



True Tribal: Contemporary Expressions of Ancestral Tattoo Practices *Opens at the Museum of Vancouver March 28, 2024*

Embodied Mark Making a Reclamation of Indigenous Culture

For Immediate Release: February 14, 2024 — *True Tribal: Contemporary Expressions of Ancestral Tattoo Practices* explores 30-plus years of Indigenous tattooing from around the world and the artists who are reconnecting with traditional skin marking practices. The revival of ancestral tattoo designs and motifs, the re-envisioning of meaning and protocols, and the re-fashioning of ancestral application methods is part of Indigenous peoples' efforts to reclaim their lands, cultures and identities.

Tattoo artists **Tristen Jenni Sanderson** (Woodland and Plains Cree), **Terje Koloamatangi** (Tongan), **Nolan Malbeuf** (Métis), **Mo-Naga** (Uipo Naga), **Julie Paama-Pengelly** (Māori), **Gordon Sparks** (Mi'kmaq), **Nathalie Standingcloud** (Cherokee) and **Dion Kaszas** (Nlaka'pamux) use contemporary technologies to build upon ancestral design conventions as seen on ancestral belongings. Their work gives power back to Indigenous people to think through and theorize their own world and life views while taking away the colonial tools that separated them from the visual language of skin markings.

Portraits of people with the artists' tattoos will be exhibited alongside cultural belongings that act as a visual dictionary for the markings, as well as projections, blood impression paintings and augmented reality (AR). The AR app will allow visitors to view tattoo designs created by the *True Tribal* artists expanded in the exhibition space with the use of their own devices.

"This exhibition seeks to enliven our community's relationship to their ancestral visual languages, which are written on the rocks, in our families' homes or on ancestral belongings in museum collections." — **Dion Kaszas, Co-Curator and Artist**

True Tribal is co-curated by artist and podcaster Dion Kaszas and curator Mireille Bourgeois, in collaboration with the curatorial team at the Museum of Vancouver and its collection of cultural belongings. The project is co-managed by IOTA Institute, a Nova Scotia based art collective and creative agency. True Tribal will be on display at the Museum of Vancouver starting March 28, 2024 with an opening reception on March 27th.

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Media Tours on March 27, 2024

Members of the media are invited to tour the exhibition. Exhibition Co-curator and featured artist, Dion Kaszas, along with the Museum of Vancouver's Curatorial Lead, Sharon Fortney, Curator of Indigenous Collections & Engagement, will be on-site and available for interviews **by appointment on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 between 11:00am and 2:00pm** at the Museum of Vancouver, located at 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, BC.

To book an appointment for a walk through, or for media inquiries and interviews at other times, contact Marketing & Communications Manager, Debby Reis at dreis@museumofvancouver.ca.

About the IOTA Institute: IOTA is an art collective and creative agency that finds new ways of creating artistic livelihood through research, creation and curatorial practice within cross-disciplinary, new media, web, visual, interactive and movement art. They aim to reach beyond the scope and duration of traditional art exhibitions, to create an environment that fosters research opportunities, multi-sector partnerships including technology, biology and grass roots movements.

About the Museum of Vancouver: The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) connects Vancouverites to each other and connects Vancouver to the world. The Museum's programs, exhibitions and collections bring people together and inspire conversation about the future. The Museum is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring a socially connected, civically engaged city. The Museum of Vancouver and the city of Vancouver is located within the shared, unceded, ancestral territories of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətəł (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.