

**C E N T R E  
INTERNATIONAL  
D ' A R T  
CONTEMPORAIN  
DE MONTRÉAL**

**THE TWO-SPIRITS OF THE FIRST NATIONS**

From August 5<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm,  
A production of the Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal,  
in collaboration with Montréal First Peoples and Montréal Pride Festivals.

CDEx, UQAM, 405, Sainte-Catherine Street East – Room J-R940  
(at the Saint-Denis corner street)



**Adrian Stimson**  
*Buffalo Boy's Born Again*, 2012  
Performance

**Adrian Stimson**, a Two-Spirit artist, was born in 1964 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. He is a member of the Siksika Nation (Blackfoot Reserve, Alberta), and was raised there. He served as tribal councilor for eight years in the 1990s, leaving afterwards to pursue art in 1999. Stimson studied at the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, Alberta and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2003. He has since completed a Master of Fine Arts at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

Stimson uses in his art a variety of media incorporating themes of history, gender, and identity. His "Buffalo Boy" performance uses satire to critique stereotypes about Aboriginal people, his installation "Old Sun" explores the legacy of the residential school system, while his "Transformation" exhibit of paintings examines the subject of missing Aboriginal women. Many of his works have been exhibited throughout Canada, and he is particularly known for his "tar and feather" series.

Bison often appears in Stimson's work: *"I use the bison as a symbol representing the destruction of the Aboriginal way of life, but it also represents survival and cultural regeneration. The bison is central and very important to all Blackfoot. The bison is also considered as an icon, a food source, as well as the whole history of its disappearance; it is very much a part of my contemporary life"* (Canadian Art Magazine, 2007).

Stimson has received honors and awards, including the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal (2003), the Alberta Centennial Medal (2005), and the Blackfoot Visual Arts Award (2009). In 2006, Stimson served as artist-in-residence at the Mendel Art Gallery (Saskatoon). In 2010, he was selected to travel to Afghanistan as part of the Canadian Forces Artists program and lastly, in 2018, Stimson received the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

## Adrian STIMSON

### Quotations related to Two-Spirits

*"Two-Spirit people were very much part of our communities from time immemorial. With the reintroduction and re-examining of our traditional ways, the marginalization facing Two-Spirit people is getting better,"* says Stimson.

"Two-Spirit", denoting Indigenous queers, was coined in 1990 at the third annual Inter-tribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference in Winnipeg.

*"They were becoming more aware that as a group they needed to identify themselves together somehow,"* says Stimson, referring to the attendees at the conference.

Superseding "berdache", an earlier version of it, "Two-Spirit" speaks to multiple genders and sexualities within First Nations communities. *"The previous terms that were used are very derogatory, such as 'berdache' – that's an anthropological term that has nothing to do with Indigenous LGBT people,"* notes Stimson.

*"As Indigenous people, we are born political into this country. Throughout my life, I've been acutely aware of the racism that exists in our world and combating the trauma in my life that started from a child,"* says Stimson.

Two-Spirit people, for him, face a battle as the buffalo did 150 years ago. "Buffalo Boy", adopted by Stimson, has since become his persona in many of his artworks.

**Source :** Yusheng CAI, " Indigenous two spirit artists rebuild identity through art ", *The Source - Forum of diversity*, Volume 18, Issue 01, June 2017

*"For the Blackfoot, a lot of our stories have sexual content, sex and sexuality was often interwoven within the language... Yet the damage has been done and in our time, it is our right and duty to reclaim our sexual histories, I hope through this series of paintings to trigger people, to help them understand and accept our ways of life. To be Napi and create stories for our time and Two Spirit being."*

**Source :** Akimbo, <http://www.akimbo.ca/akimbos/?id=122209>

*"I can only speak from the Blackfoot context and years of research, but I do think, historically, there has been an erasure of Two-Spiritedness in Western society. That goes back to the conquistadors, when they noticed men dressing up as women, and realized those people had a lot of power. In any conquest situation, they target people in the community who are most influential, and at that time, a lot of Two-Spirit people were very influential in their communities. One of the things we recognize in our communities now is that any time somebody wants to discredit a group of people or lay the foundation for extermination, they start attacking their intellectuals and artists. Only in the last 20 years are we starting to see a real move back to understanding those histories."*

**Source :** Carine ABOUSIF, "Q&A : Canadian Artist Adrian Stimson on Canada and diverse storytelling", *This Magazine*, July 18, 2017

Movie from Adrian Stimson:

**Monday, August 12th, 2019 – 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm**

National Institute College of Image and Sound (INIS)  
301, Boulevard de Maisonneuve East, Room 362

Buffalo Boy's Don't Look East, Adrian STIMSON ( 7:30 min )

Description:

Buffalo Boy paces the streets of Venice under the dumbfounded gaze of passersby.

We would like to thank our partners and all those who contributed to our 2019 fundraising campaign. You can donate at any time via our website: <http://ciac.ca/dons/> or via Canadon. Tax receipts for donations of \$ 25 or more. Thank you.

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C.P. 42105 BP Roy Montréal (Québec) H2W 2T3, Canada  
514.288.0811 [info@ciac.ca](mailto:info@ciac.ca) [www.ciac.ca](http://www.ciac.ca)  
Canada : 10089 0920 RR0001 Québec : QCA 0235-0532

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