, which gave the show its name. The exhibition’s curator, Elizabeth McLuhan, highlighted the complexity of the work’s

composition, noting, “The image contrasts past and present in the juxtaposed depictions of flight: the natural grace of the eagle, and the unnatural technology of man.”¹² An early and active supporter of Carl’s career, McLuhan also curated his first major solo exhibition in a public institution, *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam*, at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art in 1984. *Altered Egos* showcased his controversial life-sized watercolour on paper, *Self-Portrait in My Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1980.

In sketchbook after sketchbook, my father documented this fertile, formative time. These volumes are filled with love notes and portraits—some by Ann of Carl, and some by Carl of Ann. They include details of their lives and life together, along with schematics that Carl would often draw (envisioning future sculptural projects), ideas for paintings, and notes on architecture. Inspired by the work of Jack Kerouac and other beat generation poets, Carl also used his notebooks to record his spontaneous writing. His stream-of-consciousness ideations would inform much of his work. He called these writings “koans,” in reference to the Zen Buddhist tradition of challenging students with often paradoxical statements, questions, or pieces of dialogue as part of a meditative practice. Koans require students of Zen to create new meaning from seemingly illogical relationships—something Carl’s collage format was ideally suited to do. Many of his koans are written across the surfaces of his watercolours and oil paintings, such as *Stellar Associations*.



Installation view of *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Man* at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, October 1, 1982, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



LEFT: Page from Carl Beam's Paris sketchbook, 1985, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Stellar Associations*, 1981, watercolour on paper, 152.4 x 101.6 cm, Indigenous Art Centre, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Gatineau. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

In the mid-1980s, Carl continued to develop his skills in different media and began adopting the photo-transferring technique in his work. It was perfectly suited to his collage process, which involved juxtaposing subjects and pictures from different historical periods and even different disciplines—including science, philosophy, and anthropology. In bringing together unrelated images in a single composition, he was able to make political comments, as can be seen in works such as *The Artist with Some of His Concerns*, 1983, and *Exorcism*, 1984, which was commissioned for *Altered Egos*.

A FIGHT FOR EQUAL TREATMENT

In 1983, after growing increasingly dissatisfied with how Native American art in the Southwest was presented primarily as a decorative commodity, without regard for Indigenous aesthetic and conceptual traditions, Carl returned to Canada and his unfinished battle to assert his creative voice and personal style as he saw fit. After spending the summer of 1983 on Manitoulin Island, we moved to Peterborough, Ontario, and into 222 Carlisle Avenue, a rent-controlled property that was part of a federal program that made houses (often in poorer neighbourhoods) available to Indigenous people living off-reserve. My father then purchased a large etching press from Praga Industries and began experimenting with different methods of printmaking.

Carl's entrance into the art market had been upsetting to him. He wanted to be an artist in the same way that he felt other Canadians could be, with the space to

explore visual thinking and their own iconographies, hopes, dreams, and innate creativity, without racial qualifiers being applied. He wanted to break down the wall of expectations related to “Indian-ness” that stood in the way of his and his peers’ creative evolution and critical acceptance. Time after time, he would show his work to collectors, museum administrators, curators, and fellow artists and feel a persistent invisible barrier of disapproval.

I remember watching these interactions, and I can recall my father’s anger and confusion. I see him arriving at a gallery—and other places where collectors would gather—and he would pull out a painting to display to the person we were visiting. Most often white, this individual would take the work in hand and then laugh in an odd way, pronouncing, “Carl, what is this?” Or, “Well, this isn’t Indian art.” Such dismissals enraged my father, who questioned the racial bias they betrayed. How could it not be “Indian art” when he was the person who had made it? How was it that his main goal in their eyes was to create something that looked like a projection of “Indian art”? This was where he would explain, time and time again, “I’m the artist! I am marking my experience in this way!”

My father was known for his dynamic personality; when he stepped into a room, the electricity was palpable. I used to watch people change as they approached him, almost as if melting. He was always at the centre of a crowd. He was adamant about his absolute right to choose the themes and topics of his art—in this, he would not be moved—and he was not afraid to let people know that he considered their inability to accept this as an expression of their ingrained racism. More than one conversation with museum directors or curators ended with: “Call me when you get over your racism.”



Carl Beam on scaffolding by the stained glass window he installed in his painting studio, n.d., photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Carl Beam, *The Artist with Some of His Concerns*, 1983, graphite and watercolour on paper, 115 x 165.8 cm, Indigenous Art Centre, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Gatineau. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

While the art market expected Carl to take inspiration from Indigenous (and, specifically for him, Anishinaabe) cultural traditions, he confounded his critics because he was drawn to decidedly non-Indigenous modes of artistic expression. Differences between the “traditionalist” and “modernist” camps in Indigenous contemporary art were debated at the third National Native Indian Artists Symposium, held in Hazelton, British Columbia, in 1983. Following a peaceful gathering that included traditional feasts and a performance, the discussion turned to the term “Indian art.” Some of the artists present—including Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (b.1957)—suggested that the term was here to stay, given how institutionalized and commercialized it had become. Advocating strongly for the modernists, Carl argued for a change of term and insisted on the right to a personal aesthetic vision.



LEFT: Installation view of *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from October 22, 2010–January 16, 2011, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *Red Man Watching White Man Trying to Fix Hole in the Sky*, 1990, acrylic on canvas, 142.3 x 226.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Carl told the group that his ambition was to be exhibited in the National Gallery of Canada, and he declared that he would fight for the equal treatment of his creative output.¹³ It was in the living room studio of 222 Carlisle Avenue that he created *The North American Iceberg*, 1985—the first artwork by a contemporary First Nations artist to be acquired by the National Gallery of Canada.¹⁴

CONFRONTING COLONIALISM

Also in 1985, Carl Beam began a new project with the goal of working through his lingering trauma from his time at Garnier High School. During a trip to the Netherlands to attend the opening of *Challenges*, an exhibition at de Meervaart Cultural Centre in Amsterdam, he gave a press conference in front of the Anne Frank House. He staged this opportunity like a piece of performance art in the manner of German artist Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), who had advocated for the social potential of art in his own highly symbolic performance works. Standing there in a suit with half of his face painted red, Carl told reporters that he had travelled from North America to warn the world of the ongoing dehumanization of Indigenous peoples. He also spoke directly about the culture of silence surrounding the systemic child abuse at Canada's residential schools, which were still in operation at this time and had not yet come to be regarded as tools of a state-sponsored cultural genocide against the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.



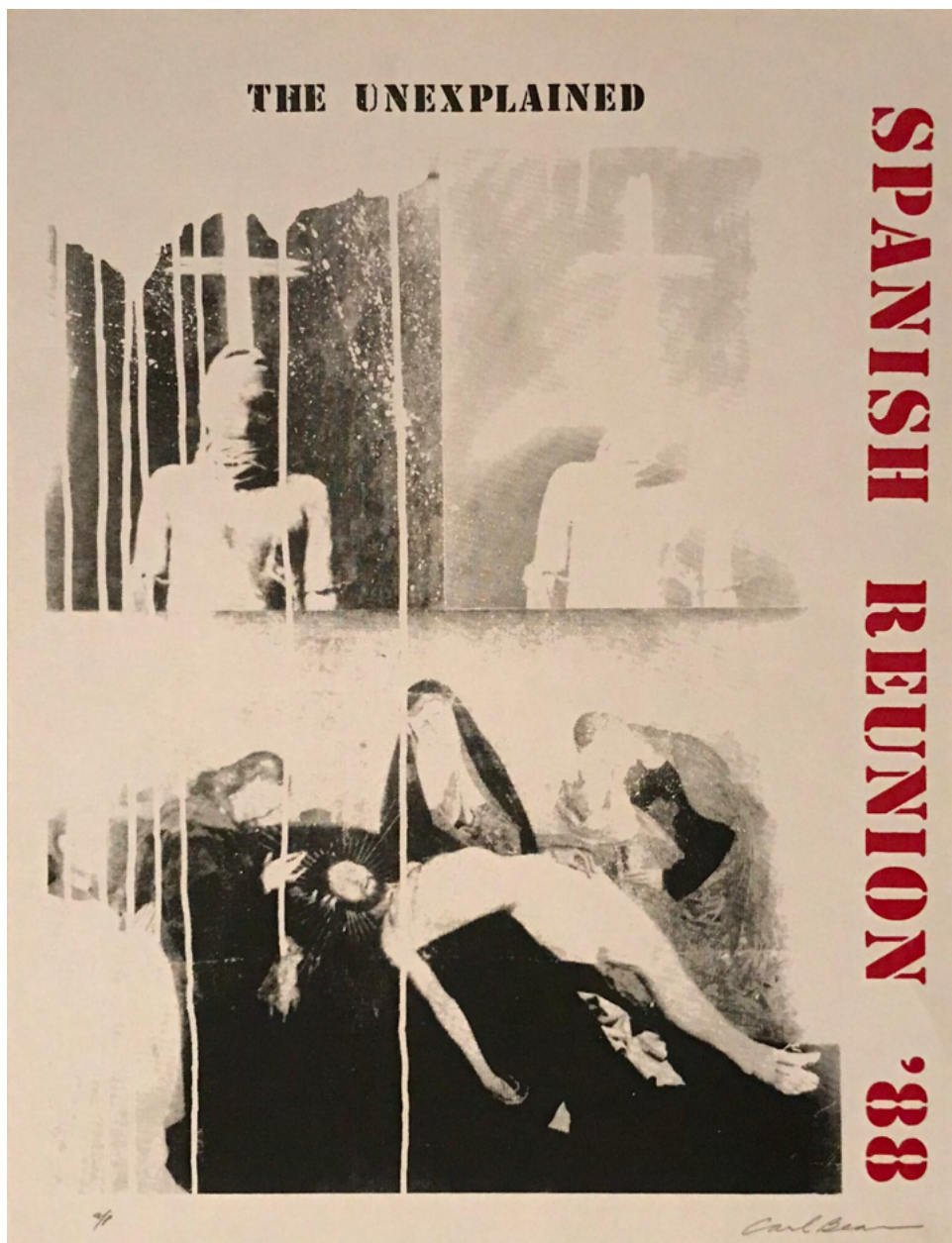
LEFT: Anong Migwans Beam at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1985, photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam speaking about residential schools at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1985, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Upon his return from Amsterdam, Carl began a series of pieces incorporating the image of Anne Frank. With this series, which includes paintings, prints, and ceramic works, he developed resonant strategies for treating difficult, urgent subjects. Indeed, the image of Anne Frank—perhaps one of the most well-known victims of the Holocaust—evoked a painful past, but Carl believed that her story could foster new modes of cross-cultural understanding. Through these works, his viewers voyage with him across centuries to witness the development, deployment, and devastation of colonial structures. These associations would evolve over time as he continued to confront harmful doctrines, institutions, and systems of thought in his creative practice.

In 1988, an invitation to attend a Garnier High School reunion prompted my father to grapple further with his residential school experiences. He viewed the invitation as a brazenly insensitive act, and he responded to it by creating posters for the Spanish School Reunion of '88 and printing T-shirts, which he brought with him to the event and distributed free of charge to his former classmates. At the reunion, I remember, as an eight-year-old, walking with my father through what remained of the school. He showed me a large communal sleeping hall containing tiny metal beds, brick bathrooms, and showers. When we came to a room with a bookcase, he searched through it and found his copy of a Canadian history textbook, which he had signed and filled with caricatures when he used it as a student. My father took it with him. It sat on the bookshelf in his painting studio for the rest of his life.

While we were in the building, the other students remained outside, sitting under white tents. Few were willing to enter. The priests were surprised to find that many of the students were unhappy and distraught, and they were dismayed there could be such resentment.

Carl's anger about his experience at Garnier is reflected in works such as *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, n.d.; *Forced Ideas in School Days*, 1991; and *Savage*, 1988—a multimedia work that features an image of Christ crucified in the graveyard of Garnier, above an image of Hiroshima after the detonation of the atomic bomb.



Carl Beam, *Spanish Reunion '88 Poster*, 1988, serigraph, 66.3 x 50.9 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

These pieces provide contexts and vocabularies to discuss the residential schools' notorious history. Following the Garnier reunion, Carl embarked on an investigation of the history of colonialism on Turtle Island—an investigation that would link his work on residential schools to the upcoming quincentennial of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the so-called New World. His research led to *The Columbus Project*, a large body of work made between 1988 and 1992 in several media, including painting, photo emulsion on canvas, and large-format etchings.



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, n.d., photo emulsion on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Sauvage*, 1988, mixed media on Plexiglas, painted wood, and found object (rifle), 308 x 109.9 x 15 cm (with integral frame), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



For four years, *The Columbus Project* in all its iterations dominated my father's studio work. It takes aim at notions of "discovery" and the assumption of the superiority of Western European and rational knowledge systems over other approaches to gaining, conveying, and feeling knowledge, especially by First Nations on pre-contact Turtle Island. It raises the idea "that the moment of contact between the old and new worlds could no longer be celebrated as a triumphant moment of discovery" but should be seen, instead, as a prelude to centuries of genocide and cultural annihilation.¹⁵ *The Columbus Project* was one of many exhibitions re-evaluating the colonization of the Indigenous peoples in the Americas.



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1992, photo emulsion, acrylic, and pencil on canvas, 274.3 x 213.3 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Columbus and Bees* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

While Carl was working on *The Columbus Project*, he also explored the theme of colonial domination in the multimedia series *Burying the Ruler*. The title is an ironic play on words, meaning both measurement and monarch. In the video that captures his performance, the system of knowledge symbolized by the ruler is laid to rest—buried—in the land, rendering it inaccessible, dead. Photographs from this burial rite became the basis for other works in the series, including *Burying the Ruler* (three panels), 1991, which was included in the landmark exhibition *Indigena*, held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History) in 1992, and *Burying the Ruler* (photo emulsion), 1992, one of four photo-emulsion works shown in *Land Spirit Power* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1992.¹⁶

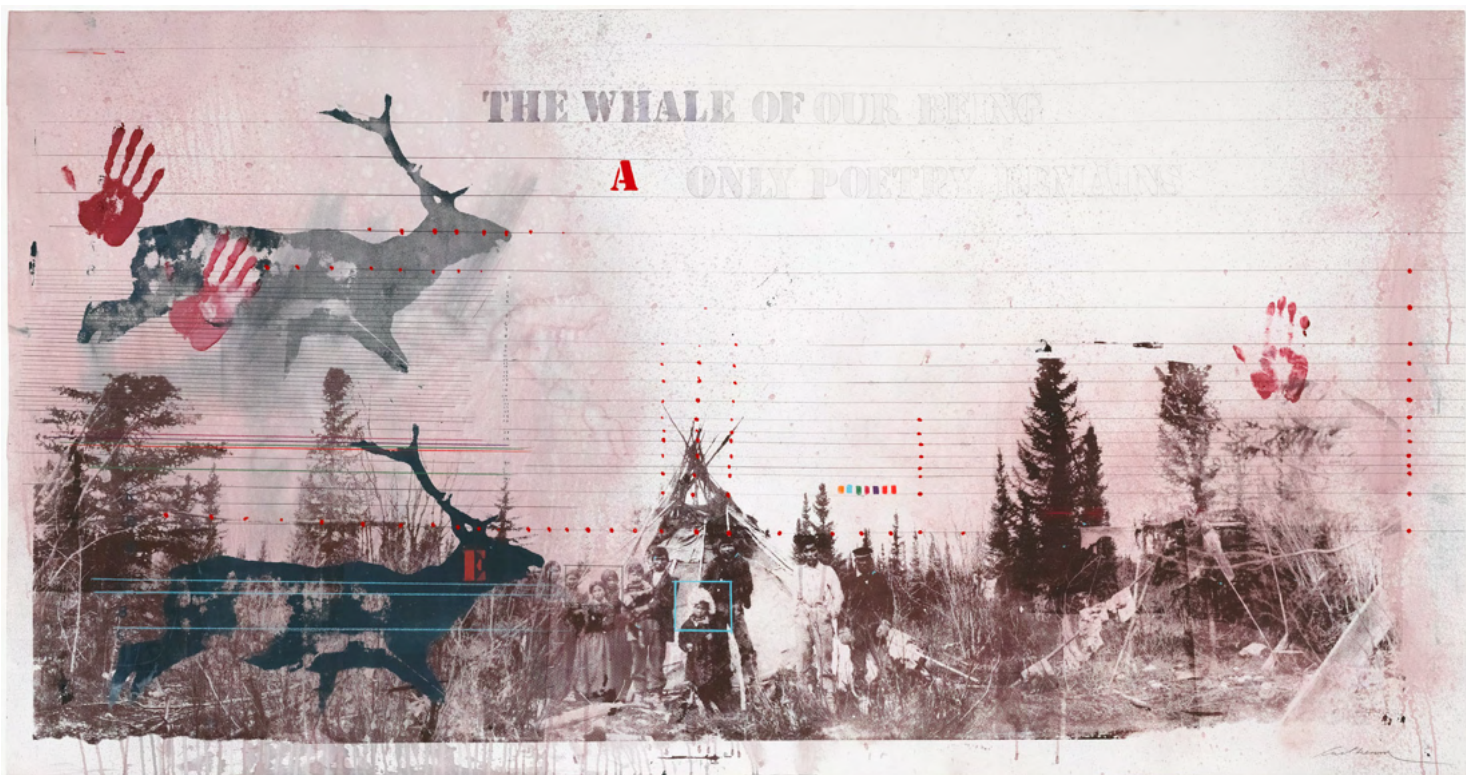
FINAL YEARS AND LEGACY

In 1999—after building an adobe house with his family on Manitoulin Island, and after eating potatoes and corn that he had cultivated on his own land, and after meals of wild meat and fish from local farmers—Carl descended on monolithic Toronto. There, he continued to refine his printmaking practice, working with Gordan Novak to develop techniques for screen printing on a variety of surfaces, including silk. But the speed at which he developed his thoughts and plans did not match the glacially slow pace of contemporary Toronto art consumers; consequently, Carl's late work was decidedly outside public expectations and taste.

By the turn of the millennium, my father was exploring both the connections between the plant and human worlds and the connections between the human and natural worlds. From this interest evolved *The Whale of Our Being* series, 2001–03, which, in addition to the mixed-media work of the same name, includes pieces such as *Big Dissolve*, 2001, and *Only Poetry Remains*, 2002. To express his thesis that humans are bound to the same fate as whales, he collaged images of commercial whaling and butchering with others that showed symbols of the human capacity for killing on a massive scale, such as the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, which appears in *Driver*, 2001.¹⁷



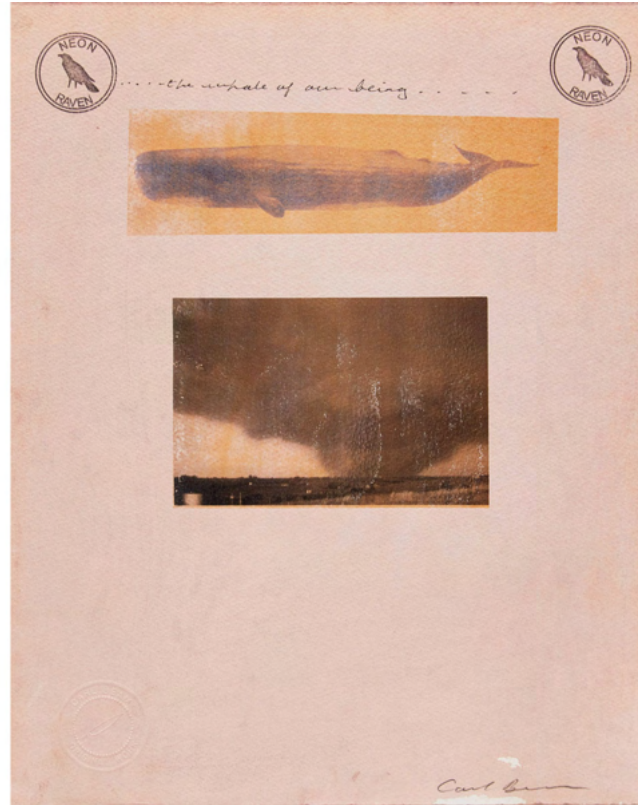
Carl and Anong Migwans Beam in the garden of the *Adobe House* in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, 1994, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam, *Only Poetry Remains*, 2002, photo silkscreen, gouache, graphite, coloured pencil, and watercolour on wove paper, 127.8 x 242.7 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

During the final years of his career, Carl found a champion in curator, author, and administrator Joan Murray (b.1943), who presented *The Whale of Our Being* at Oshawa's Robert McLaughlin Gallery in 2000. It was Carl's last art exhibition in Canada during his lifetime. He stayed true to his interests and his inner critical and creative impulses, which, when combined, made the exhibition openly critical of the art market and consumer society, and their inability to provide options and access for Indigenous artists. In an essay for the exhibition catalogue, Murray quoted my father to give context to his ecological concerns in relationship to the Canadian public and the art market: "Under the umbrella

of the whale are commodification and dollars and killing, all things possible. Take it apart and look at the aesthetics, the beauty, the red and green mixtures. The Whale of Our Being includes whatever has happened to the whale, which in some kind of way happens to everything else. Maybe to our collective disappearance in the world."¹⁸



LEFT: Carl and Ann Beam standing with a concrete piece from the artwork *The Whale of Our Being*, while awaiting a handler from Heritage Canada, n.d., photograph by Anong Migwans Beam. © Anong Migwans Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *The Whale of Our Being*, n.d., mixed media on paper, 38.1 x 30.5 cm, collection of Pauline Bradshaw. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

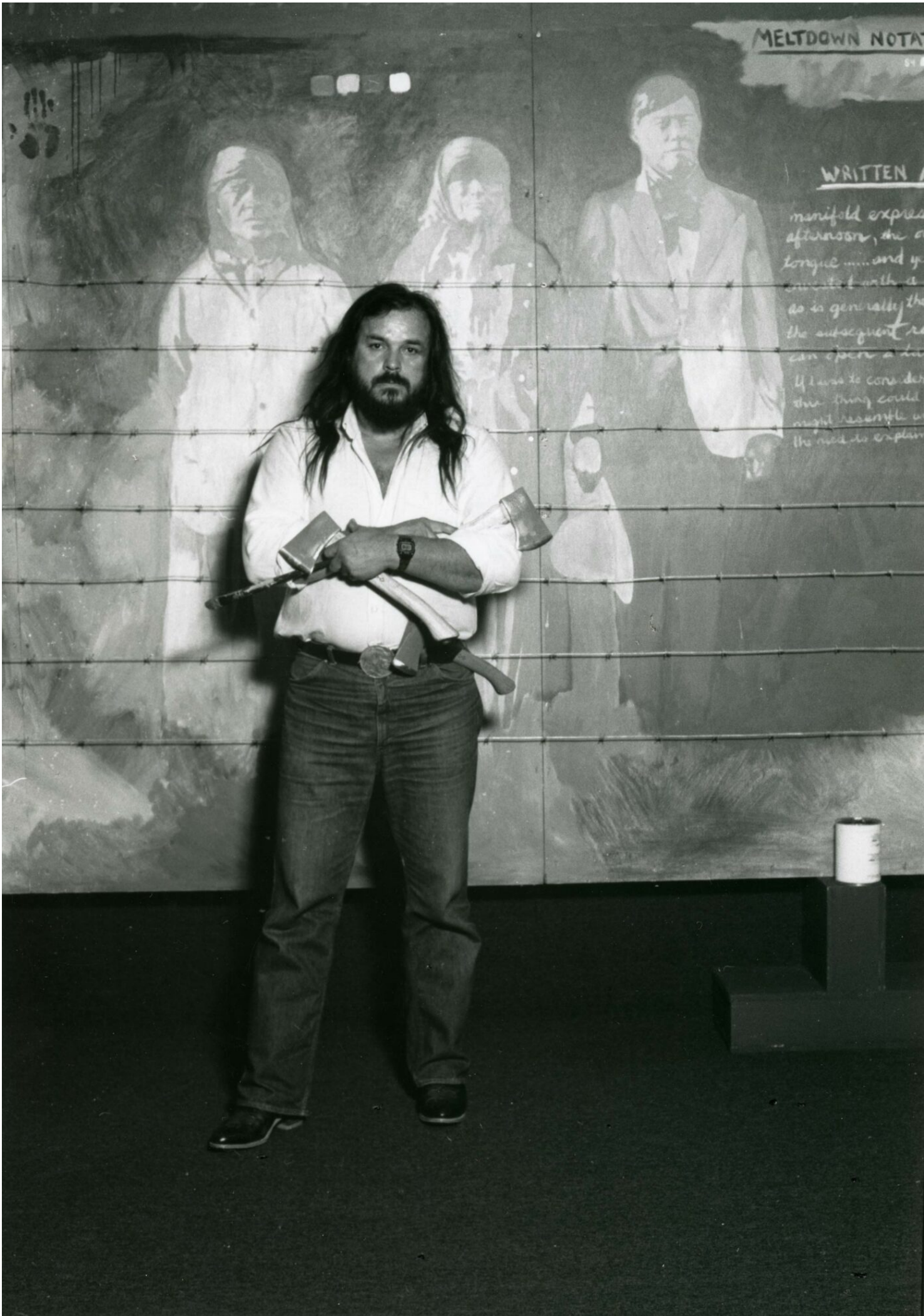
In 2005, Carl received the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts. His health and vision were failing, and he had to use a wheelchair at the ceremony. He was assisted to the dais, where Governor General Michaëlle Jean presented him with the award. Later, when a picture from the event was delivered to his home in a stately frame, he said, "I don't even need to see it. She's probably just standing over me, looking down."

On July 30 of that same year, my father passed into spirit from complications of Type 2 diabetes. Three years later, Prime Minister Stephen Harper signed a restitution bill for residential school survivors and publicly apologized to them. Perhaps prophetically, my father was asked, in an interview with CBC Radio after receiving the Governor General's Award, if he felt "validated," knowing that all his work had at last been recognized. He responded, "No, this is not a validation. My work is its own validation."¹⁹



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Carl Beam in front of *Exorcism* in Thunder Bay, 1984, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



THE ARTIST FLYING STILL

GERONIMO, *see RAHN* *sh* *ger* (1829-1909), was chief of the Chiricahua band of Apache Indians. He led hostile raids against the white settlers in New Mexico and Arizona. General George Crook received orders to pursue the Apaches to surrender by 1886. In 1885, he was to be in Fort Bowie, the Indians renewed their raids. General Nelson Miles, who replaced General Crook, pursued the Indians and finally captured them. Geronimo was sent to Fort Pickens, and later to Fort Sill, Okla., where he was held until his death. His name means *One Who Taunts*. *J.O.S.* *See also APACHE; MILES.*

Geronimo, the Apache who led one of the last Indian uprisings against the United States Government

GERRY, *GEHR* *sh*, **ELBRIDGE** (1744-1814), was Vice-President of the United States from 1813 to 1814. He was born at Marblehead, Mass., and was educated at Harvard College. Gerry was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a delegate to the United States Constitutional Convention, and a member of the United States House of Representatives from Massachusetts for four years. In 1797, he was sent to France to establish diplomatic relations with that country. Gerry served as governor of Massachusetts from 1810 to 1812. *See also GERRYMANDER; XYZ AFFAIR.*

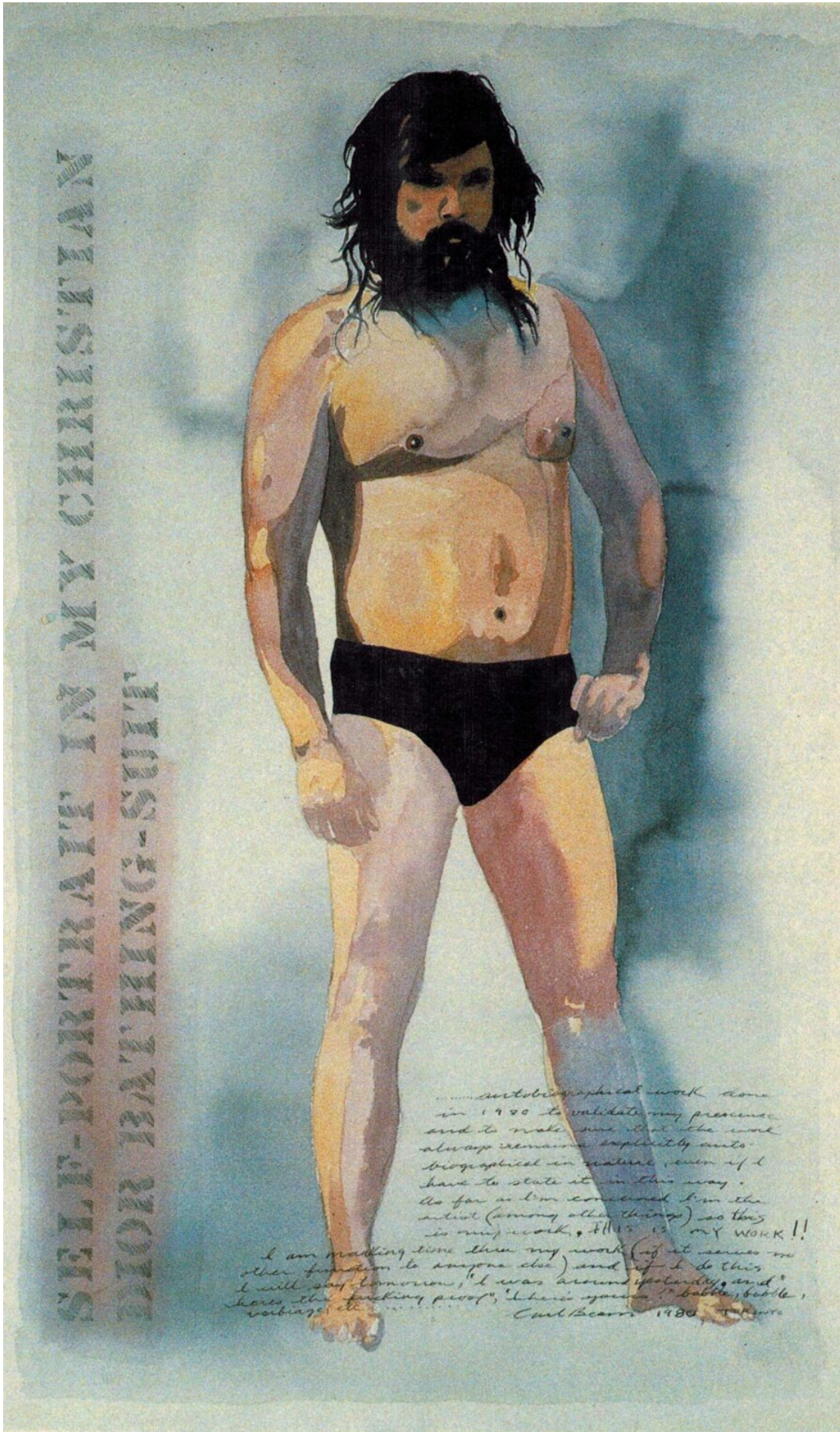
Old Hist. Soc.
Elbridge Gerry, Governor of Massachusetts. His name became a part of the English language in the political term "gerrymander."

LIVING SEQUENTIAL

Carl Beam's artistic practice was not restricted to any single medium or creative approach. Over the course of his career, he worked in many media and modes, ranging from painting, printmaking, and drawing to sculpture and ceramics, and from photography and performance art to adobe brick construction. In all his work, Beam treated significant issues that have affected Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island since European contact in the fifteenth century. He was committed to exposing stereotypes and prejudices, and through the use of complex visual fields, he challenged viewers to grapple with the ideas in his work and to be active participants in meaning-making.



SELF-PORTRAIT IN MY CHRISTIAN DIOR BATHING SUIT 1980



Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait in My Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1980

Watercolour on paper, 106 x 65.5 cm

Private collection

© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

In this iconic self-portrait, Carl Beam depicts himself, clad only in a black bathing suit, in a confrontational manner—upending the viewer’s expectations for how an Indigenous man should comport himself. With a hand on his hip and his hair hanging loose and long, he gazes from beyond the picture plane, his eyes ablaze with an eagle-like intensity. The title makes a clear reference to the fact that his bathing suit was purchased from an elegant high-fashion brand. But instead of positioning himself as an idealized pin-up, Beam presents himself as a creative subject in control of his own image.

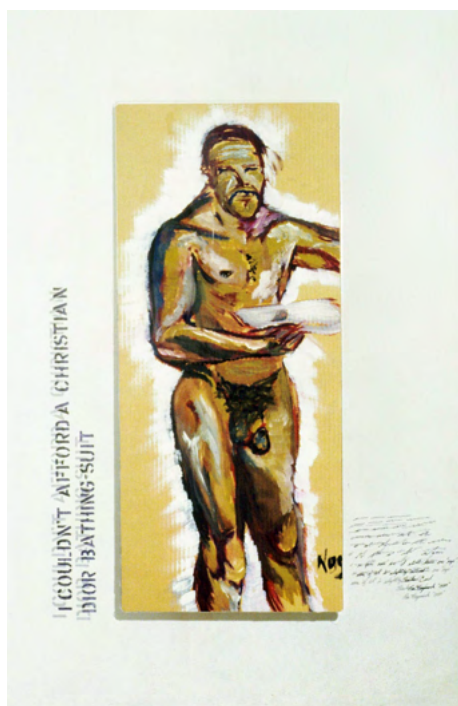
Like much of his large-scale work, the portrait includes lines of stream-of-consciousness text written in Beam’s own hand:

...autobiographical work done in 1980 to validate my presence and to make sure that the work always remains explicitly auto-biographical in nature, even if I have to state it in this way. As far as I’m concerned, I’m the artist (among other things) so this is my work. THIS IS MY WORK!!

I am marking time through my work (if it serves no other function to anyone else) and if I do this I will say tomorrow, “I was around yesterday, and here’s the fucking proof, where’s yours?” babble, babble, verbiage, etc....

—Carl Beam, 1980, Toronto

With this defiant image, Beam confronts issues of self-representation. He undermines, as curator Richard William Hill has argued, not only the suppositions of the art audience of the early 1980s, “which would have expected Anishinaabe artists to be working in the so-called Woodland School style,” but also widely held assumptions that Indigenous men did not own designer clothing.¹ Beam addresses both beliefs head-on while simultaneously pointing out how absurd they were: “There he [was,] standing in his Christian Dior bathing suit. Native people at that time weren’t really allowed to have Christian Dior bathing suits.... That’s one of the funny things. We weren’t considered to exist in modern times, especially in our prosperous modern time where we might want to have a Christian Dior bathing suit.”² By depicting himself in this manner, Beam combats—in a very tongue-in-cheek way—the centuries-long treatment of Indigenous subjects in art as ethnographic or anthropological artifacts, and he undermines stereotypes that originated in



LEFT: Ron Noganosh, *I Couldn't Afford a Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1990, oil, cardboard, Plexiglas, 142 x 86 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Viviane Gray, Carl, *I Can't Fit into My Christian Dehors Bathing Suit!*, 1989, mixed media, 193 x 61 x 193 cm, collection of the artist.





paintings by Paul Kane (1810-1871) and Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872).

The portrait elicited a range of responses when it was shown in 1984 as part of Beam's major solo exhibition, *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam*, at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art (now the Thunder Bay Art Gallery). Artists Ron Noganosh (1949-2017) and Viviane Gray (b.1947), for instance, reacted with their own works, titled *I Couldn't Afford a Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1990, and *Carl, I Can't Fit into My Christian Dehors Bathing Suit!*, 1989. Assessing the critical reception to Beam's portrait, scholar Allan J. Ryan noted that while the painting was deeply subjective—"a fierce affirmation of self-worth and personal experience"—it helped more broadly redefine the parameters of contemporary Indigenous art in Canada by "[speaking] passionately of the need for other [Indigenous] artists to create their own images of lived experience."³ This work, which Beam himself claimed "was whipped off in an afternoon,"⁴ has endured as a challenge to anyone who would try to confine self-representation to narrow or racist categories.

RAVEN 1983



Carl Beam, *Raven*, 1983

Natural mineral pigment on unglazed earthenware, 13.4 x 34.8 cm

Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau

© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

In *Raven*, collaged images of a raven and three playing cards are encircled by a border that references design motifs found on earthenware vessels made by the Mimbres, an ancient people of southwestern New Mexico. The bowl was crafted using traditional materials and hand-built (not thrown or wheel-turned) methods. It is a significant example of Carl Beam's innovation with ceramics, illustrating his proficiency with different media and the interrelated nature of his creative practice. Beam's ceramics combines several methods, techniques, and modes of representation, juxtaposing seemingly unrelated and cross-cultural imagery in a manner like that used in his painted compositions—using photo-emulsion transfers, decals, and painted symbols and handwritten texts.¹

Though Beam studied ceramics at the University of Victoria with Frances Maria Hatfield (1924–2014), the practice did not immediately resonate with him. “The training was excellent,” he later explained, “but I always had a feeling that I couldn’t articulate what I wanted in the medium of clay. I was experimental and bold, creative at times, but I couldn’t just say what I felt. I had no problem with this in painting on canvas.”² It

was not until the early 1980s—after Carl, his wife, Ann, and their infant daughter, Anong, relocated to the American Southwest—that Beam would fully incorporate ceramics into his art in a profound and meaningful way.

In New Mexico, Beam was inspired by the strong graphic designs of Mimbres and other Ancestral Pueblo earthenwares, which he described as “bold and adventurous.”³ The contrasting surfaces of these vessels—rough outside and smooth inside—appealed to him to such an extent that he emulated these characteristics in his work. Beam’s pieces, which reference historical design motifs and are infused with his own imagery, require the viewer to be an active participant in meaning-making. By working within traditional forms in *Raven* and other vessels, such as *Opus Nova*, 1983, Beam explores the tensions between history and the present and between craft and fine art. With ceramics, he found that he could describe “a universe unto itself, where anything can happen—the designs are limitless.”⁴

Beam’s work as a ceramicist is perhaps a lesser-known aspect of his creative practice, and yet it is a very personal one, often involving collaboration with members of his family. Ann and Anong would occasionally exhibit their own ceramic works alongside Carl’s, and a comprehensive exhibition of the Beam family’s pottery was organized by the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery in Waterloo, Ontario, in October 2004. While Carl was inspired by diverse creative practices—from wabi-styled Japanese raku ware to exquisitely crafted blackware by potters of the Santa Clara Pueblo—over time, he came to see ceramics as integral for reaffirming the thriving Anishinaabe and Ojibwe traditions long ignored by scholars. Through ceramics, Beam found a unique way to assert the need for more elastic modes of expression.



LEFT: Ann holding Anong Migwans Beam at a prayer well in New Mexico, 1980, photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.
RIGHT: Carl and Ann Beam’s ceramic wares, n.d., photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

ANNE FRANK 1



Carl Beam, *Anne Frank 1*, 1985

Oil on canvas, 270 x 210 cm

Private collection

© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

Following a trip to Amsterdam in 1985, and upon reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the first-person account of the Second World War by an innocent girl who died in a Nazi concentration camp, Carl Beam began to incorporate Frank's writings and image in a series of oil paintings, prints, and ceramic bowls. *Anne Frank 1* is the most visceral of his works depicting the young girl, whose portrait (sourced from one taken in a photo booth in 1943—the year Beam was born) is juxtaposed with an image of two inverted fetuses. A picture of Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, who conducted inhumane medical experiments on prisoners at Auschwitz concentration camp, is repeated towards the bottom of the composition. The surface of the canvas is treated with red paint that resembles blood—a graphic reminder of the horrific violence of the Nazi regime.

Beam's Anne Frank series is part of his wider critique of how Western European thought has been privileged above Indigenous thought. He found similarities to his way of thinking in Second World War Europe and the Holocaust. With his references to Anne Frank, Beam created a haunting visual language for exploring how autobiography can confront large-scale tragedies inflicted upon powerless communities by malevolent governments. Specifically, Beam saw in Frank's story a window through which to view the abuses of Indigenous youth in Canada's residential schools, which were still in operation at the time.

Anne Frank's image is a heavily loaded reference to long-held traumas that have, as many scholars of the Holocaust have shown, embedded themselves

within the memory of subsequent generations of Jewish people.¹ By including Frank in his work, Beam brings these realities into conversation with Indigenous experiences. This is reinforced by a ceramic bowl that bears Frank's image amid zigzag patterns echoing Mimbres designs. Scholar Mathilde Roza has noted that in this representation on the bowl, Beam "implies a comparison between the genocidal violence against Indigenous peoples on the one hand, and the Holocaust on the other." But this is a difficult comparison to make, Roza argues, because "in many cultures of memory the Holocaust is seen as a 'unique' event in human history which has no parallel."² Beam suggests that, in fact, solidarities might be found through such uncomfortable juxtapositions.



Carl Beam, *Ceramic bowl ("Anne Frank 1924-1945")*, 1987, natural mineral pigment on unglazed earthenware, 19.1 x 38.1 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam

By interpreting the Anne Frank story in his art, Beam courageously confronts the culture of silence around the institutional abuse of children at Canada's residential schools, including his own, Garnier High School. It was a culture that held sway even among those who had been forced, or were still being forced, to attend. Beam's Anne Frank series was an important step in the recovery process—for him and for others who had experienced similar trauma.

THE NORTH AMERICAN ICEBERG 1985



Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985
 Acrylic, photo-serigraph, and graphite on Plexiglas, 213.6 x 374.1 cm
 National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
 © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

One of Carl Beam's most important works, *The North American Iceberg* is a defiant statement of the artist's disgust with the ubiquitous celebrations of European "everything" across North America. Created in response to a 1985 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario titled *The European Iceberg: Creativity in Germany and Italy Today*, the piece is a virtual catalogue of the themes that informed Beam's art—and a pointed critique of European rationalism, which he saw as the root cause of colonization, the genocide of Indigenous nations on Turtle Island, and the annihilation of Indigenous culture (as well as the personal sense of loss he felt at this devaluation and destruction).

The North American Iceberg's complex image field contains multiple signs—self-portraits and portraits of prominent historical figures, stencilled and handwritten texts, and transferred documentary photographs—all collaged across a visual plane of colour splashes, passages, and drips. The transferred photographs include one coldly titled *Three Graveside Figures* and others depicting Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's assassination, an eagle in flight by English photographer Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904), and a running elk. A raven, a portrait of Apache leader Geronimo, images of an unnamed Indigenous woman, and a rocket appear as well, creating a visual lexicon of conflict and struggle.

Produced in Beam's living room studio at 222 Carlisle Avenue in Peterborough, Ontario, *The North American Iceberg* is a richly allusive composition that Beam constructed layer by layer on the back of three large sheets of Plexiglas. This same innovative method can be seen in other works, such as *Savage*, 1988. Significantly, in all his Plexiglas pieces, unlike his traditional paintings, Beam built up the composition in reverse—with the details rendered in the foreground and the text laid down backwards so it would read correctly when viewed from the opposite side of the transparent plastic.¹ Beam finished the work by applying the background colour, which in other circumstances would have been painted first. Operating in this unique fashion was a fun trick for Beam; he always challenged technical ruts and counted on chance and innovation to push himself forward artistically.

This unconventional method of construction is also a metaphor for the elasticity of time and the triumph of a pre-contact cosmology. The prominent stencilled text that reads "REVOLVING SEQUENTIAL" in part announces this triumph. It is a brilliant example of the spontaneous writing that Beam often included in his works. The pairing of the contradictory terms "revolving" and "sequential" is stimulated by the composition's various visual signs and activates the viewer's own associations.

Addressing as it does the fluidity of time and space, the relativity of truth and meaning, and the role played by semiotics and collage as defining Beam's personal creative theory and practice, *The North American Iceberg* is a forceful declaration by an artist whose intent was to confront the evils of colonialism and state-sponsored malevolence. As the first "self-conscious" purchase of a work by a First Nations artist for the contemporary art collection at the National Gallery of Canada—the culmination of many years of lobbying by the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCANA) and other Indigenous artists and art collectives²—it also marks a watershed moment in the history of contemporary art in Canada. The intentional acquisition of *The North American Iceberg* as a work of contemporary art was important because it affirmed that Indigenous art was relevant to modern times and had a place within a national narrative.



Poster for *The European Iceberg: Creativity Today in Germany and Italy* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, February 8–April 7, 1985. Design by Massimo Vignelli. Courtesy of Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



VOYAGE 1 1988



Carl Beam, *Voyage 1*, 1988
Painted wood, 530 x 308 x 310 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

One of only two surviving major sculptures Carl Beam ever made, *Voyage 1* is a quarter-scale replica of Christopher Columbus's ship the *Santa Mariá*, the largest of his trio of vessels, which also included the *Niña* and the *Pinta*. After Columbus's voyage to Turtle Island (North America) in 1492, the *Santa Mariá* and its crew of forty were abandoned in the New World after the ship ran aground, while Columbus sailed back to Spain to tell Queen Isabella what he had "discovered." The image of the wrecked *Santa Mariá* inspired Beam to create this piece.

Voyage 1 is one element of *The Columbus Project*, 1988-92, a multi-work critique of the so-called discovery of North America by Columbus. It comprises photo-emulsion and oil-on-canvas paintings, video documents of performance

pieces, installations, architectural blueprints, and numerous studies in varying formats and media. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, around the quincentennial of Columbus's voyage, Beam took aim at the celebratory nature of the anniversary by choosing to highlight the tragic impact of European colonialism, its racist legacy, and its direct link to slavery on Turtle Island. *The Columbus Project* also led to other artistic investigations into the dynamics and disasters of colonization heralded by Columbus's arrival in the Americas.



LEFT: Transport of *The Columbus Boat*, n.d., photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Transport of *The Columbus Boat*, n.d., photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

In 1988, when Beam was living in Peterborough, Ontario, he made his main studio in the family home. Recognizing that he had neither formal training as a sculptor nor specialist skills in boat-building, he commissioned his next-door neighbour John Graff—a master shipbuilder from Nova Scotia—to help him construct the skeletal husk of the *Santa Mariá* in his woodshop. A year after *Voyage 1* was completed, Beam said: “The idea of constructing a boat like Columbus's ships... is not any homage to seamanship or carpentry, but more like trying to see if the idea of sailing, or aspiring to something else in a voyage, can be conveyed—the idea of taking a trip into an unspecified area.”¹

Voyage 1 is a document of a historical fact: a boat run aground and on the verge of sinking. But by highlighting the boat's ribs, Beam also drew attention to the object's resemblance to the whitened bones of a beached whale, a metaphor he would later explore in his series *The Whale of Our Being*, 2001–03. These multiple meanings lend the piece an elegiac reading. It signifies different kinds of tragedy: the end of a storied boat, the abject failure of a voyage of “discovery” that heralded the genocide of millions of Indigenous peoples, and the expression of the limits of knowing based on measurement and rationalism. By pointing to the failure of Western European knowledge systems, Beam sought to draw attention to the enduring qualities of Indigenous knowledge and belief systems that predate European contact and continue to be relevant today.



BURYING THE RULER 1989



Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1989
Time-based media, Video Home System (VHS), 1:58 minutes
Private collection
© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

The first and most well-known of Carl Beam's four video pieces, *Burying the Ruler* documents a performance he conducted on one of his frequent trips to the American Southwest along the fabled Route 66. The sequence opens with a flash of sun and the roaring sound of wind, signalling an approaching thunderstorm. A shirtless and cowboy-hatted Beam walks across a sandy beach towards the camera (and viewer), appearing as if out of nowhere. He is the full-grown, adult emanation of himself as depicted in his print *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, and the animated version of the *Self-Portrait in My Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1980. After several steps, he stops, reaches to the sand, and begins to dig a hole, which takes the shape of a grave. Beam holds in his hand a common wooden ruler. As the narrative advances, it becomes clear that he is using the ruler to dig its own resting place. When the grave is completed, he gently and reverentially places the ruler in the freshly dug hole. Then he tenderly fills the hole with earth, pats it down, and sprinkles sand over it to disguise evidence of any disturbance before rising and walking off into the approaching storm.

With *Burying the Ruler*, Beam extends his critique of colonial domination and the displacement and dehumanization of Indigenous peoples into a new media.

The video confronts the failed notion that if something can be measured, weighed, or described rationally, then it can be fully known and thereby contained, emptied of its unknown qualities or its innate magical power. This piece debunks the dominance of Western knowledge as a system for understanding the world. The ruler is a stand-in for colonial control of Beam's own identity as an Indigenous person, and for the loss of control he suffered through forced re-education at Garnier High School. Beam's act of burying this object can be read as a manifesto for liberation from such forms of control—as he noted, “there are many kinds of rulers.”¹

The video was recorded at Animas Creek, on the border of New Mexico and Texas. The site is a wide ancient riverbed full of fossil shells and deep, almost blood-red soil. Ironically, owing to his understanding of Latin, which he learned at Garnier, Beam knew that the Latin word *animas* translates to “souls” in English. He considered this ancient site a centre of power—and this is why he saw it as a suitable location to perform a shamanic act. Still images taken from the video appear in many prints and paintings across Beam's career, among them his 1991 mixed-media triptych *Burying the Ruler* and a mixed-media work on paper also titled *Burying the Ruler*, 1992.



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1992, paper, graphite, paint, 184 x 128 x 6.5 cm, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Joseph Beuys, documentation from the performance *I Like America and America Likes Me*, 1974, photographer unknown. © Estate of Joseph Beuys / CARCC Ottawa 2024. During this performance, Beuys spent three consecutive days living with a live coyote in the René Block Gallery in New York.

Burying the Ruler reflects the influence of the German Conceptual and performance artist Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), whom Beam admired. Like Beam, Beuys believed that a turn towards pure reason could lead to a loss of creativity. Many of his works, such as *I Like America and America Likes Me*, 1974, use symbolic materials to impart a wider message about healing societal wounds through art. Born from Beam's respect for contemporary art's power to bridge two cultures—Western European and Indigenous—*Burying the Ruler* brings forth Beuys's aim. When speaking of this piece in later years, Beam said, “Well, I buried the ruler in a respectful way. I didn't piss on the ruler. There were a lot of things I could have done to the ruler, but I buried it respectfully, and it's an ongoing process. I have to keep burying the ruler continually.”²

THE COLUMBUS SUITE 1990



Installation view of Carl Beam, *The Columbus Suite*, 1990

Set of twelve etchings on Arches paper (eleven shown), 83.8 x 109.2 cm (landscape) or 109.2 x 83.8 cm (portrait) (each)

Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto

© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

The Columbus Suite is Carl Beam's most ambitious printed work, comprising twelve etchings produced in his studio at M'Chigeeng on Manitoulin Island. Begun in 1990 as a commentary on the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus's arrival on the shores of Turtle Island (North America), it features complex imagery and layers of meaning. In seemingly unrelated juxtapositions of images, Beam critiques the privileging of rationalism as a superior form of knowing, the tragic legacy of residential schools, the catastrophic impacts of European colonization on Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island, and the enduring influence of genocide and racism. The suite is an element of a larger initiative entitled *The Columbus Project*, a work that Beam began to develop following the Garnier residential school reunion in 1988.

The first of the twelve etchings is *New World*, whose central image is a turtle—a totemic emblem of the North American continent. Looking out of the illusory space, the turtle directs its gaze to the viewer's eyes; its head turns towards our world. The complicated visual field also includes stencilled words, stave-like lines that might allude to a musical score or a lined notebook page, drip-like ink passages, and an array of other lines and marks, among which is an almost illegible message—written in a cursive script—to Columbus himself: “Dear Columbus / the voyage was probably / doomed from the beginning— / the spirit [reviews?] the / unknown factor, the, the / in which etc etc / this will.”



LEFT: Carl Beam, *The Unexplained*, 1989, photo emulsion and mixed media on canvas, 213.4 x 152.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *The Proper Way to Ride a Horse* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

The marks and signs all set a context—a visual polemic—that is given definition and stridency in the subsequent eleven prints. The figures who appear in the prints, including Jesus Christ, Louis Riel, Sitting Bull, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, and John F. Kennedy, are among history's most revered martyrs, people who were persecuted and exiled. This episodic narrative, cast across the entire suite of prints, has been called “a colossal tragedy: the unresolved cultural struggles pertaining to race.”¹ Beam achieves this effect through a mix of solemnity and humour, by radically juxtaposing, for example, a double image of a hooded Apache Gaan dancer with a representation of the Pietà in the print *The Unexplained*, 1989. In *The Proper Way to Ride a Horse*, he set an image of a naked ethnologist, Frank Cushing (1857–1900), astride a sawhorse adjacent to portraits of Big Bear, Louis Riel, Geronimo, and Sitting Bull.² The imagery represents Beam's lifelong project to recuperate Indigenous knowledge and identity concealed by European histories.

When speaking of this suite of prints, Beam said, “One act of faith equals one act of faith,” in an aspirational way.³ These works have been compiled as if making a reckoning of the act of keeping score: plus one, minus one. In a way, they have assumed the status of the koans that Beam so favoured as a device to elicit thought.



ADOBE HOUSE 1992



Carl Beam, *Adobe House*, 1992
Handmade sun-dried clay bricks, 3,000 square feet
M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island
© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

In the summer of 1992, shortly after the completion of *The Columbus Project* and following its exhibition at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto, Carl Beam returned to Manitoulin Island and set about building a home modelled on the adobe brick houses that he had seen in the American Southwest. He and Ann envisioned the house as a way to express a form of Indigenous knowledge from the Southwest. He also felt that it could provide an alternative model for local reserve housing, which was (and remains) plagued by shoddy construction.¹ His uncle had given him five acres of family-owned land adjacent to Beam's grandfather's home, where he had been raised. The adobe house was constructed on the site of his grandfather's potato field. The *Adobe House* is both a site-specific work of art and a model of affordable housing that is urgently needed in Indigenous communities across Turtle Island.



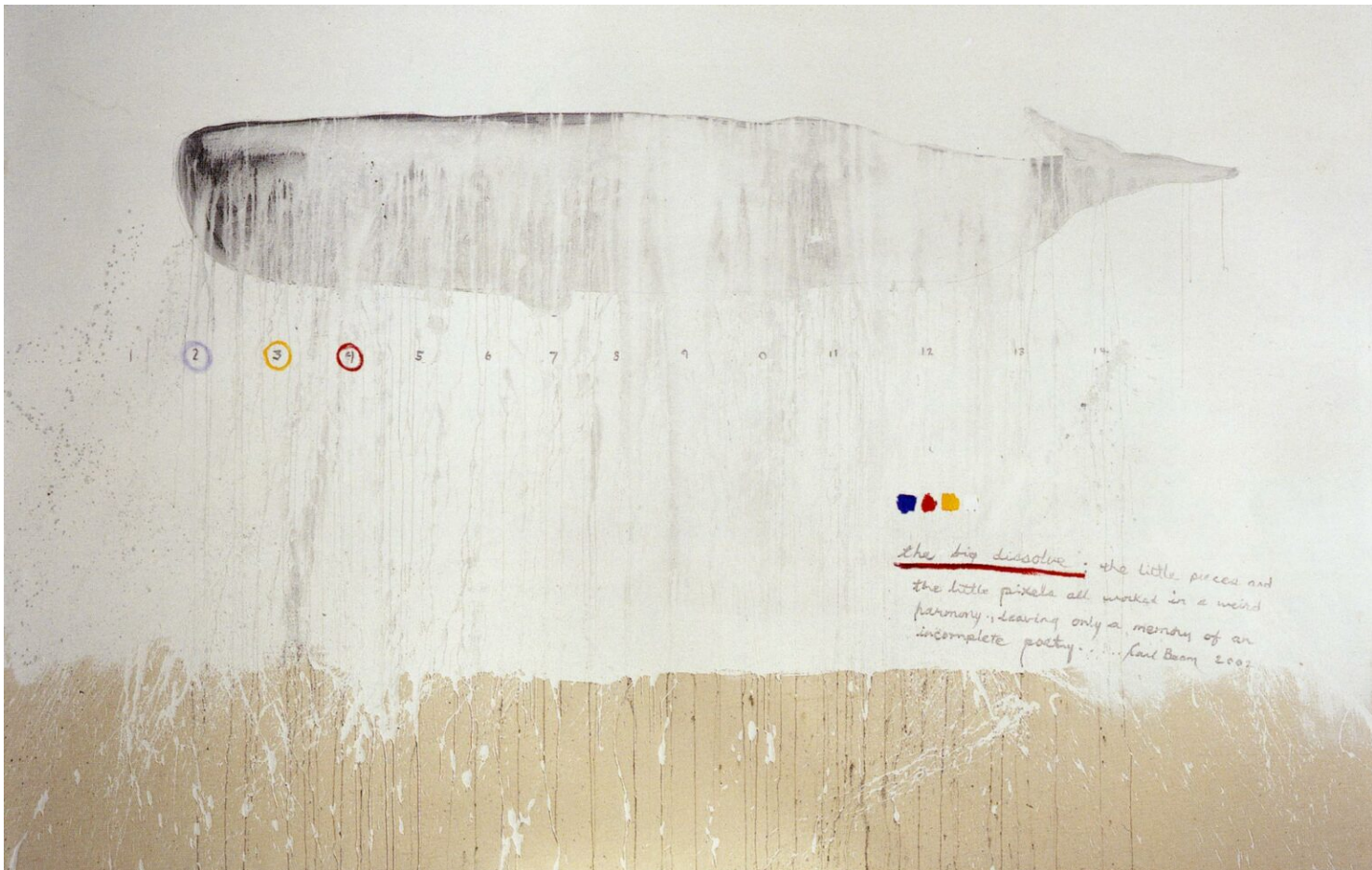
LEFT: Antlers above the side doorway to the *Adobe House* courtyard in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, 1994, photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. CENTRE: Anong Migwans Beam at the construction site of the *Adobe House* in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, n.d., photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Constructing the *Adobe House* in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, n.d., photograph by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

The *Adobe House* consists of 3,500 handmade, sun-dried clay bricks. The bricks were laid in ranks and cemented with a mortar of clay, sand, water, and naturally sourced asphalt to make them water-resistant. On the structure's tan-coloured stucco walls, Beam painted hematite pictographs. The 3,000-square-foot home has been called Beam's largest ceramic work. The following summer, he built a studio next to the house. It included etched limestone set into the walls.

It was the real, attainable tangibility that Beam celebrated in adobe brick architectural projects. He believed that through directed labour, you could subvert the general life equation in which schooling leads to a job, which leads to a mortgage. In Beam's vision, building structures from the very earth of Manitoulin Island could result in many jobs. The wood featured prominently in the homes' decorative and structural elements would advance the fortunes of local sawmills. Moreover, the houses would be of sound construction and would reflect Indigenous values related to being stewards of the land. To promote his vision, Beam invited all the chiefs on Manitoulin Island to visit his work site/studio, where he pitched the idea that adobe brick houses could potentially benefit bands in their search for sustainable housing.



BIG DISSOLVE 2001



Carl Beam, *Big Dissolve*, 2001
Acrylic and pencil on canvas, 213.5 x 335.5 cm
Collection of Steven and Mary Orfield
© Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024

In *Big Dissolve*, a whale is depicted almost as a ghostly shadow suspended in fields of white painterly washes alongside a number sequence, colour index, and the following poem, inscribed on the painted surface: "the big dissolve: the little pieces and the little pixels all worked in a weird harmony, leaving only a memory of an incomplete poetry." The idea of "dissolve"—of breaking down, disappearing, letting go—is expressed directly in the overpainting of the whale, which nearly obliterates the image from the composition, causing the mammal to melt into its background.

Created at a time when Carl Beam had found peace working in his adobe studio on Manitoulin Island, *Big Dissolve* is a large-format painting from the series *The Whale of Our Being*, 2001-03, a body of work that brought Beam's ecological concerns more directly into his art practice. In this series, he uses the image of a sperm whale as a metaphor for the natural ecosystem and a symbol of the relationship between the human and natural worlds. For Beam, the whale served as a bellwether of the deterioration of the natural environment and the health of animal species that are under threat of extinction because of human activities. Along with *Big Dissolve*, the rest of the works in *The Whale of Our*

Being continue Beam's investigation of the connections among the human, animal, and plant realms. The moral of the series is that humans are bound to the same fate as whales.¹

The Whale of Our Being was Beam's last major series. And while it brought together the broader themes and intellectual concerns he had engaged with throughout his prolific career, the idea for the series was cemented during a family trip to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 2000. Beam spent the long summer days at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, shooting rolls of film that would eventually be used in paintings and photo-emulsion works such as *Self-Portrait at the Ocean of Our Great Unlimited Stupidness*, n.d.



LEFT: Carl Beam with a watercolour painting in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 2000, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Driver*, 2001, mixed media on wove paper, 102 x 151.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Big Dissolve is best understood as a visual poem critiquing the practice of factory fishing, in which the seas are pillaged, and entire species of sea mammals and fish are catastrophically depleted. Other works in *The Whale of Our Being*, such as *Driver*, 2001, juxtapose images of a whale being carved on a factory ship with pictures of the cockpit of the *Enola Gay*, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. These uncomfortable images underline Beam's message that "what happens to the whale happens to us."² In contrast, *Big Dissolve* is a relatively minimal work, but nonetheless a haunting and meditative one, especially because of the allusive poem incorporated into the piece's formal structure. The "big dissolve" signifies the rapid decline of the whale population due to seemingly uncontrolled harvesting by factory trawlers.

Whose Space Is It Anyway is a significant example of how semiotics influenced Carl Beam's collage method, and it represents the culmination of his decades-long development of a visual library of symbols. He asks his viewers to be open to simultaneous readings of image signs, and to immerse themselves in the work's allusive visual poetry. The "space" that he references is both specific—the land, sea, moon, womb—and metaphysical, a poetic space formed by bringing together disparate images.

The main image of the whale, symbolizing humanity and the earth, signifies that its fate and ours are connected. I remember my father saying many times, in artist talks and among his colleagues, "I keep hearing, 'Save the planet, save the earth,' as if it's some other outside thing. But people should really be saying, 'Save the humans,' because we are not some separate part of this system."

To compose as dense an image field on such a relatively large scale, Beam made numerous small studies on paper. The preliminary studies include many with images of an apple, which was also used in his large piece *Epistemological Reconstruction Work*, c.1990, a photo emulsion on canvas. In the lower left-hand corner of *Whose Space Is It Anyway* is an image of soldier-witnesses at the first atomic bomb test blasts at the Trinity Site in New Mexico, standing in plain clothes, covering their eyes as instructed.



Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1991, triptych, mixed media on handmade paper, 122.9 x 91.4 cm (each), Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Whose Space Is It Anyway was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution after Beam's passing, although the absurdity of the circumstances surrounding the purchase is something he himself might have orchestrated as a parody of Indigenous creation and its relationship to arts institutions. The Smithsonian originally wanted to purchase the *Burying the Ruler* triptych that had toured with Beam's retrospective exhibition. But that piece had eagle feathers tied to one panel, and because of restrictions imposed by the 1977 amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918), it could not enter the United States. There were many conversations about whether the feathers could be replaced. Finally, however, it was determined that the Smithsonian should simply choose a different piece, *Whose Space Is It Anyway*—a decision that disregarded the political comedy of the imaginary line (the Canada-U.S. border) that the first painting could not cross.



SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

FINAL NOTICE

FINAL NOTICE



Carl Beam sought to distance himself from the Woodland School painting style developed by his Ojibwe contemporary Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007). Through his work in many different mediums, Beam highlights the significant harm that colonialism has had on the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (North America). His art treats a wide range of issues: the tragedy of the residential school system, alternative conceptions of time and space held by Indigenous peoples, different notions of fame and notoriety, and the harm caused by losing connection with the environment that sustains all life.

A NEW APPROACH TO INDIGENOUS ART

In the late 1970s, after Beam abandoned his graduate studies at the University of Alberta, he devoted himself fully to a career as an artist. At the time, there were very few contemporary artists of Indigenous descent (or from other minority groups) practising professionally in Canada. An exception was found on Manitoulin Island, where several young Ojibwe artists who rejected formal training and saw painting as a means of expressing their culture and traditional spiritual beliefs had formed a community. They called themselves the Woodland School.

The founder and leading member was Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007). Other members included Blake Debassige (1956–2022), Joshim Kakegamic (1952–1993), Daphne Odjig (1919–2016), Carl Ray (1943–1978), and Roy Thomas (1949–2004). Their style, which referenced Anishinaabe spiritual teachings, was becoming increasingly popular with art critics and collectors, but it was radically different from what Beam was beginning to develop in his own practice.

In general, Woodland School art is characterized by colourful compositions with symbolic figures, animals, and spirits inhabiting mystical worlds and often shown in states of transformation. Morrisseau's epic work *Artist and Shaman between Two Worlds*, 1980, is an iconic example of the subject matter, style, and themes associated with the Woodland School. Although Beam respected this approach, he saw its visual devices, which for the most part followed Morrisseau's style, as curtailing his own and perhaps other artists' creative intentions and inadvertently contributing to a limited understanding of what contemporary Indigenous art could be.¹



Carl Beam working on *Big Dissolve* in his studio, n.d., photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



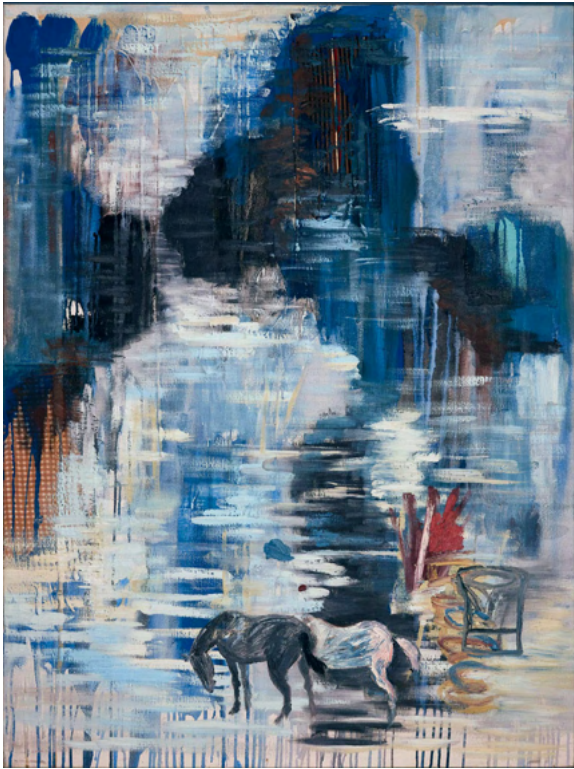
LEFT: Norval Morrisseau, *Artist and Shaman between Two Worlds*, 1980, acrylic on canvas, 175 x 282 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Contain that Force*, 1978, acrylic, collage materials on canvas, 120.5 x 163 cm, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

In the late 1970s, Beam began to combine found objects with painting, collage, prose, and poetry. This approach—on display in *Contain that Force*, 1978—placed him firmly in an emerging category of Indigenous artists whose works reflected a radically different creative sensibility. Robert Houle (b.1947), a Saulteaux painter and curator who also identified as part of this group, described it as a collection of artists who had “the distinction of having come from two different aesthetic traditions: North American and western European.”² In addition to Houle, the group included Abraham Anghik Ruben (b.1951), Bob Boyer (1948–2004), Domingo Cisneros (b.1942), Douglas Coffin (b.1946), Larry Emerson (1947–2017), Phyllis Fife (b.1948), Harry Fonseca (1946–2006), George C. Longfish (b.1942), Leonard Paul (b.1953), Edward Poitras (b.1953), Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (b.1940), Randy Lee White (b.1951), and Dana Alan Williams (b.1953).

In challenging the influence of the Woodland School, Houle sought to defy the underlying assumption that First Nations artists needed to be categorized at all. Houle’s own work, such as *Kanata*, 1992, reframes the idea of what constitutes a “history” painting, subverting supposedly heroic depictions of colonial conquest that subjugated First Nations peoples. Bob Boyer’s painted blankets, such as *Grandfather Will Come Again*, 1987, address the issue of First Nations genocide. Jaune Quick-to-See Smith’s abstract landscapes, including *Blackwater Draw II*, 1983, with their pictographic symbolism in conversation with Abstract Expressionist-inspired colour fields, treat the theme of the alienation of the American Indian in the modern world. All the above-mentioned artists blended tradition with contemporary idioms, themes, media, and modes to develop personal art forms of engaged political and cultural advocacy that challenge racist stereotypes of what constitutes Indigenous art. They also sought to highlight the oppressive social conditions that impoverish contemporary First Nations peoples across Turtle Island.



LEFT: Robert Houle, *Kanata*, 1992, acrylic and conte crayon on canvas, 228.7 x 732 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: George Longfish, *America: 500 Years, "I" is for Indian as "I" is for Invisible #2*, 1992, coloured pencil, photograph, graphite, stamps, and reflective mylar on board, 49.8 x 76.2 cm, Washington State Arts Commission, Olympia.



LEFT: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *Blackwater Draw II*, 1983, acrylic and fabric on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm, John and Susan Horseman Collection. RIGHT: Bob Boyer, *Grandfather Will Come Again*, 1987, oil, acrylic, chalk pastel, charcoal on blanket, 192 x 231.4 cm, The Mendel Art Gallery Collection at Remai Modern, Saskatoon.

Beam was at the vanguard of this groundbreaking approach to Indigenous art. His interest lay in experimenting with and adapting current styles and techniques. Through his complex, semiotically informed layering of imagery and signs, collaging, and startling visual juxtapositions, as well as his innovative use of performance-based practice, he challenged colonial power, exclusionary and distorted historical narratives, racist paradigms, limited conceptions of nationalism, and narrow definitions of what constituted First Nations art.

Above all, he was an advocate for artistic agency unconstrained by limiting categories based on race. His work quickly struck a chord with his fellow Indigenous artists, as well as with curators across the country. In the catalogue accompanying his solo exhibition at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art (now the Thunder Bay Art Gallery) in 1984, curator Elizabeth McLuhan wrote, "His message is urgent and inescapable.... Beam transforms his personal voice into a global conscience."³



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Carl Beam, *Medicine '84* (from *The Zeitgeist Suite*), 1984, photo etching on paper, artist proof, 121.5 x 80.4 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

A GROUNDBREAKING ACQUISITION

Throughout his career, Beam advocated for changes in the way cultural institutions supported (or failed to support) contemporary Indigenous art—which was frequently referred to pejoratively as “Indian Art.” Works by Indigenous creators began entering national collecting institutions in the 1920s as “artifacts.” Most of these early acquisitions were cultural objects seized from potlatch ceremonies, which were banned through an amendment to the Indian Act in 1884.⁴ For more than a century, these works were regarded solely as anthropological or ethnographic specimens. By the early 1980s, the National Gallery of Canada had only a small collection of First Nations artifacts and a handful of prints and sculptures produced by Inuit artists. Beam’s ambition—stated at the third National Native Indian Artists Symposium in 1983—was to be the first openly Indigenous artist to have works exhibited and purchased by the National Gallery of Canada.



LEFT: Carl Beam with (from left to right) David Neel, Joanne Cardinal-Schubert, and Robert Houle speaking on a panel at the third National Native Indian Artists Symposium in Hazelton, B.C., 1983, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Tess Boudreau Taconis, *Rita Letendre*, early 1960s, gelatin silver print, 23.7 x 34.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

This distinction—the first openly Indigenous artist—was important for Beam because the National Gallery of Canada had purchased works by other First Nations artists, including Rita Letendre (1928–2021) and Robert Markle (1936–1990), but they were quietly doing their work without drawing attention to their backgrounds. If you wanted to participate equally in the modern art landscape, you had to conceal the fact that you were Indigenous. Some people did that. But Beam refused. He had the warriorship to demand that people accept he was an Indigenous artist with contemporary concerns.⁵

Spurred on by reactions to his art that ranged from quizzical to aggressively hostile, Beam produced pieces that rejected the public’s expectations of Indigenous artists. Through rigorous, visually dense, and monumental works such as *Exorcism*, 1984, he took aim at the art world’s established norms. When *Exorcism* was exhibited at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art (now the Thunder Bay Art Gallery) in 1984, Beam encouraged viewers to become participants in the work by throwing a hatchet at it. Thumbing his nose at the taste-making establishment, which had failed to appreciate or embrace the validity of his expression as a visual artist, became a central theme in many of his paintings and prints.



LEFT: A woman throwing a hatchet at *Exorcism*, 1984, during the opening of *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam* at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1984, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Exorcism*, 1984, plywood, acrylic, arrows, barbed wire, hatchets, 213 x 610 cm, Thunder Bay Art Gallery. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Despite this uneasy relationship, in 1986, the National Gallery of Canada acquired *The North American Iceberg*, 1985. Beam recounted that the gallery drove a hard bargain, and the work was sold for \$16,000—just over a quarter of the \$60,000 asking price.⁶ Nevertheless, this was the first time that an object of contemporary art by a self-identifying Indigenous artist was bought for the gallery's contemporary collection.

Beam later decried the purchase, calling it a political act by the National Gallery, which, he said, had acquired a work by “Carl the Indian” and not “Carl the artist.” He felt used, saying:

I feel like a real dupe. At the time, I felt honoured, but now I know I was used politically. Native artists, as art-making citizens of Canada, put a lot of pressure on the National Gallery. Our argument was that someone like Norval Morrisseau doesn't make artifacts that belong in an ethnological museum, he's an important Canadian painter. So they bought a work by a native artist—me—as a way to hush us up, and at the time it succeeded. They bought four or five more only after realizing it was worse to have one native artwork than none. I can document it. They now have a dozen native artists in their collection, but there hasn't been much good faith.⁷



Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985, acrylic, photo-serigraph, and graphite on Plexiglas, 213.6 x 374.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Indeed, few purchases were to follow Beam's. By 1990, only six Indigenous artists were included in a field of 780 Canadian art acquisitions. Nonetheless, the purchase of *The North American Iceberg* remains a watershed moment in Canadian art history, and the start of a more equitable relationship between the art establishment and Indigenous creators.

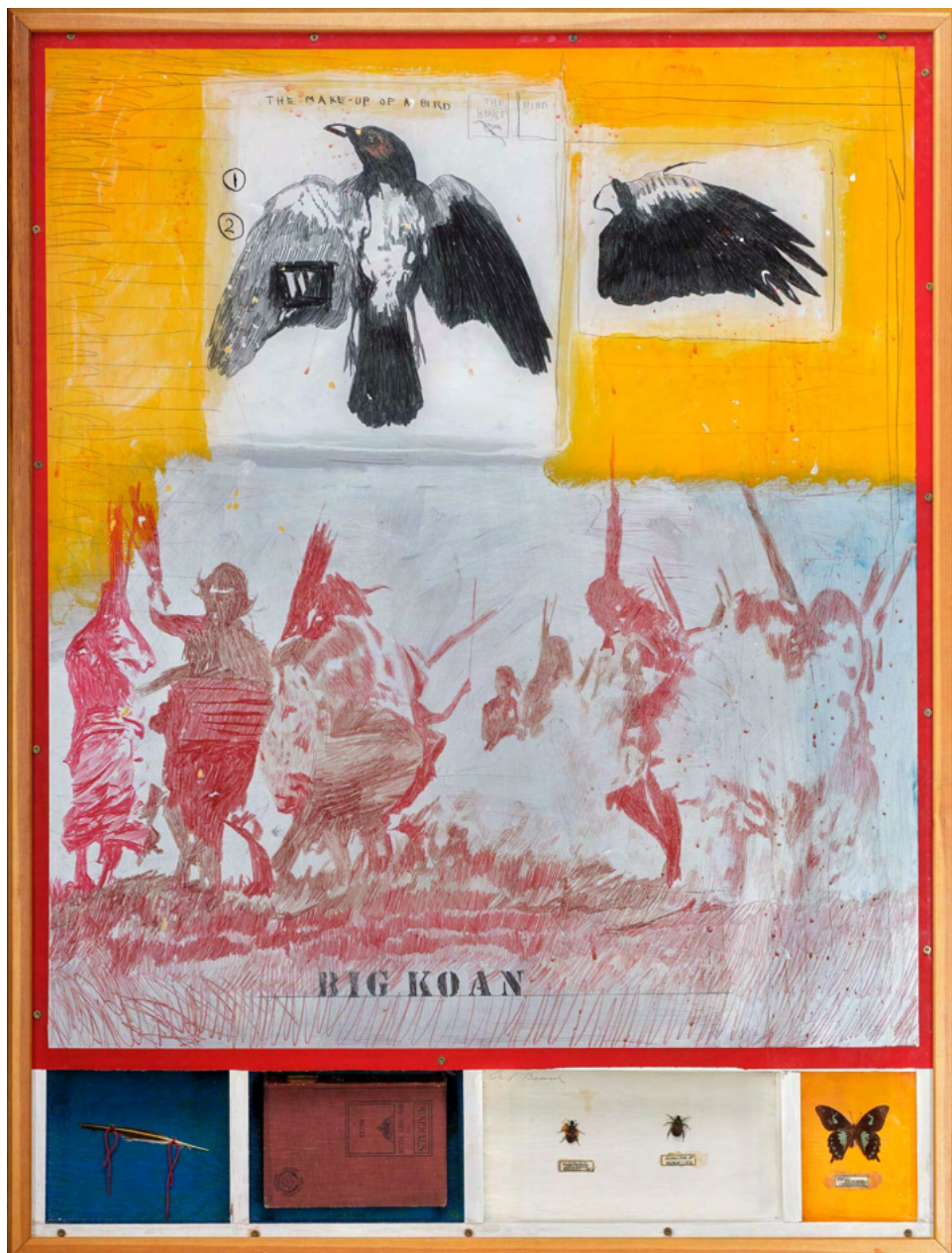
CHALLENGING WESTERN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

*Time-distancing is the model used to displace native people from contemporary reality by making us into museum pieces. It is at the crux of a lot of problems. If Indian people can be made to inhabit an inauthentic time, to seem not to belong in the present and to be living outside our time, then it is easy to believe we have no real title to our land in the present reality. But I know that I live at the same time as anybody else, that I'm not something left over from the Stone Age. So, in my paintings I show that we're all living in a cyclical time, with things fading in and fading out. I put the contemporary in a box and give it some distance.*⁸

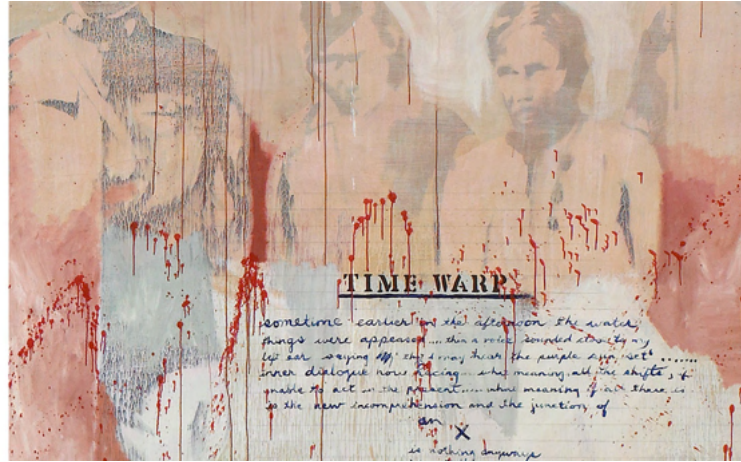
–Carl Beam, 1990

Time—how it is perceived, lived, and used as a colonizing tool—is a core element of Beam's work. Embracing contemporary Pop art modes, he refused to be boxed in. Through collages like *Big Koan*, 1989, Beam juxtaposes objects, texts, and pictures from different times, giving viewers a visual portal through which they could travel between historical periods, time zones, and imaginative worlds.

Beam felt limited by Western European-based rationalism and its linear sense of time. His engagement with the idea that time is cyclical—tied to recurring phenomena, such as habits that are shaped by seasonal change—informed his critique of Western systems of thought and the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous ways of knowing. In monumental works such as *Time Warp*, 1984, he resists linearity by juxtaposing images and texts that enfold past, present, and future onto a single canvas, acting, as curator Greg A. Hill writes, “as a permeable plane allowing the viewer to approach it and conceptually enter it at various points.”⁹ Measuring 3 by 12.2 metres, *Time Warp* was Beam's largest work to this date.



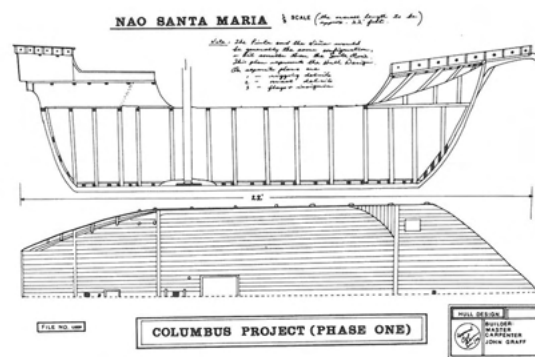
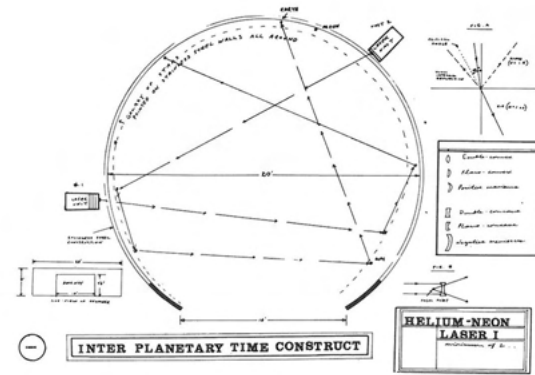
Carl Beam, *Big Koan*, 1989, acrylic sheet, acrylic paint, wood, feather, book, and insects, 125.4 x 95.1 x 9.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



LEFT: Carl Beam, installation view of *Time Warp*, 1984, in *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from October 22, 2010–January 16, 2011, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.
RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Time Warp* (detail), 1984, acrylic on linen, 304 x 1219 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

In 1988, on the eve of the quincentennial of Columbus's arrival on Turtle Island and in the aftermath of the reunion held at Garnier High School, Beam took his critique of Western knowledge systems a step further by investigating the tragic effects of colonialism on the continent's Indigenous nations, a subject he would revisit throughout his career. This investigation led to *The Columbus Project*, 1988–92, a four-year enterprise executed in several media, including painting, photo emulsion on canvas, and large-format etchings.

Whereas *Time Warp* challenges concepts of time, *The Columbus Project* takes aim at the notion of "discovery" and its impact on the ways histories are written—often by denigrating Indigenous knowledge and belief systems that predate European contact. With *The Columbus Project*, Beam wanted to raise the idea "that the moment of contact between the old and new worlds could no longer be celebrated as a triumphant moment of discovery," but was instead the prelude to centuries of genocide and cultural annihilation of Indigenous populations in the Americas.¹⁰ Beam drew a straight line, for example, between rationalism and the sexual and cultural abuses that he and others suffered at residential schools because of destructive government policies.



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Sitting Bull and Whale* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Drawing for Voyage 1* (from *The Columbus Project*), c.1988, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Like *Time Warp*, *The Columbus Project* juxtaposes seemingly disparate images in often radical matchups, as in *Sitting Bull and Whale* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990. Beam's strategy was to create an image field of various signs that cannot simply be read in rational ways. Instead, he asks his viewers to validate all the associations that come into play while "reading" his work. Beam expresses his contempt for instruments of colonial domination by imploring viewers to derive their own meaning from his works, making space for a variety of thought systems and time-based experiences to coexist.

ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Beam embraced his role as social critic on topics that ranged beyond Indigenous issues like the struggle for self-representation, the effects of colonialism, the privileging of Western systems of knowledge, and the tragedy of the residential school system. He was also passionate about the environment and critical of the way environmentalists of the time seemed to view themselves as outside of shared nature, causally or experientially. In works from series such as *The Whale of Our Being*, 2001-03, he was interested in investigating the interconnectedness of worldly events as extensions of what he called "microscopic ecologies."¹¹

Furthermore, he did not distinguish between micro and macro; an environment, he insisted, was not "out there," divorced even from the ecologies that constitute a person's microbiology or from the body politic of a community or nation. His environment was holistic, embracing the here, the past, and the

future. The entirety of creation held a sanctity for Beam that he honoured both as a human being and as an artist. His concern embraced the pine forests as well as the great whales. He saw in the plight of the whale a metaphor for the fragile interconnectedness of the human and non-human worlds, or as he put it, "what happens to the whale happens to us."¹² Fostering a sustainable environment was, for Beam, an act of faith that required action. He spoke out against the use of chemicals that he saw as disproportionately and adversely affecting the poor and minorities, and negatively impacting the natural ecosystem. And he asked everyone who sought environmental protection and ecological sustainability to act in a manner that advanced positive change for all.



Carl Beam, *Whale of Our Being*, 2003, stoneware, underglaze, and glaze, 25.5 x 42 cm, Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, Waterloo. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

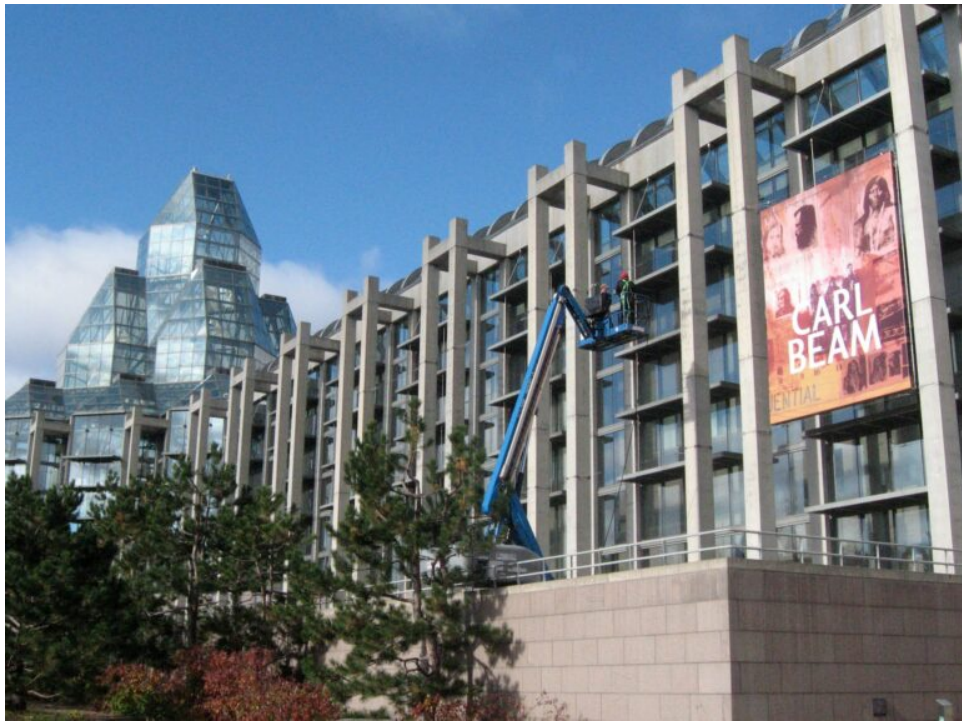


LEFT: Carl Beam with his hominy corn harvest, n.d., photographer unknown. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Critical Autobiographical Mass*, n.d., mixed media on paper, 73.7 x 53.9 cm, Gallery Gevik, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

paintings, prints, and performance works, he tackled contemporary and historical themes that he felt had not been previously explored in artistic terms, making it possible for Indigenous creators to be recognized as *contemporary* artists in national dialogues.

Beam believed that being an artist made it morally imperative for him and his viewers to interact with and deconstruct national myths. He felt a great responsibility to shed light on the parts that were tattered and in need of repair, to delete others, and to add mythologies when necessary. To this end, Beam was essential in starting the dialogue on residential schools in Canada, in initiating the national apology to survivors, and in moving the separate nations towards an eventual reconciliation.¹⁴ An entire generation grew up seeing his works in art galleries across the country and, in so doing, became more outspoken on racism and inequality. It is for this reason that Beam's *Burying the Ruler*, 1992, was chosen to be the central image on the cover of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015.

Although his art demands considered observation, a remarkable aspect of the work is that it invites the viewer to discover the shape of meaning, knowledge, time, and history. Collage works such as *Time Dissolve*, c.1992, force audiences to look through a non-linear lens to decipher the significance of their signs and symbols. Beam held up his compositions as emblems of an alternative way to acquire and express knowledge—one gained through an intensely personal visual interaction. This unique approach to making art gives non-Indigenous people ways to interact with stories of unfairness, atrocity, ecological collapse, genocide, and the failures of colonialism without feeling blamed, shamed, guilty, or otherwise judged. This is an incredible feat. To be able to engage with the histories as Beam conceived them is even now fraught with sensitivities. But Beam waded into them heart first, like a warrior. And in embracing art's ability to enact social change, by arming himself with intellect and literature, he battled.



Exterior view of the Carl Beam retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada, 2010, photographer unknown.



CARL BEAM

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Carl Beam, *Time Dissolve*, c.1992, photo emulsion, acrylic, pencil on canvas, 274.3 x 213.3 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Now, more than a decade after his passing, there is an expanded generation of Indigenous artists who have not had to fight against expectations that their work would be in the manner of the Woodland School. But a second hurdle—which Beam found vexing to his last—remains: the systematic limitations we place on how Indigenous art functions in this country. Until Indigenous artists can be a

part of the fabric of the national art community without having to shoulder the burden of explaining or satirizing their own and mainstream Canadian culture, his legacy is not fully realized.

I'm grateful to my father for so, so many things, including the fact that he chose to keep me close to him, and that he educated me in the way he did art, colour, and paint. Art is the great love of my life, and my father paved the way for me to be able to fully exercise my autonomy as an artistic thinking person in Canada. I get to paint whatever I want. I can create work in any media and call it my art, and people understand that it is. Nobody has ever told me, "No, Anong, you can't paint that way." I owe that to him.¹⁵



LEFT: Anong Migwans Beam, *Red Mangrove*, 2018, oil and photo transfer on canvas, 182.9 x 182.9 cm, Gallery Gevik, Toronto. © Anong Migwans Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl and Anong Migwans Beam in front of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, 1992, photographer unknown.

A photograph of a man with long, dark hair and a beard, wearing a colorful headband and a light-colored shirt. He is holding a large, reddish-brown ceramic vessel with a bird-like shape on it. The background is a textured, stone-like wall.

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Carl Beam drew his artistic influences from a wide array of sources, including historical Indigenous iconography and traditional ceramics methods, the innovative printmaking techniques of Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), contemporary video, and performance art inspired by Joseph Beuys (1921–1986). Ever experimental and innovative, Beam blended abstract and figurative modes, often in jarring juxtapositions. His work is intimate and autobiographical, symbolic and critical, poetic and monumental. His purpose was always to challenge viewers to consider the damage caused by European colonialism and the annihilation of Indigenous peoples, their culture, and their spirituality.

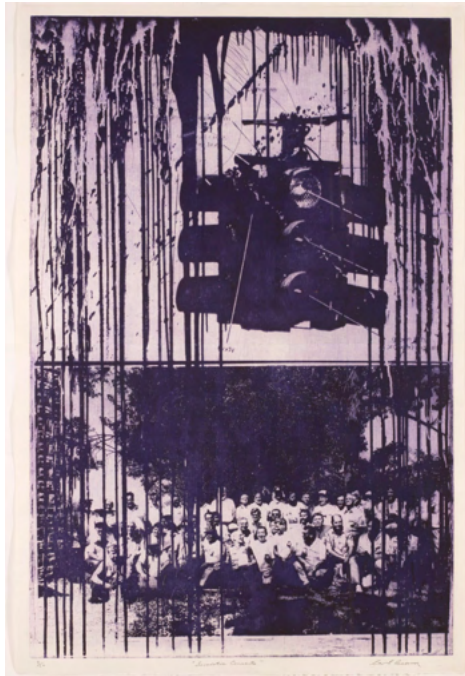
SEMIOTICS AS SUBVERSION

Virtually all of Beam's work is informed by semiotics, a critical theory he was introduced to while pursuing an MFA at the University of Alberta between 1975 and 1977. The word "semiotic" appears frequently in his work, in either the textual elements of the imagery or the titles of many of his pieces (such as *Semiotic Converts*, 1990). Though he abandoned his degree when he was discouraged from studying contemporary Indigenous art in any critical and meaningful way, he continued to engage with semiotics throughout his artistic career.

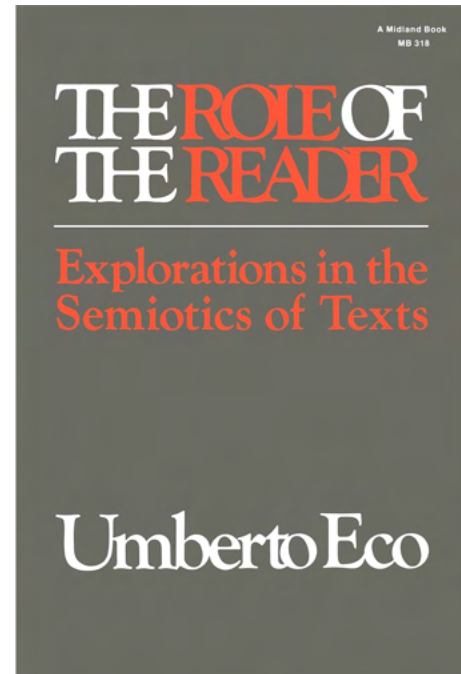
As a theory, semiotics explores the significance of visual signs and

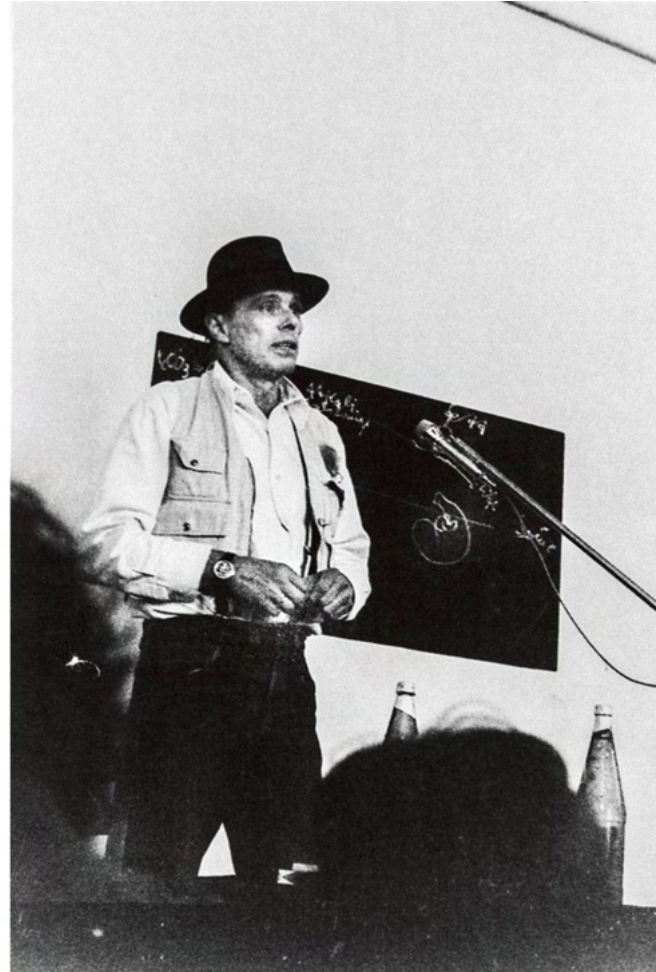
symbols that communicate meaning beyond written language. Beam wanted his works of art to be complex purveyors of meaning, and to operate on several levels—metonymic (figurative), metaphorical, and contextual. He found in semiotics an expansive conceptual and creative framework that allowed him to express many things at the same time. He read and was influenced by Umberto Eco (1932-2016), a prominent semiotician whose theories on the "open text" argued that literature and art are fields of meaning rather than prescribed narratives that can be read only one way.¹ Beam embraced Eco's theories advancing the idea that open texts are dynamic and convey meaning as experiences dependent upon personal interpretations of signs and vocabularies. He approached his art through this elastic lens, viewing his compositions as open image fields that provoke reflection upon the very process of developing meaning.

In experimenting with the parameters of meaning-making, Beam's approach echoes that of German Conceptual and performance artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), who explored the relationships between thought, speech, and form through performances involving symbolic gestures and materials such as felt and honey. Beam admired Beuys (the artist is even pictured, headless, in Beam's monumental painting *Summa*, 2003), and he shared his conviction that art should subvert dogmatic messages and challenge viewers to form their own knowledge. Semiotics gave Beam the philosophy and techniques of subversion, which he then used to expose the absurdities and deceptions at play in his and our times. It also allowed him to experiment with different media and practices of making—from collage and photo emulsion to video- and performance-based expression—which helped his art to evolve over the course of his career.



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Semiotic Converts* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Cover of *The Role of the Reader*, by Umberto Eco (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).





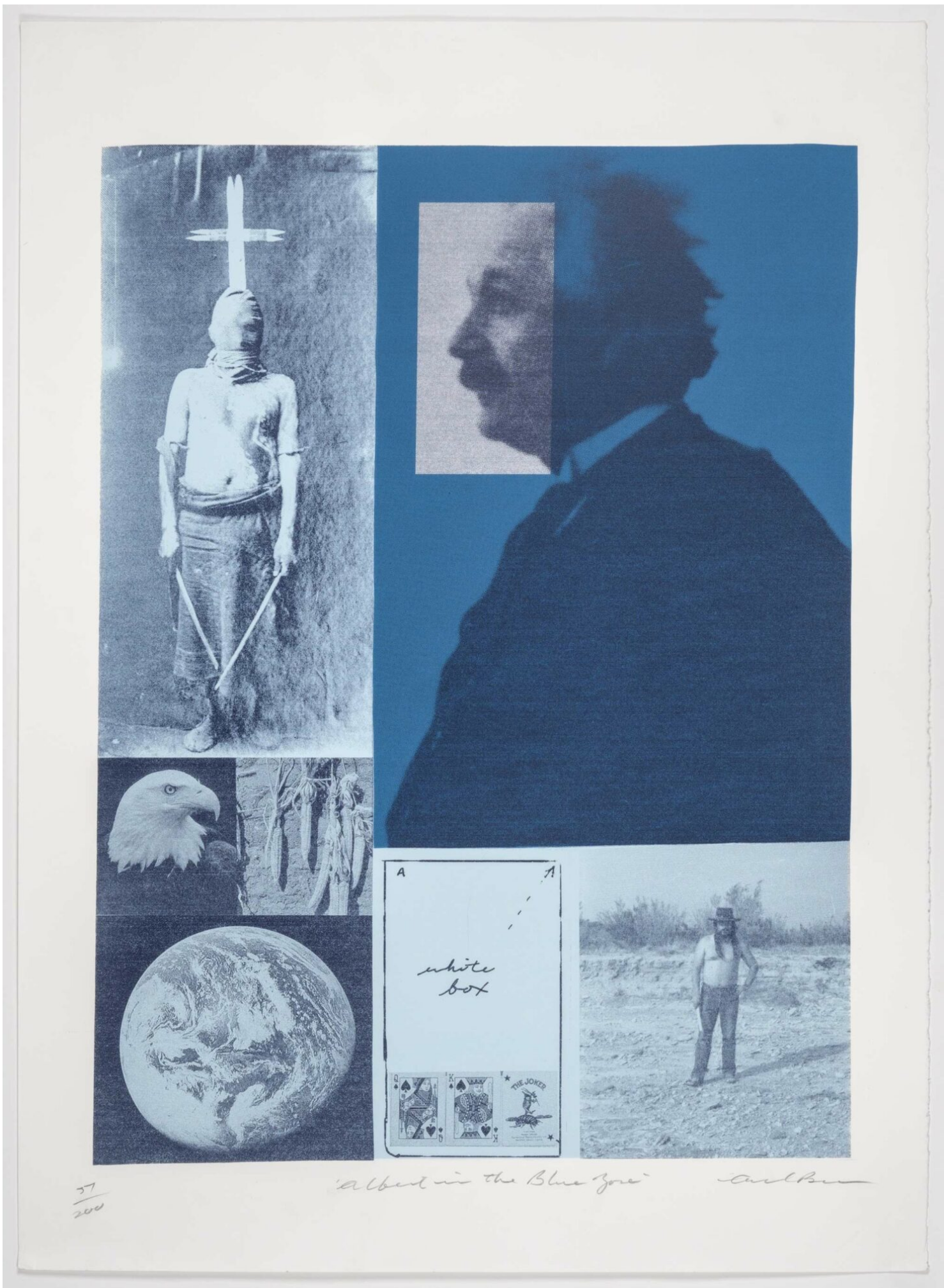
LEFT: Carl Beam, *Summa*, 2003, photo emulsion on canvas, 274.3 x 213.4 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Joseph Beuys giving a lecture at Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna, on April 4, 1979, photograph by Gerhard Kaiser, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.

Beam's wide study of Western thought—along with semiotics, he explored the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and Immanuel Kant, the modernist literature of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, and the mathematical metaphysics of Stephen Hawking—provided fertile ground for examining the limitations of rationalism as an intellectual system. Images of writers and thinkers entered works such as *Albert in the Blue Zone*, 2001, which features a portrait of theoretical physicist Albert Einstein. Together, these pieces form a pantheon that represents the push and pull of the twentieth century.



CARL BEAM

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Carl Beam, *Albert in the Blue Zone*, 2001, colour silkscreen, edition 57/200, 76.2 x 55.9 cm, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

COLLAGE AND POP ART INFLUENCES

Beam received formal art training in the early 1970s, starting with a part-time drafting program at the Kootenay School of the Arts in Nelson, British Columbia. In 1974, he earned a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Victoria. It was during this time that he became acquainted with the techniques of contemporary innovators such as Andy Warhol (1928-1987), whose repetition of pop culture images mirrors Beam's penchant for seriality, and Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), whose multimedia works built upon the techniques of early twentieth-century Dadaists. Beam's early collage works, such as *Stuffed Fish & Deer Antlers*, 1983, resemble Rauschenberg's "Combines" (large canvases incorporating found materials), as in *Collection*, 1954-55.

Rauschenberg's innovative collage-making strategy was an important reference point at a time when Beam was beginning to carve his own distinct path as an artist.

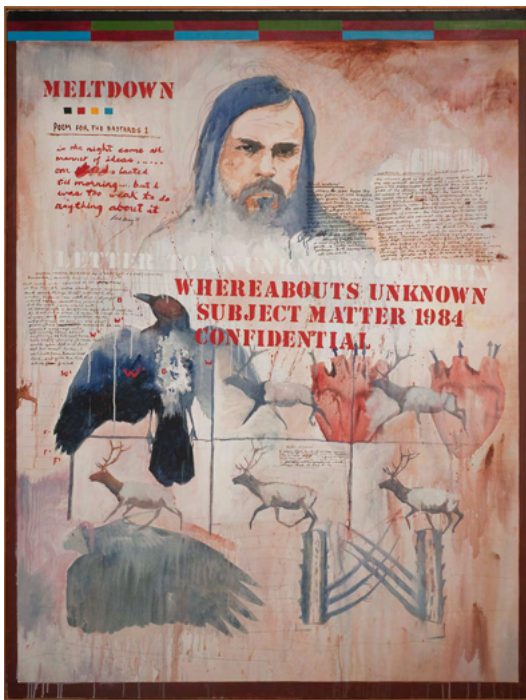


LEFT: Robert Rauschenberg, *Collection*, 1954-55, fabric, metal, oil, paper and wood on canvas, 203.2 x 243.8 x 8.9 cm, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Stuffed Fish & Deer Antlers*, 1983, acrylic and collage material on plywood, 109.2 x 142.2 x 38.1 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

In collage, Beam found an image-making strategy that was in harmony with the principles of semiotics—namely, it allowed for the expression of open meaning. He was attracted to the idea that sign systems that are juxtaposed (collaged) in the same work could create multiple, dynamic, and allusive readings simultaneously. For Beam, collage forced the “reader” of his work to interpret meaning through clues supplied by the imagery, composition, and context. He valued the idea that the personal associations his collaged imagery stimulated in the viewer were perhaps more valid carriers of meaning than rational explanations of the relationships of one image, sign system, or visual vocabulary.

The large-scale painting *Meltdown*, 1984, deftly illustrates Beam's use of collage methods across a range of media. Beam's painted self-portrait features prominently within an image field defined by colour washes and handwritten and stencilled texts that emerge and recede into the pictorial space. Collaged images of running elk (sourced from photographer Eadweard Muybridge's archive), as well as a bird, a heart, and other symbolic glyphs, are arranged in the composition. Many of these images also appeared frequently in works made

in other media—the bird, for instance, is seen again in the earthenware bowl *Parts of a Bird #2*, 1985, and in the watercolour *Untitled (Parts of a Bird)*, 1982. The seriality of Beam’s work served his interests in the subversion of meaning: the bird evokes different associations when juxtaposed with the running elk in *Meltdown* than it does illustrated on the inside of an earthenware bowl. Amid the various signs and scripts, Beam calls out to viewers to read the piece fragment by fragment, and to perhaps create a narrative whose meaning is entirely dependent on their own perspectives and the context in which they are experiencing the work.



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Meltdown*, 1984, acrylic pen and ink on canvas, 217 x 164.5 cm, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Parts of a Bird #2*, 1985, clay, 18 x 38 cm, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Collage allowed for open-ended reading of his compositions in much the same way poetry and metaphor function. Beam’s artistic processes have been described as combining and recombining “visual and textual fragments from the past and present to interrogate history and illuminate contemporary experience.”² Of the way he built his compositions—in a manner similar to composing spontaneous visual poetry—he stated: “Things have a power in and of themselves, ... a peculiar emanation. The task of the artist is to set up a dialogue between objects.”³

In addition to reflecting and complementing his ideas on semiotics, collage provided Beam with a visual form to express Anishinaabe cosmology. In 1989, he said, “We [the Anishinaabe] have the collage-like aspect to looking at life, which we could call cyclical—with no single viewpoint predominating.”⁴ This idea informs all his work in all media. Through collage, Beam created visual analogies of an entire worldview that seeks new meaning and forms of knowledge through the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate, irrational imagery.

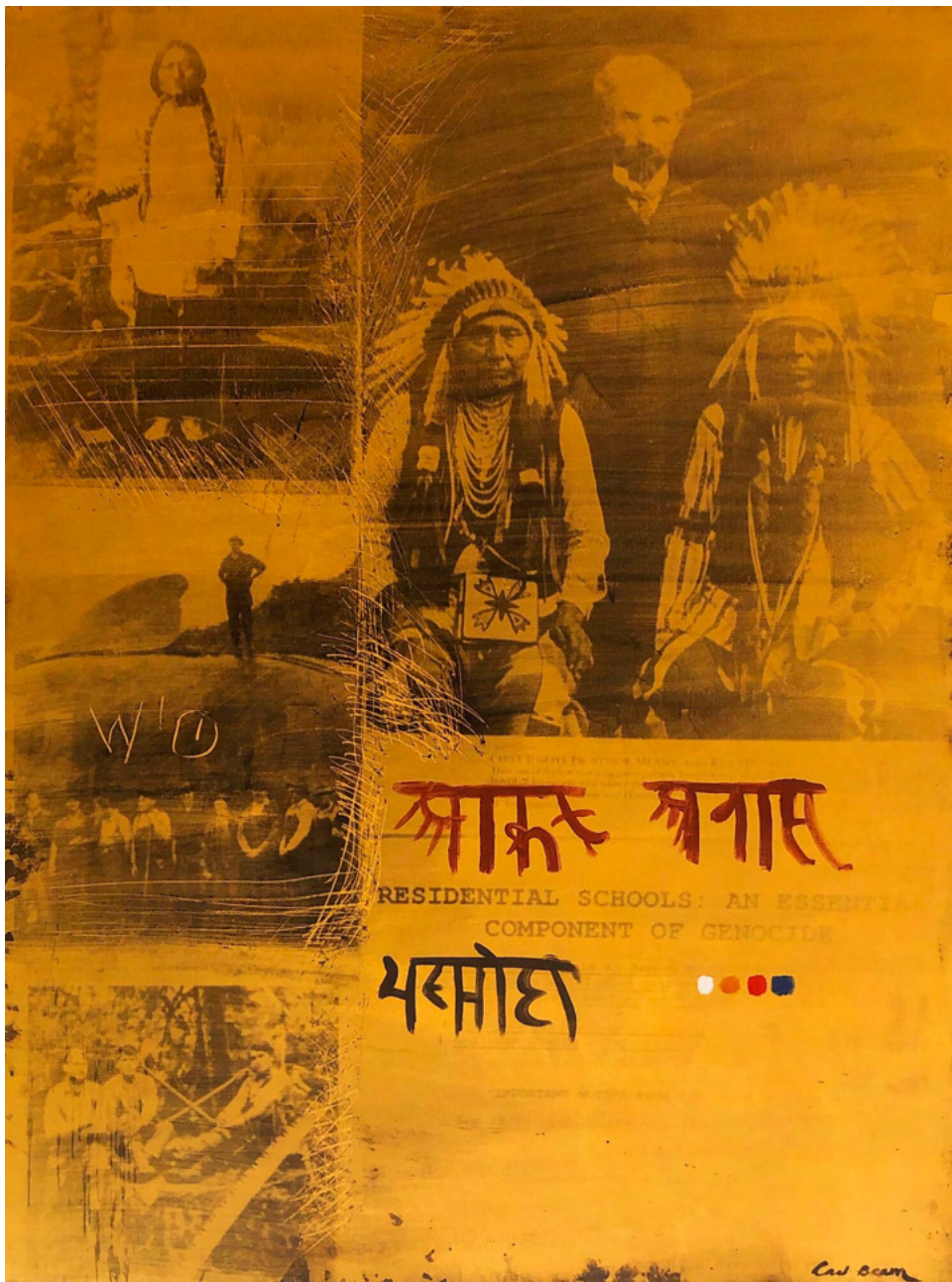
PICTURING TEXT

Beam's interest in collage and semiotics can be regarded as an outgrowth of the harassment and violence he endured at Garnier High School in the 1950s. He considered the school to be a microcosm of society: a place where one's worth—his worth—was based on the ability to speak, read, and write both English and Latin, and think in English and French. Those who could not were vulnerable. So, he forced himself to acquire these language-based skills to escape abuse. Later, he used text and language to deliver his messages like a Trojan horse.

In large-format works such as *Bashmi Cri (Reduced to Ashes)*, 1999, Beam uses the visual look of so-called foreign languages such as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Ojibwe to provoke vulnerability. The work's title, which translates to "reduced to ashes," is written in Sanskrit over a glowing orange background with images of Indigenous chiefs posed with an Indian Affairs agent named Mr. Meany. Under the chiefs' portraits is a screenshot of an early online forum entitled "Residential Schools: An Essential Component of Genocide."

Confronted with this combination of foreign text and collaged images, viewers, for a moment, would have to assume nothing. They would be forced to gaze upon the surface for clues to extrapolate meaning, and maybe, in this way, gain empathy or respect for the complexity of other language or thought systems.

In picturing text, Beam worked in a manner like that of prominent Canadian conceptual artists such as Greg Curnoe (1936–1992) and Ken Lum (b.1956). Curnoe used stamps and stencils or handwrote fragments of text on the surfaces of his canvases, such as *View of Victoria Hospital, First Series: #1–6*, 1968–69. Meanwhile, Lum derived his 1980s series *Language Paintings* from the visual forms of billboards, often placing the onus on the viewer to decode any text presented. In contrast, Beam's text-based works evolved from a deeply personal style. Lines of text in works such as *Autumnal Idiocy Koan #814*, 1986, were conceived as spontaneous prose—stream-of-consciousness writings in the manner of Jack Kerouac and other beat generation poets whom Beam admired



Carl Beam, *Bashmi Cri (Reduced to Ashes)*, 1999, mixed media on canvas, 213.4 x 182.9 cm, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

and read. He called this type of writing a “koan”—referencing a Zen Buddhist form of dialogue meant to spur enlightened insight. His lines of text were never prearranged or preconceived. They flowed from his pen nib or brush directly onto paper, etching plate, or canvas. No erasing. No second thoughts.

It is this bracing immediacy and honesty that arrests viewers. The nearly inscrutable compositions, iconographies, and lines of text in works such as *Bashmi Cri (Reduced to Ashes)* compel the viewer—without thought—to the impatient, furtive reading we might have experienced as children, when we surreptitiously scanned someone’s diary and, in the process, invaded the person’s innermost feelings and thoughts without regard for their privacy.

Words are inscribed on Beam’s work in black India ink, silver, gold, magenta, dark blue, and white, and always applied with lightfast inks, which he tested carefully to weed out colours that would fade over time. Occasionally, such as in *The North American Iceberg*, 1985, he changed colours and combined a frenetic script with a composed authoritative block of stencilled text overlaid with a grid, his other device of choice. *New World* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, for instance, includes stream-of-consciousness prose written in cursive against a visual field with stenciled words and dripping ink.

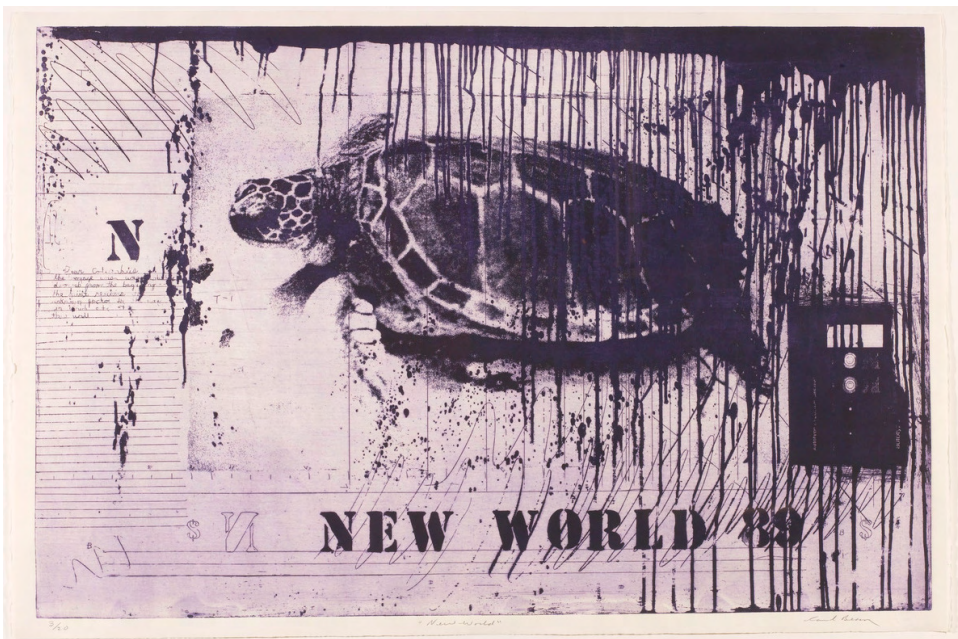
Such strategies reflected Beam’s belief that the dominant culture was obsessed with grid systems, in everything from pay to farming to measuring, to assume control over other humans and the natural world.

PHOTO TRANSFER AND PRINTMAKING: A NEW POETIC LANGUAGE

Through photo transfer and printmaking—etching and serigraphy—Beam developed innovative creative practices that supported his collage-making strategy. In 1983, shortly after moving to Peterborough, Ontario, he purchased a large etching press from Praga Industries—the only piece of furniture, besides



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Autumnal Idiocy Koan #814*, 1986, colour Xerox and mixed media on mulberry paper, 99.5 x 65 cm, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Ken Lum, *Untitled (Language Painting)*, 1987, enamel on wood, 203 x 152.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Carl Beam, *New World (from The Columbus Suite)*, 1990, etching on Arches paper, 83.8 x 109.2 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

the kitchen table and a futon, in the entire house at 222 Carlisle Avenue. With the assistance of his wife, Ann, Beam soon developed his first suite of etchings, *The Zeitgeist Suite*, 1983–84. This was a precursor to *The Columbus Suite*, 1990, and similar in size and scope.⁵



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Wing Primordial* (from *The Zeitgeist Suite*), 1983, photo etching on paper, 103.5 x 80.4 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Carl Beam pulling proofs of *The Columbus Suite* from his Praga press, n.d., photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Also in the early 1980s, Beam began experimenting with the photo-transferring technique, which he used to reproduce images on a variety of surfaces, from watercolour paper and canvas to Plexiglas and cotton T-shirts. It was Ann who introduced him to this innovative process. Soon, Beam began to incorporate photographic materials into his mixed-media works, developing what he and Ann called “working images”—an archive of photographs taken from their family life and travels, as well as from museum displays, newspaper clippings, and textbooks. Beam also used a video camera to record the world around him, resulting in the performance piece *Burying the Ruler*, 1989, which provided additional still photographs that feature in several of his late-career photo-transfer works. From this point on, the working-images archive formed the foundation of Beam’s artistic practice, especially when involving collage.

In photo transfer, Beam found a potent method for producing visual poetry. It was readily adaptable and could be used to create radical juxtapositions of recognizable images—his own and those taken from contemporary print media. In this regard, Beam saw models to emulate in Pop art creator Robert Rauschenberg’s print collages. Beam was particularly inspired by Rauschenberg’s audaciously innovative lithograph *Booster*, 1967, which he saw on exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario. This print and its collaged image field turned Beam on to the poetic potential of creating radical juxtapositions in large-format print compositions. Works such as *Various Concerns of the Artist*, 1984, show the influence of Rauschenberg’s prints. For Beam, Rauschenberg was an innovator developing a new kind of poetic language that used text, images, and painterly devices, and in the process advancing the idea of what a poem could be: a visual statement as much as a textual one, whose meanings were as open-ended as they were allusive and metaphorical.

Beam’s printmaking process also used silkscreen negatives to reproduce imagery across different series. For instance, one screen for *Three Graveside Figures*, 1984, part of *The Zeitgeist Suite*, was used to print the same image in a positive polarity on the face of a sheet of Plexiglas forming part of *The North American Iceberg*. This same screen was later used to reproduce *Three Graveside Figures*, 1984, as a large-scale etching. The negative polarity images were printed directly onto steel plates using an asphaltum emulsion as if it were printing ink. These sequences of image flippings—starting with a negative image and ending with a positive one, thereby building imagery “backwards”—are a hallmark of Beam’s unique approach in most mediums. For example, by handwriting backwards on Plexiglas, Beam ensures the text becomes right-reading to the viewer.



Carl Beam, *Three Graveside Figures*, 1984, coloured etching, artist proof, 116.8 x 76.2 cm, Gallery Gevik, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

CERAMICS AND CULTURAL CONNECTION

My father's love of ceramics was a constant presence in my recollections, especially in my early childhood. We would go into every museum, cultural centre, roadside shop, pueblo, kitchen. I remember watching him trade bearskins for tins of elusive black glaze used in Mimbres and contemporary pueblo designs. In all these places, he was looking for a connection to his own culture as well, documenting collections in Midland, Ontario, and at the Gardiner Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Everywhere he was told that the Anishinaabe, or Ojibwe, people did not have a ceramic culture. They and the Odawa were the traders of the region, and they obtained ceramics from the Mohawks to the south.



LEFT: Carl and Anong Migwans Beam at Arroyo Seco, 1982, photograph by Ann Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Mimbres bowl, 850-1050, ceramic, 8.3 × 21 × 55.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

In the late 1980s, while my father was visiting family in M'Chigeeng, his young cousin came home from school with an interesting story. He and other local young people had assisted at an archaeological dig in Providence Bay on Manitoulin Island. He explained that they had found a bowl, and when my father asked what it looked like, the young man said, "It looked like the ones you make." My father continued the search for this bowl, or any other indication of ceramic culture, but it was seemingly lost to the shuffling collections of archaeology. He also continued his explorations of Indigenous ceramic tradition, despite the many who repeated the line that it was not part of the culture. He felt a connection to this work and shared it with other artists, among them David Migwans, who was the most avid and skilled of the contemporary ceramicists.

Many years later, in 2017, when I was working for the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, I happened upon the pot that my father had heard about so long ago. It had been returned from a storage facility belonging to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The castellated pot was a wonder to behold. Finely made and beautifully shaped, it was a prime example of the 126 vessel fragments that were discovered in the 1980 dig by archaeologist A.W. (Thor) Conway. The pots were indeed Ojibwe, as my father had presumed, and in the archaeological notes related to this vessel, there were descriptions of storage pits filled with processed clay formed into balls, ready to be shaped into pots and bowls. There was, in fact, a thriving Anishinaabe ceramic tradition—one that had been glossed over by academics and archaeologists for decades. Conway called the ceramics Algoma ware.



LEFT: Archaeologist A.W. (Thor) Conway (*left*) at a dig site in the Algoma region, c.1970s, photographer unknown, Sault Ste. Marie Public Library Archives. RIGHT: Kenzan-style tea bowl, nineteenth century, earthenware, raku type, 8.3 cm (height) x 12.4 cm (diameter), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Ceramics were a significant part of Beam's creative practice. From the time of his studies at the Kootenay School of the Arts and the University of Victoria, he was attracted to ceramics as a material for re-visioning history. His teacher, Frances Maria Hatfield (1924-2014), ignited in Beam a lifelong love of Asian ceramics. The shapes and forms of Kenzan-style Japanese ceramics, a type of raku-fired pottery characterized by delicate decorative glazes and brushed forms and named after the Kyoto-based potter and painter Ogata Kenzan (1663-1743), inspired his many experiments with the medium. But rather than appropriating Kenzan's imagery, Beam infused his works with his own lexicon of signs and symbols. In the ceramic plate *Re-Alignment*, 1984, he juxtaposes a serialized portrait of Chief Poundmaker with a bird and the stencilled words "RE-ALIGNMENT 1984 MULTIPLE MELTDOWN NOTATION." A piece of spontaneous prose written in Beam's cursive reads "general info for the machine."



CARL BEAM

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Carl Beam, *Re-Alignment*, 1984, glazed earthenware, 3 cm (height) x 38.5 cm (diameter), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

While living in the American Southwest, Beam expanded his repertoire by studying bowls by the Mimbres and Ancestral Pueblo peoples. The strong graphic designs of these works and the contrasting surfaces of the vessels—rough outside and smooth inside—appealed to him to such an extent that he emulated these characteristics in his own ceramics. He was taken by the fact that these wares seemed to deny a chronological sense of history. Of these works, Beam later noted:

When I discovered they were done 1,000 years ago, I was completely surprised. For me this was it! Finally, one form I could use to be absolutely creative in, as had the Anasazi who had created these beautiful artworks, for they were nothing less than artworks. The hemispherical quality of a large bowl still excites me... like no cup, tea pot, plate or other clay shape can do. It is a universe unto itself, where anything can happen—the designs are limitless.⁶



Anong Migwans Beam in her father's pottery (assumed), n.d., photographer unknown.

For Beam, ceramics were contemporary and yet rooted to long-standing cultural traditions—working with them could open the door to more fluid modes of expression. Once he and Ann embraced both the designs and hand-building techniques of Mimbres and Ancestral Puebloan ceramics, they were hooked. As Ann recalls, “Our pottery buzz continued until it reached an all-consuming frenzy.”⁷

In 1982, just two years after Beam and his wife Ann relocated to the American Southwest, his ceramics caught the eye of Jerry Brody, curator at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico. Brody was impressed with the sheer creativity of the Beams' wares, and he noted that they were “more like easel paintings than crafted objects, and for that reason raise many questions about our categories of fine arts, craft arts, and ethnic arts.”⁸ Indeed, with his ceramics, Beam broke down barriers like never before.



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Carl Beam holding an earthenware bowl, n.d., photographer unknown.



The works of Carl Beam are held in public and private collections in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view.

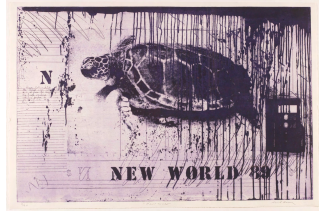


ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1-877-225-4246
www.ago.ca



Carl Beam, *Columbus and Bees* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
Etching on Arches
paper
109.2 x 83.8 cm



Carl Beam, *New World* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
Etching on Arches
paper
83.8 x 109.2 cm



Carl Beam, *The Proper Way to Ride a Horse* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
Etching on Arches
paper
109.2 x 83.8 cm



Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
Etching on Arches
paper
109.2 x 83.8 cm



Carl Beam, *Semiotic Converts* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
Etching on Arches
paper
109.2 x 83.8 cm



Carl Beam, *Sitting Bull and Whale* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
Etching on Arches
paper
109.2 x 83.8 cm



CANADA COUNCIL ART BANK

921 St. Laurent Boulevard
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
1-800-263-5588, ext. 4479
www.artbank.ca



Carl Beam, *Autumnal Idiocy Koan #814, 1986*
Colour Xerox and mixed media on mulberry paper
99.5 x 65 cm



Carl Beam, *Forced Ideas in School Days, 1991*
Photo emulsion and ink on paper
94 x 74 cm

CANADIAN CLAY & GLASS GALLERY

25 Caroline Street North
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
519-746-1882
www.theclayandglass.ca



Carl Beam, *Whale of Our Being, 2003*
Stoneware, underglaze, and glaze
25.5 x 42 cm



CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY

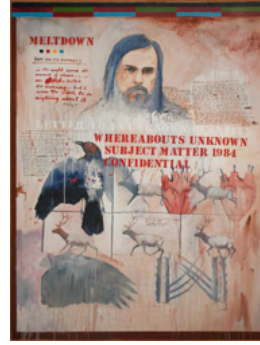
100 Laurier Street
Gatineau, Quebec, Canada
1-800-555-5621
historymuseum.ca



Carl Beam, *Opus Nova*, 1983
Natural mineral pigment
on unglazed
earthenware
13 x 35.5 cm



Carl Beam, *Raven*, 1983
Natural mineral pigment
on unglazed
earthenware
13.4 x 34.8 cm



Carl Beam, *Meltdown*, 1984
Acrylic pen and ink on
canvas
217 x 164.5 cm



Carl Beam, *Parts of a Bird #2*, 1985
Clay
18 x 38 cm



Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1991
Triptych, mixed media
on handmade paper
122.9 x 91.4 cm (each)

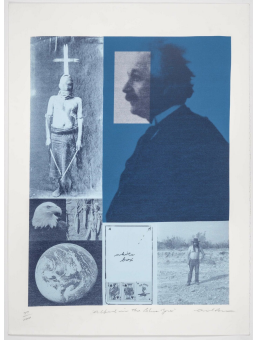


CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam

CARLETON UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

St. Patrick's Building, Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
613-520-2120
cuag.ca



Carl Beam, *Albert in the Blue Zone*, 2001

Colour silkscreen, edition 57/200
76.2 x 55.9 cm

INDIGENOUS ART CENTRE

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
10 rue Wellington
Gatineau, Quebec, Canada
819-994-1262
rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca



Carl Beam, *The Artist with Some of His Concerns*, 1983

Graphite and watercolour on
paper
115 x 165.8 cm



MACLAREN ART CENTRE

37 Mulcaster Street
Barrie, Ontario, Canada
705-721-9696
maclarenart.com



Carl Beam, *Artist and Eagle in a High-Tech Environment*, 1980
Diptych, mixed media on paper
76.5 x 58 cm (each)

MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

10365 Islington Avenue
Kleinburg, Ontario, Canada
1-888-213-1121
mcmichael.com



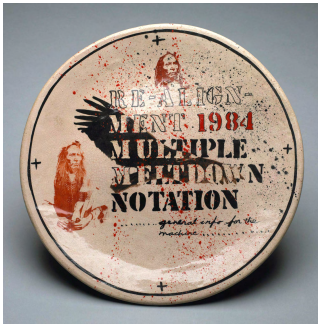
Carl Beam, *Wing Primordial* (from *The Zeitgeist Suite*), 1983
Photo etching on paper
103.5 x 80.4 cm



Carl Beam, *Medicine '84* (from *The Zeitgeist Suite*), 1984
Photo etching on paper, artist proof
121.5 x 80.4 cm

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
1-800-319-2787
gallery.ca



Carl Beam, *Re-Alignment*, 1984

Glazed earthenware
3 cm (height) x 38.5 cm
(diameter)



Carl Beam, *Time Warp*, 1984

Acrylic on linen
304 x 1219 cm



Carl Beam, *Geronimo*, 1985

Glazed earthenware
28.6 x 27.9 x 4 cm



Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985

Acrylic, photo-serigraph, and graphite on Plexiglas
213.6 x 374.1 cm



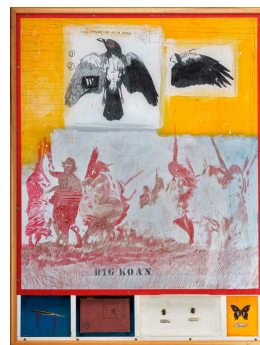
Carl Beam, *Sauvage*, 1988

Mixed media on Plexiglas, painted wood, and found object (rifle)
308 x 109.9 x 15 cm
(with integral frame)



Carl Beam, *Voyage 1*, 1988

Painted wood
530 x 308 x 310 cm



Carl Beam, *Big Koan*, 1989

Acrylic sheet, acrylic paint, wood, feather, book, and insects
125.4 x 95.1 x 9.5 cm



Carl Beam, *The Unexplained*, 1989

Photo emulsion and mixed media on canvas
213.4 x 152.4 cm



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Carl Beam, *Autobiographical Errata*, 1997
Photo emulsion, watercolour, and ink on paper
104.1 x 74.9 cm



Carl Beam, *Driver*, 2001
Mixed media on wove paper
102 x 151.5 cm



Carl Beam, *Only Poetry Remains*, 2002
Photo silkscreen, gouache, graphite, coloured pencil, and watercolour on wove paper
127.8 x 242.7 cm

OJIBWE CULTURAL FOUNDATION

15 Highway 551
M'Chigeeng, Ontario, Canada
705-377-4902
ojibweculture.ca



Carl Beam, *Contain that Force*, 1978
Acrylic, collage materials on canvas
120.5 x 163 cm



Carl Beam, *The Elders*, 1978
Mixed media
120 x 160 cm



ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

100 Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
416-586-8000
rom.on.ca

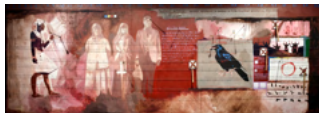


Carl Beam, *Ceramic bowl ("Anne Frank 1924-1945")*, 1987

Natural mineral pigment on
unglazed earthenware
19.1 x 38.1 cm

THUNDER BAY ART GALLERY

1080 Keewatin Street
Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada
807-577-6427
theag.ca



Carl Beam, *Exorcism*, 1984

Plywood, acrylic, arrows, barbed
wire, hatchets
213 x 610 cm



NOTES

PREFACE

1. Carl Beam, excerpt from "Talks with the artist originally broadcast on Trent Radio" (transcription), in Shelagh Young and Carl Beam, *Carl Beam: The Columbus Project, Phase 1* (Peterborough: Artspace, November 4-30, 1989, and the Art Gallery of Peterborough, November 23-December 30, 1989), 20.

BIOGRAPHY

1. The author in conversation with the artist.

2. Ka'nhehsí:io Deer, "10 out of 27 Jesuits 'Credibly Accused' of Abusing Minors Worked at a Residential School or a First Nation," CBC News, March 17, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/jesuit-sexual-abuse-list-residential-school-1.6781439>.

3. To learn more about the Canadian residential school system, see the website of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at <https://nctr.ca/>.

4. The author in conversation with the artist.

5. See the home page of Fritz Scholder's official website at <http://www.fritzscholder.com/index.php>.

6. Fritz Scholder, "Native Arts in America," in *Indian Voices: The First Convocation of American Indian Scholars* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1970), 197.

7. Scholder, "Native Arts in America," 197.

8. Carl Beam and Elizabeth McLuhan, *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1984), 5.

9. Dr. Bernhard Cinader's pieces are now part of the Royal Ontario Museum's collection of Indigenous art from Manitoulin Island.

10. Ann Beam, "The Life and Work of Carl Beam: A Narrative Chronology," in Greg Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 63.

11. Ann Beam quoted in Virginia Eichhorn, *It's All Relative: Carl Beam, Ann Beam, Anong Migwans Beam* (Waterloo: Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, 2005), 10-11.

12. Elizabeth McLuhan, "Renewal," in *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Man* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1982), 4.

13. At the symposium's conclusion, the Society for Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry was established with a mandate "to pressure publicly funded art



galleries to cease the deliberate exclusion of 'Indian Art,' [to] encourage tours of national collections to local Indian communities, and to 'explore the formation of a national native art gallery and art bank.'" Artist David General asked, "Would it carry more weight if it were written in stone?" Unpublished paper presented at the National Native Indian Artists Symposium, IV (Lethbridge, 1987).

14. Greg A. Hill, "Carl Beam: The Artist and Some of His Concerns," in Greg A. Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 19-20. Hill notes that Indigenous art first entered the collection of the National Gallery of Canada in 1927, when a Haida argillite model crest pole (c.1885) was purchased. Subsequently, the NGC acquired Inuit art beginning in 1956. It purchased a work by Mohawk artist Robert Markle (Maracle) (1936-1990) in 1963, and a painting by Abenaki artist Rita Letendre (1928-2021) in 1974, although these artists were not recognized as First Nations when their work was acquired.

15. Hill, "The Artist and Some of His Concerns," 23-24.

16. The other three photo-emulsion works were *Membrane*, 1992, *Columbus Chronicles*, 1992, and *Time Dissolve*, c.1992.

17. Hill, "The Artist and Some of His Concerns," 28.

18. Joan Murray, *Carl Beam: The Whale of Our Being* (Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2002), 3.

19. Carl Beam, quoted in an interview on "Morning North with Markus Schwabe," CBC Radio, March 9, 2005.

KEY WORKS: SELF-PORTRAIT IN MY CHRISTIAN DIOR BATHING SUIT

1. Richard William Hill, "10 Indigenous Artworks that Changed How We Imagine Ourselves," *Canadian Art*, April 28, 2016, <https://canadianart.ca/essays/ten-indigenous-artworks-changed-imagine/>.

2. Anong Migwans Beam, quoted in Chris Beaver and Shelby Liske, "Carl Beam," June 22, 2022, in *The Art of Sovereignty*, produced by TVO, podcast, 31:48, <https://www.tv.org/podcasts/the-art-of-sovereignty/carl-beam>.

3. Allan J. Ryan, "The Trickster Shift: A New Paradigm in Contemporary Canadian Native Art" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1995), 70.

4. Carl Beam, quoted in Ryan, "The Trickster Shift," 69.



KEY WORKS: RAVEN

1. Virginia Eichhorn, *It's All Relative: Carl Beam, Ann Beam, Anong Migwans Beam* (Waterloo: Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, 2005), n.p.
2. Beam, quoted in Virginia Eichhorn, "All Related: The Ceramic Work of Carl Beam," in Greg A. Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 42.
3. Beam, quoted in Eichhorn, "All Related," 42.
4. Beam, quoted in Eichhorn, "All Related," 42.

KEY WORKS: ANNE FRANK 1

1. Marianne Hirsch's work on postmemory—a term she coined to examine the relationships between the children of Holocaust survivors and their parents' memories—is significant in this regard. See Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
2. Mathilde Roza, "Carl Beam's Tribute to Anne Frank," *American Indian* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2018), <https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/carl-beams-tribute-anne-frank>.

KEY WORKS: THE NORTH AMERICAN ICEBERG

1. Greg A. Hill, "Carl Beam: The Artist and Some of His Concerns," in Greg A. Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 15.
2. Greg A. Hill in "At the MacKenzie: The North American Iceberg," October 17, 2012, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJdOeXdmdh0&ab_channel=MacKenzieArtGallery.

KEY WORKS: VOYAGE 1

1. Carl Beam, quoted in Jennifer David, "Carl Beam's Voyage: An Interview with Curator Greg Hill," *National Gallery of Canada Magazine*, May 16, 2017, <https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/exhibitions/ngc/carl-beams-voyage-an-interview-with-greg-hill>.

KEY WORKS: BURYING THE RULER

1. Carl Beam made this statement in numerous interviews, as he often noted.
2. The author in conversation with the artist.

KEY WORKS: THE COLUMBUS SUITE

1. See "Carl Beam: The Columbus Suite," Art Gallery of Ontario, <https://ago.ca/exhibitions/carl-beam-columbus-suite>.
2. See "Carl Beam: The Columbus Suite."



3. The artist in conversation with the author. These words are also inscribed in Greek on Carl Beam's large canvas work *The Unexplained*, 1989.

KEY WORKS: ADOBE HOUSE

1. Since reserve land cannot be used as a financial or investment instrument, band members cannot use their land or structures on it to finance mortgages or as a means of financial leverage. The Canada Mortgage and House Corporation (CMHC) offers the ability to borrow money to build a structure, but the reserve holds the certificate of possession until the building debts are paid off. In exchange for this guarantee, CMHC homes must be built to its codes, design specifications, and occupancy standards. Many houses are demolished before the debts are cleared due to infestations of black mould. As a result, reserves and band members are left with no equity despite the decades of payments.

KEY WORKS: BIG DISSOLVE

1. Carl Beam, quoted in Joan Murray, *Carl Beam: Whale of Our Being* (Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2002), 3.

2. Greg A. Hill, "Carl Beam: The Artist and Some of His Concerns," in Greg A. Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 28.

SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Greg A. Hill, "Carl Beam: The Artist and Some of His Concerns," in Greg A. Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 17.

2. Karen Duffek and Tom Hill, *Beyond History* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989), 12.

3. Carl Beam and Elizabeth McLuhan, *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1984), 5.

4. The Indian Act of 1876 was established to grant the fledgling Canadian state increasing control over the lives and well-being of Indigenous peoples. Policies such as the potlatch ban of 1884 and the establishment of the residential school system largely enforced cultural assimilation. See <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act>.

5. Adapted from a quote by Anong Migwans Beam, in Chris Beaver and Shelby Liske, "Carl Beam," June 22, 2022, in *The Art of Sovereignty*, produced by TVO, podcast, 31:48, <https://www.tvo.org/podcasts/the-art-of-sovereignty/carl-beam>.

6. Letter in the artist's archives.

7. Deirdre Hanna, "Carl Beam Finds Eco-alternative in Building Blocks," *Now 9*, no. 26 (March 8-14, 1990): 16.

8. Hanna, "Carl Beam Finds Eco-alternative," 16.



9. Hill, "The Artist and Some of His Concerns," 22.

10. Hill, "The Artist and Some of His Concerns," 23-24.

11. The author in conversation with the artist.

12. Hill, "The Artist and Some of His Concerns," 28.

13. Carl Beam, quoted in McLuhan, *Altered Egos*, 5.

14. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established in 2009 as part of the historic Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history. Until 2015, the TRC conducted research on the impact of residential schools, hearing stories from more than 6,500 former students and their families about the abuses endured. The TRC culminated with an event in Ottawa, where commissioners presented a summary of their findings, along with ninety-four calls to action to further facilitate reconciliation between Canadians and members of Indigenous nations. For more information about the TRC, its history, and its calls to action, see <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>.

15. Adapted from a quote by Anong Migwans Beam, in Beaver and Liske, "Carl Beam," in *The Art of Sovereignty*, <https://www.tvos.org/podcasts/the-art-of-sovereignty/carl-beam>.

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. See Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

2. Carl Beam, quoted in Allan J. Ryan, *The Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 151.

3. Carl Beam, quoted in Allan J. Ryan, *The Trickster Shift*, 151.

4. Carl Beam, excerpt from "Talks with the artist originally broadcast on Trent Radio" (transcription), in Shelagh Young and Carl Beam, *Carl Beam: The Columbus Project, Phase 1* (Peterborough: Artspace, November 4-30, 1989, and the Art Gallery of Peterborough, November 23-December 30, 1989), 20.

5. Purchased by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in 1985, *The Zeitgeist Suite* comprises these prints: *Three Graveside Figures*, 1984; *Neo-Glyph I*, 1983; *Prairie Wedding*, 1983; *Geronimo: States of Being 2*, 1984; *Wing Primordial*, 1983; *Medicine '84*, 1984; *The Seventh Direction*, 1984; and *Neo-Glyph II*, 1983.

6. Carl Beam, "Artist Statement," in Ann Beam, *It's All Relative* (Waterloo, ON: Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, 2005), 9.



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam

7. Ann Beam, "The Life and Work of Carl Beam: A Narrative Chronology," in Greg A. Hill et al., *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), 63.

8. Robert Reid, "Ontario: Carl Beam in Brantford," *Artpost* (August/September 1985): 29-30.



GLOSSARY

Abstract Expressionism

A style that flourished in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, Abstract Expressionism is defined by its combination of formal abstraction and self-conscious expression. The term describes a wide variety of work; among the most famous Abstract Expressionists are Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning.

Anishinaabe/Anishnabe/Anishinābe

A collective term that means “the people” or “original people” and refers to a number of interconnected communities such as the Ojibway/Ojibwa/Ojibwé, Odawa, Chippewa, Saulteaux, Mississauga, Potawatomi, and others. In Canada, the Anishinaabe/Anishnabe region includes areas of Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.

Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)

Founded in 1900 as the Art Museum of Toronto—and later named the Art Gallery of Toronto—the Art Gallery of Ontario is a major collecting institution in Toronto, Ontario, holding close to 95,000 works by Canadian and international artists.

assemblage

An assemblage, collage, or bricolage is a three-dimensional artwork created from found objects. The term “assemblage” was first used in the 1950s by the French artist Jean Dubuffet to describe his butterfly-wing collages; it was popularized in the United States in reference to the work of the American artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jim Dine.

Beuys, Joseph (German, 1921–1986)

A versatile visual artist, performer, teacher, and political activist whose “expanded concept of art,” as he put it, held that every individual could act creatively and that creativity could infuse every aspect of life. Animals are an important theme in Beuys’s frequently Symbolist and expressionistic works. He also made use of felt and fat in his artworks, as these materials held deep significance for him.

Boyer, Bob (Métis, 1948–2004)

A nonrepresentational painter known for his use of symmetric patterns of arrows, triangles, and rectangles found in Plains First Nations beadwork and hide painting. Boyer was influenced by colour-field painting and the Abstract Expressionism of the Regina Five in the 1960s. In the 1980s he began painting on blankets to signal the fraught Indigenous histories in Canada. From 1981 to 1998 and in 2004, Boyer served as Head of Visual Arts at the First Nations University of Canada (formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College).

Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery

Opened in 1993 in Waterloo, Ontario, to showcase contemporary Canadian ceramic, glass, and enamel work, it is the only gallery of its kind in the country. It offers a variety of educational programming and boasts an extensive library and archive.



Cartesian Rationalism

Originating from the writings of French philosopher René Descartes, Cartesian Rationalism upholds that knowledge can derive from reason and ideas rather than only from empirical evidence and sensory experience.

Cisneros, Domingo (Métis Tepehuane, b.1942)

A mixed-media artist interested in the continual cycle of life and death, humanity's relationship to nature, and the sense of a primordial place where the self can be reborn. Cisneros's works often feature bones, animal pelts, and driftwood. Before immigrating to Canada from Mexico in 1969, Cisneros founded an art movement called La Rabia ("Rage"). In the 1970s he taught at Manitou College in La Macaza, Quebec.

Coffin, Douglas (Potawatomi, Creek, b.1946)

A painter and mixed-media sculptor known for his use of monumental structures, brightly painted steel, and totem pole forms combined with modernist abstraction. Spirituality is essential to Coffin's artistic practice. He has taught at many institutions, including the Institute of American Indian Arts, New Mexico.

Conceptual art

Traced to the work of Marcel Duchamp but not codified until the 1960s, "Conceptual art" is a general term for art that emphasizes ideas over form. The finished product may even be physically transient, as with land art or performance art.

Curnoe, Greg (Canadian, 1936–1992)

A central figure in London regionalism from the 1960s to the early 1990s, Curnoe was a painter, printmaker, and graphic artist who found inspiration in his life and his Southwestern Ontario surroundings. His wide-ranging art interests included Surrealism, Dada, Cubism, and the work of many individual artists, both historical and contemporary. (See *Greg Curnoe: Life & Work* by Judith Rodger.)

Dada

A multidisciplinary movement that arose in Europe in response to the horrors of the First World War, whose adherents aimed to deconstruct and demolish traditional societal values and institutions. Artworks, often collages and ready-mades, typically scorned fine materials and craftsmanship. Chief Dadaists include Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, and Hans Arp.

Debassige, Blake (Ojibway, 1956–2022)

A painter associated with the second generation of Woodland School artists, Debassige used a graphic style to explore the intersection of Anishinaabe cosmology and teachings with contemporary social and environmental concerns.



Emerson, Larry (Tsénaahabłnii, Tó'aheidlííni, Diné First Nation, 1947–2017)

Larry Emerson was an artist, scholar, Indigenous activist, and educator. His academic pursuits focused on methodologies of decolonization and Diné traditions and philosophies. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Emerson participated in several significant North American exhibitions on contemporary Indigenous art, alongside artists such as Carl Beam, Robert Houle, and Gerald McMaster.

etching

A printmaking technique that follows the same principles as engraving but uses acid instead of a burin to cut through the plate. A copper plate is coated with a waxy acid resist; the artist draws an image into the wax with a needle. The plate is then immersed in an acid bath, incising the lines and leaving the rest of the plate untouched.

Fife, Phyllis (Muscogee [Creek] Nation, b.1948)

A painter, clothing designer, and arts educator, Fife works in an expressionistic mode with subtle colours and brush strokes as metaphors for inner thought. She is the founder of the Fife Collection, a Native American clothing line with international recognition.

Fonseca, Harry (Nisenan Maidu, Hawaiian, American, 1946–2006)

A mixed-media painter influenced by basketry designs, Maidu creation myths, and the trickster figure of the coyote. In 1979, Fonseca began his Coyote series, which depicted the traditional figure as a contemporary persona variously donning a leather jacket, clad in high-top sneakers, or situated in San Francisco's Mission District or a Parisian café. Fonseca is known for connecting a past Native American identity to the present. In the 1990s his works became more abstract and political, referencing the physical and spiritual genocide of the Indigenous peoples of California.

Gardiner Museum

The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art was opened by philanthropists George and Helen Gardiner in 1984 to house their extensive collection of pottery and ceramic art. The museum's permanent collection holds over five thousand pieces from all over the world but emphasizes work by Canadian artists.

Gray, Viviane (Mi'gmaq, b.1947)

A Mi'gmaq curator, lecturer, arts administrator, and writer who formerly served as the director of the Indigenous Arts Centre at Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. She was the first university graduate from the Listuguj First Nation, receiving her bachelor of arts in anthropology from Carleton University in 1973.

Hatfield, Frances Maria (1924–2014)

A British Columbia artist who worked mainly in painting and pottery. Born in Kelowna, Hatfield studied at the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr University of Art + Design) and the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University). She taught pottery classes out of her home studio near Naramata, B.C., serving as a mentor to many within the Okanagan arts community.



Hill, Greg A. (Kayen'kahaka [Mohawk]/French, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, b.1967)

An artist and a curator specializing in Indigenous art. A Mohawk member of the Six Nations of the Grand River, Hill led the Department of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa from 2007 to 2022. (He was previously the gallery's assistant curator of contemporary art.) His installation pieces are held in major national collections around the country.

Houle, Robert (Saulteaux, Kaa-wii-kwe-tawang-kak, b.1947)

Painter, curator, teacher, and writer, known for increasing the visibility of contemporary First Nations art in Canada. Houle's experience at Sandy Bay Residential School informs his colour-field paintings, which gave him a conceptual language to express the opposing ideologies of Saulteaux-Ojibwa spirituality and Christianity. Houle served as the first Curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of History (1977–1980) and co-curated several landmark exhibitions of First Nations artists. He received the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2015. (See *Robert Houle: Life & Work* by Shirley Madill.)

Johns, Jasper (American, b.1930)

One of the most significant figures in twentieth-century American art, Johns—a painter, printmaker, and sculptor—is credited, with Robert Rauschenberg, with renewing interest in figurative painting following Abstract Expressionism's dominance of the New York scene. Among his best-known works are those incorporating the motif of the American flag.

Kakegamic, Joshim (Cree, 1952–1993)

Associated with the Woodland School, Kakegamic received early training from Norval Morrisseau and Carl Ray. He is known for championing Indigenous print production by co-founding the Triple K Cooperative. Kakegamic's work is held at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario, and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Kane, Paul (Irish/Canadian, 1810–1871)

Influenced by the American artist George Catlin, this nineteenth-century painter and explorer spent extensive time documenting Indigenous Peoples in North America and depicting, in a traditional European style, scenes of their culture and landscapes. The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto houses one hundred paintings and several hundred sketches by Kane. (See *Paul Kane: Life & Work* by Arlene Gehmacher.)

Kenzan, Ogata (Japanese, 1663–1743)

A Japanese potter and painter known for his decoratively painted ceramics. He was born in Kyoto and trained with the master potter Nonomura Ninsei (active c.1646–77). He often drew inspiration from his older brother, the celebrated painter Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716).

koan

A paradoxical statement, story, or question used in Zen Buddhism to facilitate meditation and provoke enlightenment. Koans encourage practitioners to question their egotism and reflect on the inherent illogicality of the world.



Kootenay School of the Arts

Founded in 1958 in Nelson, British Columbia, as a summer art program under the name Nelson School of Fine Arts, it had by 1968 been renamed the Kootenay School of the Arts and was granting three-year diplomas. Due to uncertain funding, the school was shut down and revived several times over the decades, before finally merging with Selkirk College in 2004.

Kriehoff, Cornelius (Dutch/Canadian, 1815–1872)

A painter who emigrated to the United States from Europe in 1837 and then moved to Canada. Kriehoff was drawn to First Nations peoples and environments as subjects; he also painted landscapes and scenes of everyday Canadian life.

Letendre, Rita (Canadian, 1928–2021)

Abstract artist of Abenaki and Québécoise descent, associated with the Quebec artist groups Les Automatistes and Les Plasticiens, renowned for her geometric art exploring light, colour, and movement. Working with diverse materials and in evolving avant-garde styles, Letendre's paintings, murals, and prints brought her national and international acclaim. She received the Order of Canada in 2005 and the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2010.

lithograph

A type of print invented in 1798 in Germany by Aloys Senefelder. Like other planographic methods of image reproduction, lithography relies on the fact that grease and water do not mix. Placed in a press, the moistened and inked lithographic stone will print only those areas previously designed with greasy lithographic ink.

Longfish, George C. (Seneca, Tuscarora, b.1942)

A painter and sculptor influenced by Native American activism and modernist abstraction. Longfish's use of bold colours and text examines the idea of the "soul theft" of Native Americans and explores the path to re-owning one's spirituality, addressing the loss of information that Indigenous peoples need to spiritually, culturally, and physically thrive. Longfish was a professor of Native American Studies at the University of California, Davis, for over thirty years and Director at the C.N. Gorman Museum from 1974 to 1996.

Lum, Ken (Canadian, b.1956)

A Vancouver-born, Philadelphia-based artist internationally recognized for his conceptual and often wry work in photography, sculpture, and installation. Known for his diptychs that pair photographic portraits with pithy quotes, Lum has created numerous series that probe contemporary concerns relating to gender, race, and class. Associated since the 1980s with the Vancouver School of photo-conceptualism, he is currently Chair of Fine Arts at the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania.



Markle, Robert (Mohawk/Canadian, 1936–1990)

A painter and graphic artist who worked primarily in tempera and ink, Markle was known for his bold, sexual female nudes. His piece *Lovers I*, showing two women embracing, led to an obscenity charge against the gallerist Dorothy Cameron when she displayed it as part of the exhibition *Eros '65* in 1965. Later in life, Markle began to incorporate elements of his Indigenous identity into his work.

Mimbres

An ancient Indigenous people who lived in the area now known as southwestern New Mexico and Arizona. They are one branch of the larger Mogollon culture of the region and are best known for their distinctive pottery, which is often characterized by black-and-white colour schemes and elaborate geometric patterns and designs.

Morrisseau, Norval (Anishinaabe, 1931–2007)

A painter known for depicting Anishinaabe legends and personal, hybrid spiritual themes with vibrant colours and strong lines, Morrisseau was a crucial figure in introducing contemporary Indigenous art into the wider Canadian art scene. He founded the Woodland School and inspired a generation of younger First Nations artists. In 1978, Morrisseau was appointed to the Order of Canada, and in 2006 the National Gallery mounted a major retrospective of his work. (See *Norval Morrisseau: Life & Work* by Carmen Robertson.)

Muybridge, Eadweard (British, 1830–1904)

A landscape and experimental photographer best known for his groundbreaking motion studies. From 1872—when he famously photographed the gait of Leland Stanford's horse—to the 1890s, Muybridge made thousands of photographs capturing the movements of animals and humans; some 20,000 were included in the portfolio *Animal Locomotion* (1887).

National Gallery of Canada

Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the Marquis of Lorne (Canada's Governor General from 1878 to 1883), the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988, the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

Noganosh, Ron (Anishinābe, 1949–2017)

An Anishinābe sculptor and assemblage artist from Magnetewan First Nation in Ontario who co-founded the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (now the Indigenous Curatorial Collective) in 2006. Noganosh trained as a welder and graphic artist before studying fine arts at the University of Ottawa. His pioneering assemblage works transformed readymade commercial materials such as beer cans and caps into sculptural objects rich with humour, symbolism, and cultural commentary.



Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery

Now known as the MacKenzie Art Gallery, it was founded as a university art gallery in 1953 to house the collection donated to Regina College (now the University of Regina) by lawyer Norman MacKenzie (1869-1936). Today, the gallery holds over five thousand works in its collection, and its programming focuses mostly on contemporary Canadian and Indigenous art.

Odjig, Daphne (Odawa/Potawatomi/English, Wikwemikong First Nation, 1919–2016)

A founding member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. and a prominent Indigenous painter in Canada. Odjig's work blends traditional First Nations styles with Cubist and Surrealist aesthetics. Soft contours, bold colours, and black outlines are characteristic of her work, which thematically focuses on issues of Indigenous politics in art.

painterly

A characteristic or quality of a painting where the brushwork is intentionally visible. Colour, brushwork, and texture render form in painterly works. Artists whose oeuvre would be considered painterly include Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, and Tom Thomson.

Paul, Leonard (Mi'kmaq, b.1953)

A watercolourist and painter working in a high-realist style with interest in natural forms, like rivers and wildlife, as well as Mi'kmaq legends. Paul places importance in art's role in therapy. He studied therapy counselling at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and suicide prevention training in Calgary. Paul has illustrated several books and was commissioned by the Nova Scotia government to create the province's welcome sign.

performance art

A genre of art presented live and in which the medium is the artist's body in time. The performance may involve multiple participants, as well as the audience. Performance art originated in the early twentieth century with movements like Dadaism and Futurism and found wider prominence in the 1960s and 1970s after the decline of modernism. Common themes of this genre concern the dematerialized art object, ephemerality, the artist's presence, anti-capitalism, and the integration of art with life.

photo emulsion

A light-sensitive material used in the production of film photography. Made of silver halide crystals suspended in gelatin, it is coated onto a base (usually glass, film, or paper), preparing it for photographic development.

photo transfer

A technique used in printmaking to embed images onto other surfaces. It was popularized by American artist Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) in the 1950s and entails soaking printed images in a solvent and then rubbing them onto new surfaces.



pictographs

An ancient art form, pictographs constitute a category of rock art in which images were created by applying, with a finger or brushes, paints or dyes (commonly red ochre, black, white, and yellow) to rock surfaces.

Poitras, Edward (Métis, b.1953)

A mixed-media sculptor and installation artist known for his combination of dissimilar materials, such as eroded animal bones, beadwork, transistor boards, audiotapes, and electrical wires, to explore the interrelationships between Indigenous and European or settler cultures. From 1975 to 1976 Poitras studied with Domingo Cisneros in La Macaza, Quebec. In 1995, he became the first Indigenous artist to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale.

Pop art

A movement of the late 1950s to early 1970s in Britain and the United States, Pop art adopted imagery from commercial design, television, and cinema. Pop art's most recognized proponents are Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein.

potlatch

From the Chinook word *patshatl*, the potlatch is a ceremony integral to the governing structure, culture, and spiritual traditions of various First Nations living on the Northwest Coast and in parts of the interior western Subarctic. It redistributes wealth; confers status and rank upon individuals, kin groups, and clans; and establishes claims to names, powers, and rights to hunting and fishing territories. Potlatches called on the skills of cultural practitioners such as singers, dancers, sculptors, weavers, and storytellers, thereby retaining and supporting the lived integrity and cultural richness of these communities and the relations among them.

Quick-to-See Smith, Jaune (Salish, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation, b.1940)

A painter and cultural worker who combines Salish mythology with collage, appropriated imagery, and formal elements of Western canon artists to consider environmental destruction and the systemic oppression of Indigenous peoples. In the 1970s Smith founded the Grey Canyon Artists based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to advocate for Indigenous women artists.

raku ware

A type of pottery, originating in Japan, that consists of glazed earthenware shaped by hand instead of on a potter's wheel. The resulting pieces are lightweight, asymmetrical, and unique. Traditionally, raku ware was used for Japanese tea ceremonies, but in the twentieth century, raku techniques became popular among Western artists and potters.



Rauschenberg, Robert (American, 1925–2008)

A significant figure in twentieth-century American art whose paintings, sculptures, prints, photographs, collages, and installations span styles and movements from Abstract Expressionism to Pop art. Together with Jasper Johns he led a revival of interest in Dada. Among Rauschenberg's best-known works is *Bed*, 1955, one of his first "Combines," or paintings that incorporate found objects.

Ray, Carl (Cree, 1943–1978)

A member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. and the Woodland School. Mentored by Norval Morrisseau, Ray was an influential painter of wildlife, northern landscapes, and Medicine art. Held by the Winnipeg Art Gallery in Manitoba; the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario; and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, his work is known for its three-dimensional quality, flowing lines, and original composition.

representational

A term used to describe art that is derived from references to real objects and images that are recognizable as depictions of what exists in the real world.

A representational work may not be entirely realistic.

residential school system

Established by the Canadian government in the 1880s and often administered by churches, residential schools continued into the 1990s. The system removed and isolated Indigenous children from their homes, families, traditions, and cultures so that they could be assimilated into the dominant colonial culture. Children were indoctrinated into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living and forbidden from practising their cultures or speaking their languages; curricula focused less on academic advancement than on training for manual labour in agricultural, industrial, and domestic settings. Many children were subjected to horrendous physical, sexual, emotional, and/or psychological abuse.

Robert McLaughlin Gallery

A public art gallery established in Oshawa, Ontario, in 1967 with funds and artworks donated by Ewart McLaughlin and his wife, founding Painters Eleven member Alexandra Luke (1901–1967). It focuses mainly on contemporary Canadian art and holds the largest collection of Painters Eleven works in Canada.

Royal Ontario Museum

Created in 1912, the Royal Ontario Museum is a Toronto institution that opened to the public in 1914. Originally it housed collections in archaeology, zoology, paleontology, mineralogy, and geology; the museum's current holdings include important collections of artifacts from China and from Canada's Indigenous peoples, as well as an important textile collection. The building has undergone three major expansions since its founding: in 1933, 1982, and 2007.



Ruben, Abraham Anghik (Inuvialuit, Salt Spring Island, b.1951)

A sculptor who incorporates stories, tales, and experiences from Inuit and western Arctic cultures into stone and bronze works, Ruben often explores the encounters between the Nordic Vikings and the Inuit during a historic period when the two cultures found similarity in the practice of shamanism. In 2016, Ruben received the Order of Canada.

Scholder, Fritz (American, Luiseño, 1937–2005)

A prolific American multimedia artist best known for his surreal, semi-abstract paintings questioning stereotypes of Indigenous peoples. An enrolled member of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians of southern California, he taught at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he influenced many young Indigenous artists.

semiotics

The study and interpretation of signs and symbols, and the process by which they produce and convey meaning within society. The modern field of semiotics emerged through the theoretical work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and American polymath Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914).

serigraphy / screen printing (screen print)

Now typically described as screen printing, serigraphy was advanced in 1940 by a group of American artists working in the silkscreen process who wished to distinguish their work from commercial prints made by the same method. To produce a screen print, a printmaker uses a squeegee to push ink through a screen made of very fine wire or fabric mesh, where a stencilled design has been blocked out using a substance or emulsion that prevents liquids from seeping through. The ink is therefore transferred to the substrate—such as canvas or paper—by passing through only the areas that remain permeable. Screen printing can be traced back to China, where it developed sometime during the ninth or tenth century; the technique became more popular throughout Europe and areas of the Western world towards the end of the eighteenth century.

Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCANA)

Formed in 1983 with the mandate of advocating for Indigenous artists and their representation in Canadian museums, art galleries, and other cultural institutions, SCANA was fundamental in securing funding for Indigenous artists and promoting Indigenous-focused exhibitions and acquisition policies across Canada.

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

Founded in 1987, The Power Plant is located in Toronto, Ontario. Initially established as the Art Gallery at Harbourfront in 1976, the gallery changed its name when it moved into its current premises, the power plant that provided heating and refrigeration for Toronto Terminal Warehouse from 1926 until 1980. A non-collecting public gallery, The Power Plant shows contemporary work by artists from Canada and around the world.



Thomas, Roy (Ojibway, 1949–2004)

Associated with the Woodland School, Thomas painted representations of the teachings he inherited from his ancestors and that he saw in visions. His work is known for its strong design and bold use of colour and lines. The Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinberg, Ontario, house his work.

Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Established in 1976 as the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, as it is known today, is one of Canada's largest public galleries dedicated to contemporary Indigenous art. Its permanent collection is made up of over sixteen hundred works and includes celebrated artists such as Norval Morrisseau, Carl Beam, and Shelley Niro.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

A commission formed in 2008 with the mandate of documenting and shedding light on the abuses of Canada's Indian residential school system. It was disbanded in 2015, after releasing a six-volume report of its years-long investigation, as well as ninety-four calls to action to address this harmful legacy.

Turtle Island

Used to refer to the lands that we now know as the Americas, the term comes from Indigenous creation stories, such as those held by the Ojibwe, which tell of the earth as being formed on the shell of a large turtle.

Warhol, Andy (American, 1928–1987)

One of the most important artists of the twentieth century and a central figure in Pop art. With his serial screen prints of commercial items like Campbell's Soup cans and portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Elvis, Warhol defied the notion of the artwork as a singular, handcrafted object.

White, Randy Lee (American, b.1951)

An artist who drew imagery from Plains Indigenous art and claimed to be a member of the Sioux Nation. In the 1990s White came under criticism when it was revealed that he was not of Indigenous descent.

Williams, Dana Alan (Potawatomi, b.1953)

A multimedia artist and curator of Potawatomi descent working mainly in sculpture, painting, and mixed media. He studied at George Brown College, the Emily Carr College of Art (now the Emily Carr University of Art + Design), and McGill University and has curated several important exhibitions of contemporary Indigenous art.

Woodland School (of art)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Norval Morrisseau pioneered this school of artistic practice. Key characteristics of Woodland School art include the fusion of traditional Ojibway imagery and symbols with sensibilities of modernism and Pop art, as well as the fusion of X-ray-style motifs with bold colours and interconnected, curvilinear lines. Alex Janvier, Daphne Odjig, and Carl Ray are other prominent artists associated with the Woodland School.



Yuxweluptun, Lawrence Paul (Coast Salish/Okanagan, b.1957)

Vancouver-based artist and activist Yuxweluptun merges Northwest Coast motifs with Surrealist visual language to address issues of Indigenous and global concern. Colonial encounters, scenes of environmental destruction, and struggles over sovereignty unfold across his vibrant and imaginative canvases. A graduate of the Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Yuxweluptun's work has been exhibited internationally.

Zen Buddhism

A branch of Mahayana Buddhism, Zen Buddhism emerged in China as Chan Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty, migrating to Korea, Vietnam, and Japan in slightly different forms. It emphasizes meditation or dhyana, and seated meditation, or zazen, is a core practice. Under the shogun, Zen Buddhism in Japan attained political power and influence, though by the end of the Edo period, it had declined. After the Second World War, it gained popularity in the West.



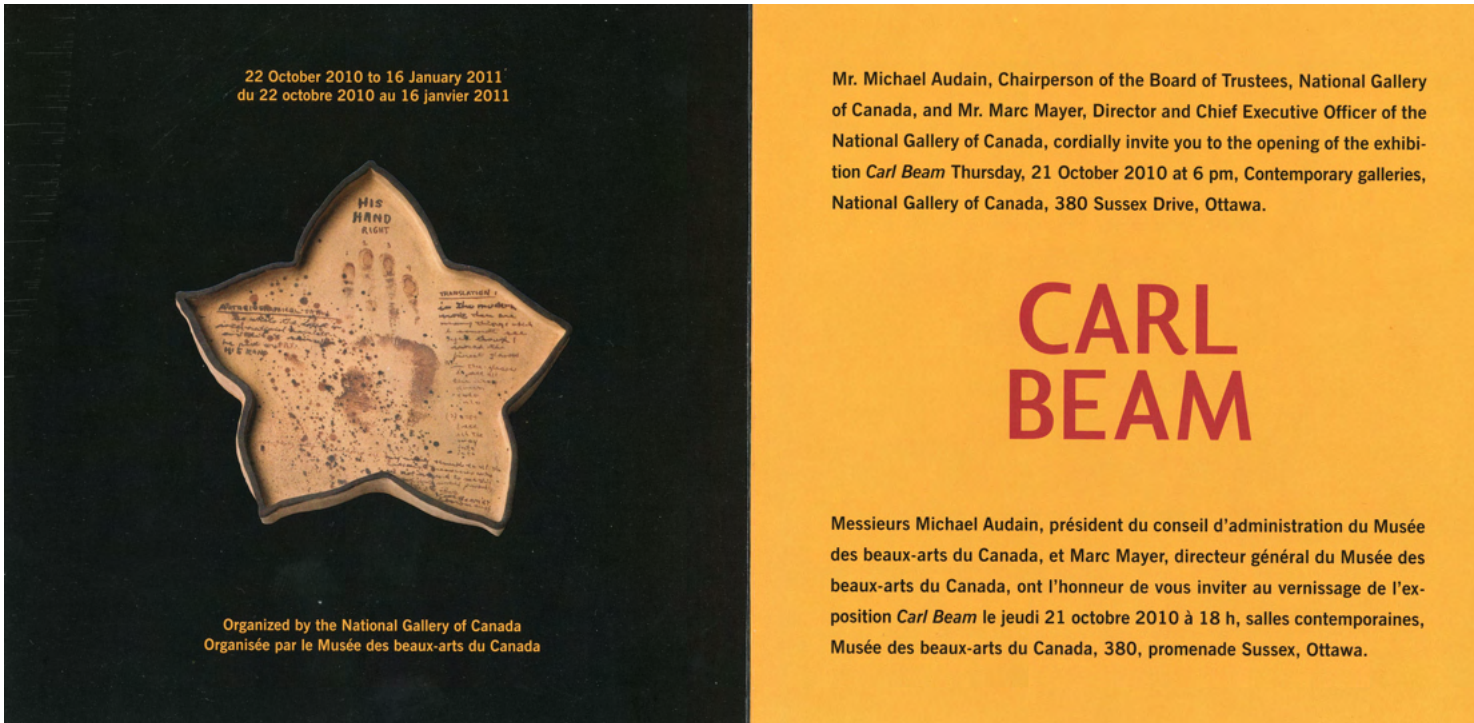
SOURCES & RESOURCES

A complete list of Carl Beam's exhibition history and a bibliography can be found in the National Gallery of Canada's publication *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being* (see details below). The following selected list has been drawn from this source.



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Invitation to the opening of the exhibition *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, 2010. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

EXHIBITION HISTORY (SELECTED)

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

-
- 1977** *Carl Beam*, Eagle Down Gallery, Edmonton
-
- 1979** *Carl Beam*, Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
-
- 1982** *Two Sides to All Stories: Carl Beam, Important Art for the 1980s*, Scharf Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico
-
- 1984** *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam*, Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art. Travelled to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg; Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, Brantford; Laurentian University Museum and Arts Centre, Sudbury; and Art Gallery of York University, Toronto
-
- 1985** *Carl Beam*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto
- The North American Iceberg and Related Works*, Brignall Gallery, Toronto
-
- 1989** *Carl Beam: The Columbus Project, Phase I*, a joint show at the Art Gallery of Peterborough and Artspace, Peterborough
- A Piece of My Life: Prints by Carl Beam*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston
-
- 1990** *The Columbus Project, Phase II*, Artspace, Peterborough



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-
- 1992** *Carl Beam: The Columbus Boat*, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto. Travelled to the Two Rivers Gallery, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Weil Gallery, Corpus Christi State University, Texas; Arnold Gottlieb Gallery, Toronto; and Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, Brandon, in 1993
-
- 1993** *The Columbus Suite*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
- Adobe Project: Living in Mother Earth*, London Regional Art Gallery and Historical Museums
- Carl Beam: The Columbus Boat*, travelled to four venues in Italy: Leonardi V-Idea, Genoa; Neon Arte Contemporanea, Bologna; Circolo Arcinboldo, La Spezia; and ViaFarini, Milan
-
- 1999** *Reconstructing Reason: The Koan of Carl Beam*, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa
-
- 2000** *Parallel Histories, The Reinventions of Carl Beam*, Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound
-
- 2001** *Carl Beam: Interpreting the World*, Robert Langen Art Gallery, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo
-
- 2002** *Carl Beam: The Whale of Our Being*, Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa. Travelled to the Thames Art Gallery, Chatham-Kent, in 2003
-
- 2005** *The Columbus Suite*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
-
- 2006** *Flying Still: Carl Beam, 1943-2005*, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa. Travelled to the Kópavogur Museum, Iceland

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

-
- 1980** *Indian Art '80*, Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, Brantford
- Anishnabe Mee-kun*, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island
-
- 1981** *Carl Beam, Lynn Tillery, Amiel Scharf*, Lutz-Bergerson Gallery, Taos, New Mexico
-
- 1982** *The Painted Pottery of Ann and Carl Beam*, Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
- New Work by a New Generation*, Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina
-
- 1983** *Contemporary Indian and Inuit Art of Canada*, United Nations, New York, and Indian and Northern Affairs, Gatineau. Travelled until 1985



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- 1984** *Indian Art '84*, Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, Brantford
-
- 1985** *Indian Art '85*, Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, Brantford
-
- 1986** *Indian Art '86*, Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, Brantford
- Cross-Cultural Views*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
-
- 1988** *Indian Art '88*, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford
- In the Shadow of the Sun*. Opened at the Museum am Ostwall and Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Dortmund, Federal Republic of Germany, in 1988-89. Travelled to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, in 1989-90; and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax; the Museon, The Hague, Netherlands; and the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, Netherlands, in 1990
-
- 1989** *Indian Art '89*, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford
- Political Landscapes #1: Canadian Artists Exploring Perceptions of the Land*, Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound
-
- 1991** *Strengthening the Spirit: Works by Native Artists*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1991-92
- First Nations Art '91*, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford
- Political Landscape #2: Sacred and Secular Sites*, Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound. Travelled to the Ojibway Cultural Foundation and Kasheese Studios & Art Gallery, West Bay, Manitoulin Island
-
- 1992** *Land, Spirit, Power*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Travelled to the MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, in 1993; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas; and Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, in 1994
- Indigena: Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples on Five Hundred Years*, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau. Travelled to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Dalhousie University Art Gallery, Halifax, in 1993 (under the title *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*); the Art Gallery of Windsor; Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona; and Glenbow Museum, Calgary, in 1994; and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, in 1995
-
- 1993** *Seeing a New World: The Works of Carl Beam and Frederic Remington*, Art Gallery of Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania
-
- 1996** *Oh! Canada*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

-
- 1997** *Cultural Imprints: Contemporary Works by Seven First Nations Artists*, Burnaby Art Gallery
-
- 2000** *Cultural CRITICS*, W. Keith and Janet Kellogg University Art Gallery, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California
- Novak Graphics Print Show*, Shenzhen and Shanghai, China
-
- 2002** *Shamans and Ravens: Carl and Ann Beam*, DeLeon White Gallery, Toronto
-
- 2003** *All Things Are Connected*, Gardiner Museum, Toronto
-
- 2004** *It's All Relative: Carl, Ann and Anong Beam*, Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, Waterloo. Travelled to the Art Gallery of Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie; Thunder Bay Art Gallery; and Art Gallery of Peterborough in 2006

FURTHER READINGS

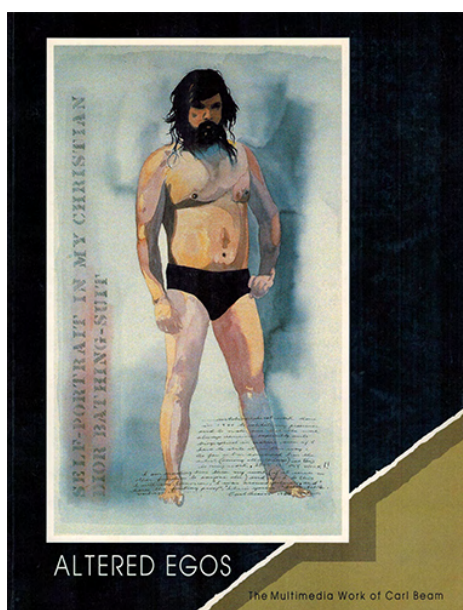
Carl Beam's art is held in many public gallery and museum collections across Canada, including the National Gallery of Canada, which holds his archive, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery.

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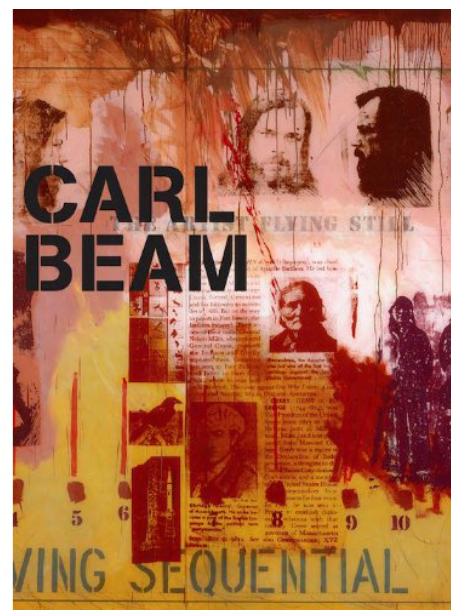
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LEFT: Cover of *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam*, by Elizabeth McLuhan (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1984). © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024. RIGHT: Cover of *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being*, by Greg A. Hill, Gerald McMaster, Virginia Eichhorn, Alan Corbiere, Crystal Migwans, and Ann Beam (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010), National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.





Bell, Michael. *A Piece of My Life: Prints by Carl Beam*. Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1989. Exhibition catalogue.

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Recto of invitation to *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Man*, 1982, presented at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, featuring *Renewal, 1980*, by Carl Beam, private collection. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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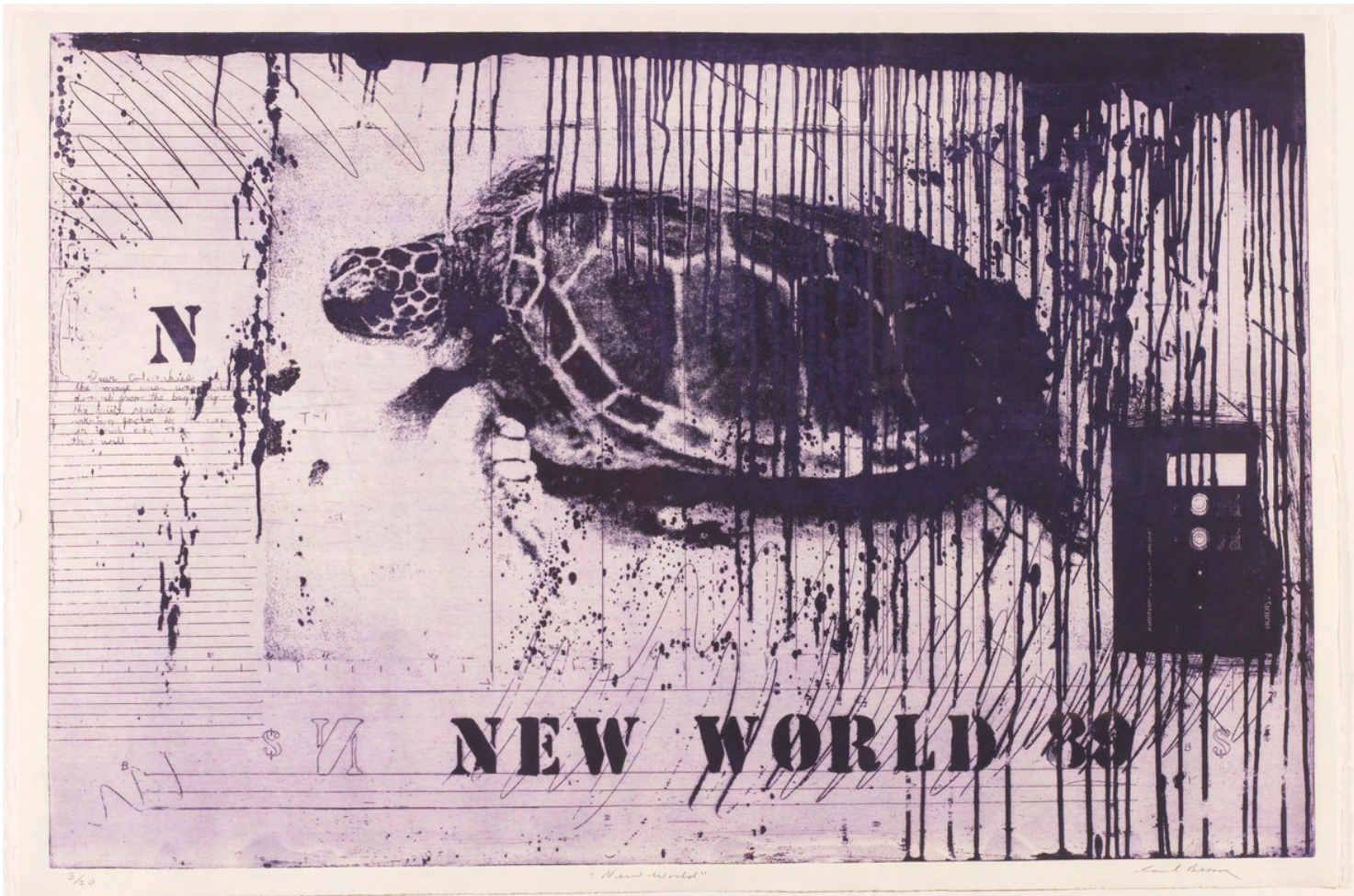
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANONG MIGWANS BEAM

Anong Migwans Beam is a painter, art historian, and arts administrator from M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island. She was born to artist parents Carl Beam and Ann Beam and was raised with a meaningful connection to her artistic familial roots and rich ancestral heritage. She attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Ontario College of Art and Design, the Institute of American Indian Arts, and York University. Alongside her art practice, Beam has been actively involved in curatorial work and teaching. She served as the art director and executive director of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation from 2016 to 2018, and was a guest instructor in painting at Harvard Art Museums in June 2023. She launched BEAM Paints, her own line of watercolour and oil paints, in 2017.



“Carl Beam was my father and my primary teacher on the world and the power of imagery in its evolution. I was honoured to have the chance to consider his life and art for the Art Canada Institute. I hope that readers will come away with a sense of the breadth of his practice, of the visionary man he was, and of his belief in the power of art to change the world.”



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From the Author

I would like to thank my father and mother, Carl Beam and Ann Beam, for educating me, loving me, and keeping me close to them. I am grateful to have learned about the power of art and creativity by watching their practice. I would like to thank my boyfriend, Dennis Corbiere, for supporting and encouraging me, being a father to Riel and Lux, and making life a joy to live. Deepest love to Riel and Lux. Riel, who was born on the same day as his grandfather Carl, and who shines as bright and brave. Lux, who carries traditions in our third generation of ceramic and clay work, and who lights up my heart!

Miigwech and thank you to Phillip Gevik and Gallery Gevik, who represent my father's estate and always put our well-being first. Thank you for all your help with the complexities of the art world.

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Thank you immensely to Tom Smart, who assisted graciously with the text and answered any questions I had along the way.

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Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985. (See below for details.)

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Preface: Carl Beam, *Artist and Eagle in a High-Tech Environment* (detail), 1980. (See below for details.)



Biography: Carl Beam, 1979. (See below for details.)



Key Works: Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985. (See below for details.)



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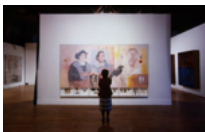
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Style & Technique: Carl Beam at the Olsen fast fire kiln he built at his aunt Maime Migwans's home, 1986. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: Installation view of *The Ampoleta* at Artspace in Peterborough, Ontario, 1989. (See below for details.)



Where to See: Installation view of the exhibition *Carl Beam: The Columbus Project, Phase 1* at the Art Gallery of Peterborough, 1989. (See below for details.)



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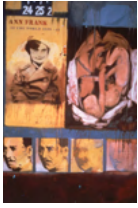
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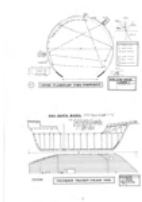
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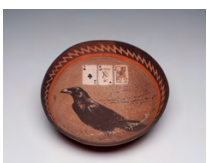
Page from Carl Beam's Paris sketchbook, 1985. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchased with funds donated by AGO Members, 1991 (91/51.6). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo credit: AGO. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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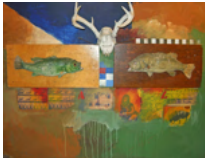
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Three Graveside Figures, 1984. Collection of Gallery Gevik, Toronto. Courtesy of Gallery Gevik. Photo credit: Justin Giallonardo. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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Time Warp (detail), 1984. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 2007 (42060). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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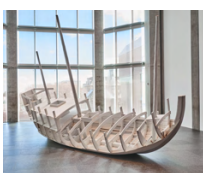
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Various Concerns of the Artist, 1984. Collection of Gallery Gevik, Toronto. Courtesy of Gallery Gevik. Photo credit: Justin Giallonardo. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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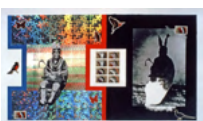


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Ann and Carl Beam's wedding photo, taken at Camel Rock, north of Santa Fe, October 24, 1979. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Ann holding Anong Migwans Beam at a prayer well in New Mexico, 1980. Photograph by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Ann Beam with her and Carl Beam's daughter, Anong, n.d. Photograph by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Anong Migwans Beam at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1985. Photograph by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Anong Migwans Beam at the construction site of the *Adobe House* in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, n.d. Photograph by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Anong Migwans Beam in her father's pottery (assumed), n.d. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Antlers above the side doorway to the *Adobe House* courtyard in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, 1994. Photograph by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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Archaeologist A.W. (Thor) Conway at a dig site in the Algoma region, c.1970s. Photographer unknown. Collection of Sault Ste. Marie Public Library Archives (2024.2.239). Courtesy of Sault Ste. Marie Public Library Archives.



Artist and Shaman between Two Worlds, 1980, by Norval Morrisseau. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 2006 (41869). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Norval Morrisseau.



Barbara Migwans and Maime Migwans, Carl Beam's mother and aunt, c.1942. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



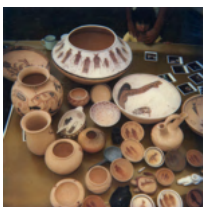
Beaverman, 1977, by Carl Ray. Private collection. Courtesy of Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto. © Estate of Carl Ray.



Blackwater Draw II, 1983, by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. John and Susan Horseman Collection, St. Louis, Missouri. Courtesy of the Horseman Foundation. © Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.



Carl and Ann Beam standing with a concrete piece from the artwork *The Whale of Our Being*, while awaiting a handler from Heritage Canada, n.d. Photograph by Anong Migwans Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Anong Migwans Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl and Ann Beam's ceramic wares, n.d. Photograph by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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Carl and Anong Migwans Beam at Arroyo Seco, 1982. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl and Anong Migwans Beam in front of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, 1992. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Carl and Anong Migwans Beam in the garden of the *Adobe House* in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, 1994. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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Carl Beam with David Neel, Joanne Cardinal-Schubert, and Robert Houle speaking on a panel at the third National Native Indian Artists Symposium in Hazelton, B.C., 1983. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam at the Olsen fast fire kiln he built at his aunt Maime Migwans's home, 1986. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam; his mother, Barbara Migwans; and his baby sister, Marjorie, on Manitoulin Island, 1946. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



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Carl Beam holding an earthenware bowl, n.d. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Carl Beam, 1979. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam in front of *Exorcism* in Thunder Bay, 1984. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam on scaffolding by the stained glass window he installed in his painting studio, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam pulling proofs of *The Columbus Suite* from his Praga press, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam speaking about residential schools at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1985. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam with a watercolour painting in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 2000. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



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Carl Beam with his hominy corn harvest, n.d. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Carl Beam working on *Big Dissolve* in his studio, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam working on clay and slips on the hood of a blue station wagon, 1981. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl, I Can't Fit into My Christian Dehors Bathing Suit!, 1989, by Viviane Gray. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Allan J. Ryan. Photo credit: Allan J. Ryan. © Viviane Gray.



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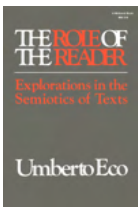
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Cover of *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam*, by Elizabeth McLuhan (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1984). © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Cover of *Carl Beam: The Poetics of Being*, by Greg A. Hill, Gerald McMaster, Virginia Eichhorn, Alan Corbiere, Crystal Migwans, and Ann Beam (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2010). Collection of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Cover of *The Role of the Reader*, by Umberto Eco (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979). Courtesy of the Indiana University Press.



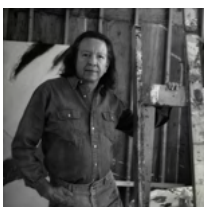
Documentation from the performance *I Like America and America Likes Me*, 1974, by Joseph Beuys. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Wiki Art. © Estate of Joseph Beuys / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Dominic Migwans, Carl Beam's grandfather, c.1950. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Exterior view of the Carl Beam retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada, 2010. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.



Fritz Scholder, 1987, by Ken Rosenthal. Courtesy of the artist. © Ken Rosenthal.



Garnier High School, also known as the Spanish Indian Residential School, n.d. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Montreal (CDA_D-3.4.2327). Courtesy of the Archive of the Jesuits in Canada.



Grandfather Will Come Again, 1987, by Bob Boyer. The Mendel Art Gallery Collection at Remai Modern, Saskatoon, Purchased with funds from the Canada Council Special Purchase Assistance Program, 1987 (1987.3). Courtesy of Remai Modern. © Estate of Bob Boyer.



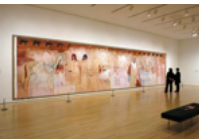
I Couldn't Afford a Christian Dior Bathing Suit, 1990, by Ron Noganosh. Private collection. Courtesy of Allan J. Ryan. Photo credit: Allan J. Ryan. © Estate of Ron Noganosh.



Indian Power, 1972, by Fritz Scholder. Collection of Denver Art Museum, Gift of Vicki and Kent Logan (2016.125). Courtesy of Denver Art Museum. © Estate of Fritz Scholder.



Installation view of *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from October 22, 2010-January 16, 2011. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Carl Beam, installation view of *Time Warp*, 1984, in *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from October 22, 2010-January 16, 2011. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Transport of *The Columbus Boat*, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



CARL BEAM

Life & Work by Anong Migwans Beam



Transport of *The Columbus Boat*, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Installation of *The Columbus Boat*, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



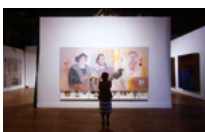
Installation view of *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Man* at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, October 1, 1982. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Installation view of *The Ampoleta* at Artspace in Peterborough, Ontario, 1989. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Installation view of *The Columbus Suite* by Carl Beam, 1990. Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Installation view of the exhibition *Carl Beam: The Columbus Project, Phase 1* at the Art Gallery of Peterborough, 1989. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Invitation to the opening of the exhibition *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, 2010. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Joseph Beuys giving a lecture at Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna, on April 4, 1979. Photograph by Gerhard Kaiser. Collection of Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, Donation Archive Gerhard Kaiser, Berndorf, Austria. Courtesy of Galerie Belvedere.



Kanata, 1992, by Robert Houle. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1994 (37479.1-4). Courtesy of National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Robert Houle.



Kenzan-style tea bowl, nineteenth century. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Adaline Van Horne Bequest (1944.Dp.41). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo credit: MMFA, Christine Guest.



Map, 1961, by Jasper Johns. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull (277.1963). Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art. © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Marilyn Diptych, 1962, by Andy Warhol. Collection of Tate Modern, London, Purchased 1980 (T03093). Courtesy of Tate Modern. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Mimbres bowl, 850–1050. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Charles and Valerie Diker, 2004 (2004.551.3). Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Ojibway Shaman Figure, 1975, by Norval Morrisseau. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Freda and Irwin Browns (2006.23). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo credit: MMFA, Brian Merrett. © Estate of Norval Morrisseau.



Poster for *The European Iceberg: Creativity Today in Germany and Italy* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, February 8–April 7, 1985. Design by Massimo Vignelli. Courtesy of Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Photo: AGO.



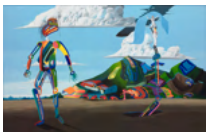
Pow Wow Dancer, 1978, by Daphne Odjig. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of John W. and Bernice W. Forster, Vancouver, 2022 (50467). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. By permission of Stan Somerville. © Estate of Daphne Odjig.



Recto of invitation to *Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Man*, 1982, presented at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, featuring *Renewal*, 1980, by Carl Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Red Mangrove, 2018, by Anong Migwans Beam. Collection of Gallery Gevik, Toronto. Courtesy of Gallery Gevik. © Anong Migwans Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.



Red Man Watching White Man Trying to Fix Hole in the Sky, 1990, by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 2012 (45529). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun.



Rita Letendre, early 1960s, by Tess Boudreau Taconis. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of the artist, 2007 (2006/463). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Estate of Tess Boudreau Taconis.



Tea bowl (*chawan*), mid-nineteenth century. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Adaline Van Horne Bequest (1944.Dp.16). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo: MMFA, Christine Guest.



Untitled (Language Painting), 1987, by Ken Lum. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 2000 (40367.1-2). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Ken Lum.



View looking south through the east leg of the wye connecting the University line with the Bloor-Danforth line, between Museum station and Bay station, June 27, 1963. Photographer unknown. Collection of the City of Toronto Archives / TTC Fonds, Fonds 16, series 1604, file 246, item 2056. Courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives.



Woman throwing a hatchet at *Exorcism* during the opening of *Altered Egos: The Multimedia Work of Carl Beam* at the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre and Centre for Indian Art, 1984. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

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