ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Unsettled borders and memories: a “local” indigenous perspective on contemporary globalization

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Abstract

This article provides a case study of decolonial counter-memory in contemporary indigenous artist Alan Michelson’s 2009 Third Bank of the River. Installed inside the lobby of the tri-national border station between the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation, Canada, and the United States—the most legally disputed territory in North America—Michelson’s artwork recovers the seventeenth-century Two Row wampum belt as model for reforming relationships at the border. This wampum belt memorializes a commitment between the Haudenosaunee and European settlers to co-exist in balanced interdependence and remains a key touchstone in indigenous political philosophy and activism. Interpreted in the post-9/11 build-up of state power at the disputed border zone, Third Bank proposes a model of international dialogue and nation-to-nation diplomacy that contrasts with the ongoing conditions of settler colonialism. It thus stands out as an important indigenous perspective on the widespread interest in memory in global contemporary art, in which artists are recovering a new viewpoint on contemporaneity through the reconceptualization of historical pasts.

Keywords: contemporary art; indigenous art; counter-memory; historical memory; temporality; borders; Native American culture; globalization; decolonial art and culture

Artistic investigations of counter-memory have been a characteristic type of “post-postmodern” art since the 1990s. As Andreas Huyssen writes, in some of the most compelling of these practices, the re-articulation of repressed “realms of memory” indicates a utopian “principle of hope” in

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which the future can be transformed by an artistic “project of reconceptualizing history.” Memory in this variety of contemporary art is employed as a means of developing new forms of social relationships through the articulation of an undetermined community of sense, oriented to the humans of the past rather than, as in relational aesthetics, the present. This community of sense emerges out of a transformed temporality produced by the work of art, one in which pasts and futures are joined together in new ways. Exploring the decolonial possibilities of this contemporary memory work, this essay examines a 2009 artwork by the Mohawk artist Alan Michelson that brings together the local and the global in an effort to visualize alternative contemporary relationships among mobile viewers of multiple nationalities in a complicated, often conflictual political border zone context (Figure 1).

Michelson’s *Third Bank of the River*, a monumental photographic montage permanently installed in the passenger lobby of the American border station adjacent the Akwesasne Nation (part of the large Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Confederacy of Six Nations) and Canada in 2009 (Figure 2). Publicly funded as part of a post-9/11 revamping of US national borders, the work’s 10 six-foot-tall glass panels span about 12 meters across the wall. Two parallel rows of photographic images from the border run horizontally across its background of cloudy sky, taking a parallel course and reasserting the solidity and horizontality of the picture plane. This strongly unified, large-scale composition recalls the well-known, similarly monumental photographs of international spaces and institutions by Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth, yet invests the border zone with a particular history and set of meanings that problematize the secure, harmonious internationalism the border station is intended to facilitate. Its digitally composed registers arrange the three national land masses of the United States, Akwesasne’s Cornwall Island, and Canada evenly across the picture plane, mimicking the horizontal flow of travelers through the three national territories. Distinguished by the Alcoa-Reynolds aluminum plant and environmentally reclaimed General Motors foundry site on the US shore at the top right and the Domtar paper mill on the Canadian shore at the bottom left, these registers visually structure the border in terms of nation-to-nation parallelism, horizontality, and parity.

These visual elements of equality and balance are references to a specific belt of wampum beads. “Wampum” refers to symbolically encoded strings or woven “belts” of polished shell or bead, traditionally used to record and convey political agreements by the indigenous peoples of eastern North America. They are both visual aids and records...
of diplomatic relationships, being held in the hand of an orator while giving a speech, while also sometimes being gifted to foreign nations as material records of agreements (in lieu of written documents, as the Haudenosaunee and other eastern North American tribes were, prior to colonial schools, non-literate). In eastern North America, these diplomatic uses of wampum remain an unbroken tradition, with belts remaining key technologies of remembrance and intercultural negotiation among tribes and between tribes and nation-states. Tapping into this traditional visual culture of diplomatic relations, the artwork abstracts its color and composition from a pivotal wampum belt: the 17th-century Two Row wampum belt recording an international treaty between the Haudenosaunee (including the Mohawk community of Akwesasne) and Dutch Republic to coexist as autonomous allies in a confederal or “brotherly” relationship (Figure 3). This agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Dutch has long represented one of the “first” documented transatlantic treaties in North America, and its vision of non-interference and allied sovereignty remains a powerful vision of a brief alternative to the domination and displacement of indigenous peoples in subsequent centuries of British, French, Spanish, and later American and Canadian rule.
The Two Row wampum belt remains in the possession of the Haudenosaunee tribal government, who continue to use it for political and legal purposes (it was recently repatriated to a nearby Haudenosaunee reservation).8

By redeploying the colors and composition of the famous belt, Third Bank produces an alternative, politically charged form of temporality—a form of “counter-memory,” defined by Foucault as the latent, repressed, interruptive part of any discourse on the past—and urges reflection on the way in which temporality itself is bound up with the politics of locality and globalization.9 This counter-historical dimension sets Third Bank apart from the many other publicly funded artworks that have been installed in the ongoing post-9/11 transformation of US border stations. While typically this emerging art in new border stations references local culture and people, it typically does so with a focus on present-day sources and images. For example, at the Nogales, Arizona, border station—the primary station in one of the most heavily trafficked areas of the US–Mexico border for drug smuggling and “illegal” immigration—the contemporary artist Kimsooja has permanently installed a panoramic LED screen featuring video portraits of local members of the large border town who routinely cross between countries for work and family reasons. Titled An Album: Sewing into Borderlines, the 2013 artwork helps bring down to vulnerable, human scale a place often known through sensational media images of drug violence, smuggling, and illegal immigration. The format of the compelling work focuses on visual images of contemporary people and their everyday reliance on the border station, but unlike Third Bank it does not explore the historical dimensions that set these US–Mexico social antagonisms into play.

The key to opening up the “realm of memory” explored by Third Bank of the River is to decode the Two Row wampum belt’s symbolism. As summarized in the artwork description available for visitors inside the border station, the piece’s extended horizontality, white and purple palette, parallel rows, and river imagery are each drawn from the woven pattern of this belt. As retold by the Haudenosaunee wampum keepers trained by the nation to preserve the meaning of the confederacy’s many belts, the white background of the Two Row design symbolizes a River of Life (or, with different philosophical nuance, Time), through which all nations and peoples are passing together. The color white carries an auspicious, peaceful connotation, representing the common ground of shared humanity.10 In contrast, the purple rows signify two “boats” or nations traveling through the stream of life together, remaining, as in the case of Michelson’s piece, autonomous and parallel over the course of time. The color purple conveys power in a more general sense as well, and thus it carries an ambivalent connotation and must be carefully managed, as indicated in the strict parallelism and harmonious balance of both compositions. Read in the belt’s original context of Dutch colonization, the purple rows indicate the Haudenosaunee confederacy and the Dutch colony.11 These potentially conflicting nations maintain an equal visual distance through the length of the composition, recording an early agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Dutch not to dominate or otherwise interfere with each other. Conveying the vow to coexist as supportive, engaged allies, the rows do not drift apart toward life’s distant banks. Instead, the nations sustain a relationship based on balance and parallelism, one that shares a trajectory but maintains respectful distance over the course of time.

Abstracting the wampum belt’s composition to its essential parallelism, parity, and horizontality, Third Bank recovers this historical agreement of mutual autonomy and places it permanently in the public space of Three Nations Crossing. This re-articulation from the belt’s composition underscores the basic political principles conveyed by the wampum, which—not coincidentally—are highly charged at the present-day Akwesasne border and elsewhere in Native American indigenous–settler relationships. According to contemporary Mohawk political philosopher Tâiaiake Alfred, the agreement enshrined in the Two Row iconography self-consciously transcended linear time because it enshrined the foundation of all Haudenosaunee understandings of justice and self-identity.12 Situating the belt within this larger indigenous American politico-cultural tradition, Alfred somewhat romantically underscores that the anticolonial autonomy and mutualism recorded by the wampum’s iconography are part of a constellation of indigenous American political ideals—past and present, at Akwesasne and in Brazil—that were historically imagined and institutionalized.
“outside of empire.” For many indigenous peoples, this counter-memory of sovereignty represents an important alternative possibility to the frustrating process of working in European-derived institutions and political concepts.

To viewers able to decode Third Bank in the context of local indigenous aesthetics—no doubt, primarily indigenous border crossers—this counter-memory has an additional aesthetic component. The artwork's glass panels catch the light, resulting in flashing moments of glare on its surface. From the perspective of Haudenosaunee aesthetics, this flashing enhances the message of harmonious, nation-to-nation coexistence based in knowledge of the Two Row agreement. For thousands of years, many of the most important artistic materials in the Eastern Woodlands were polished white shells, stone, leather, bone and teeth, and semitransparent sheets of polished mica, which somewhat resemble sheets of glass. These traditional artistic materials remain prized for their ability to create flashes of light when highly polished, a quality that famously led Woodlands peoples to seek European glass beads, polished silver, and mirrors. This capacity to generate (and decode) flashes of light remains culturally associated with knowledge, truth, and beautiful, “enlightened” harmony.

In recovering the political aesthetics of the 17th-century wampum belt, and balancing its legibility to both contemporary art audiences and indigenous viewers sensitive to traditional aesthetics, the artwork reiterates the harmonious and balanced visual relationship of the three nations depicted in the work. Third Bank uses this aesthetic as part of its diplomatic visual appeal, speaking to a broad audience in a seductive visual language. When asked about the work’s clear interest in aesthetics, Michelson suggests his nation’s traditional aesthetic is useful for establishing a relationship with all viewers, as it might pull them in long enough that they begin to think through the wider implications of the work’s iconography and historical references. He suggests that this Haudenosaunee aesthetic functions as a kind of artistic “killing them with kindness” that would be unavailable to him if he worked in the anti-aesthetic techniques he learned while attending art school in the 1980s. Moreover, Third Bank’s revival of the Two Row political model recalls the long history of diplomatic uses of wampum in Native North American politics, aesthetics, and self-determination vis-à-vis settler institutions and political practices.

More than any other wampum belt or design, the Two Row wampum is a visual “flashpoint” in Native American politics—it seems to provide a historical and legal basis for the balanced nation-to-nation relationship with the United States and Canada that is the heart of Native American sovereignty. Like other wampum belts, the Two Row has practical legal implications and has been used as a legal document in court cases involving Haudenosaunee sovereignty today. When asked about this broader visual culture of which the Two Row is a part, Michelson said Third Bank of the River is like “flying a Mohawk flag in the middle of the American border station.” He confessed some surprise that his art proposal was even approved by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authorities who monitored his project. For those who see the current relationship between indigenous nations and North American states through the lens of ongoing settler colonialism, his work’s politicized visualization of alternative relations signifies an important, even unanticipated alternative to the usual diminishing of indigenous presence and sovereignty in the realms of official state power and memory.

While the belt is a highly charged Haudenosaunee symbol, philosopher Alfred reminds us there is no exclusively indigenous relationship to the ideals of autonomy and mutualism in the Two Row wampum. Much as the association between visual balance and light with “truth” and “beauty” might recall similar associations within European, African, or Asian traditions, its political ideals have cognates across many borders (he uses the term “anarcho-indigenism” to capture this broadly “anarchist” critique of illegitimate hierarchy and domination). It might be seen as crystallizing a cross-cultural vision of power and justice that today erupts elsewhere in the world in forms of alternative globalization concerned with horizontal social autonomy and an environmentally oriented “interdependency of all peoples and beings.” Because in the indigenous context this is conceived as an extension of an a priori symbiotic natural order—rather than a social escape from an inadequate state of nature, as in classical liberalism—its vision of political parity is boundless, incorporating humans as well as other organisms. In other words,
to reference the Two Row wampum is to open up an indigenous concept of relational equality and reciprocity traditionally understood as being global in application—particularly when the reference is made in an international border zone located, in part, on Mohawk territory. Thus, Third Bank recovers a self-consciously international vision of justice, one imbricated with counter-models of political, social, and even environmental relationships based on horizontality, parity, and autonomy.

In this way, Michelson’s project draws upon local historical memory, aesthetics, and indigenous political philosophy to visualize a reformed, equitable relationship between viewers who have often pitted against each other in recent centuries. As much as an artwork can, it works against the tendency for sovereign indigenous people—in North America, Europe, and elsewhere—to be obscured or marginalized in the contemporary discourses and institutions of national security and international relations, a fact that has increased conflicts between indigenous peoples and nation-states at borders in recent years. As I explain in this article, this is particularly true in the artwork’s Three Nations Crossing context and the conflictual relations between the indigenous Mohawk Nation with Canadian and American security concerns, but it also speaks to a broader global experience of disempowerment of the world’s indigenous peoples. Engaging in the wider contemporary phenomenon of memory work in art and culture, Michelson’s artwork provocatively identifies a “glocal” intersection between the decolonial recovery of historical memory and the reforming of contemporary international relations to be inclusive of indigenous sovereignty.

A PRESSURE POINT OF GLOBALIZATION

No doubt what “indigenous sovereignty” or any counterhegemonic political project might mean in the current phase of globalization is highly context-specific. One must thus situate Michelson’s artwork in the historical context of the location, originally occupied by the Akwesasne Mohawk and their ancestors for millennia. As the most populous and expansive of Mohawk nation reservations, the community of Akwesasne predates the existence of the United States or Canada by at least several decades. Akwesasne Chief Michael Mitchell explains that the Mohawks see themselves as indigenous to the land, and, for generations before European expansion, “Akwesasne was one of many Mohawk villages,” integral to the nation’s practice of land and resource use: “our people were transient, hunting and farming in one area for only 5 or 10 years” before moving to allow the “recovery of the land after farming.” The Mohawk name for this village, Akwesasne, translates to “the land where the partridge drums,” a hunting and fishing region within the formerly expansive Mohawk territory. Yet the “transience” of the premodern Mohawk compels many academic historians to trace the origins of the Akwesasne community to the first “permanent” settlement of the site, occurring no earlier than 1755 with the establishment of the Saint Regis Jesuit mission. This new community initially absorbed Catholic Mohawks escaping the increasingly overcrowded and politically divided community at the nearby Mohawk mission and town of Kahnawake (known today for the 1990 Oka Crisis). Over the next 50 years, substantial numbers of refugees from the heart of the Mohawk homeland in the distant Mohawk River valley in central New York State fled to Akwesasne from intensifying colonial violence and settler intrusion. Thus, Akwesasne gradually became the most populous of Mohawk reservations, an indigenous “diaspora,” in the words of the artist.

The goal of a secure and sovereign Akwesasne nation has been undermined by two foundational traumas: substantial loss of territory and resources at Akwesasne, and the “official” division of the nation in half by the United States/Canada border. This gave Akwesasne the uniquely problematic distinction of being the only indigenous nation that is located under the administration of both American and Canadian nation-states. These issues form the political backdrop to Third Bank of the River, which takes the border as it subject in a manner common in contemporary art. As art historians Gill Perry and Paul Wood observe of the prominence of artistic explorations of borders, “the border figures as a powerful metaphor for political and economic connection and separation,” linked processes that are simultaneously reasserted and called into question within contemporary globalization. This is certainly the case at Three Nations Crossing, a border station situated precariously in a convoluted history of colonial and international politics.
Today, the border is a constant reminder that Akwesasne, like many indigenous nations around the world, is effectively dependent upon the settler states, their cultures, and their economic opportunities. Much of the conflict around this condition of dependency concerns the freedom of the Mohawk to travel between the separate Canadian and American sections of their land. One of the most important legally controversial documents impacting Akwesasne, the Jay Treaty, asserts that Native people from either side of the border may cross freely by land or water, may pursue commerce with cross-border indigenous nations without state interference, and are not required to pay customs duties on goods transported to sell on the reservation or to other Indians. In short, the Mohawk were not a party to the treaty establishing the border, and thus the American–Canadian border would theoretically have no impact on Native freedom of movement. Interrupted by the War of 1812, these rights were again recognized in the Treaty of Ghent at the end of the war (especially noteworthy given that many indigenous nations were allied to the British). Clearly, Native free passage was then understood as outside the legitimate concerns of the two states, and its reinstatement was as necessary as normalizing relations with Britain.

At Akwesasne and elsewhere on the border, the right of indigenous free passage was seldom controversial during the 19th century. This all changed in 1924. In that year, the United States passed the Immigration and Naturalization Act, which legally recategorized all indigenous people residing north of the Canadian border as “aliens.” This famously nativist legislation was interpreted to mean that “Canadian Indians could no longer cross into the U.S. border freely” and would be required to obtain immigrant visas and present them to border security like other foreign nationals. The sweeping act and its heavy-handed interpretation failed to make an exception for the anomalous situation of Akwesasne, and thus reclassified residents of a U.S. treaty-established reservation as “aliens” on their own land. Four years later, a Mohawk ironworker, John Diabo, challenged the act in court, leading to a US Supreme Court ruling in his favor, the Court reaffirming that the Jay Treaty was still “in force” and that “from the Indian viewpoint … this [border] does not exist.” A revised version of the Act incorporated the Jay Treaty provisions into law, which was effective until 1952. Then, as part of a general postwar undermining of Native self-determination by Congress during the “termination era,” the legislative body revoked these rights and—in a further top-down rewriting of centuries of legal precedent—reclassified indigenous nationality in terms of “blood quantum” (the fraction of ancestors of certifiable indigenous ancestry). Only those Native people who could demonstrate that “50%” of their recent ancestors were documentable, federally recognized indigenous people would maintain their right of free passage, while all other members of indigenous nations would be treated as settler Canadians. This quasi-eugenic “mixed-blood” restriction has mutated into the present-day requirement, which, contrary to the spirit of free passage and Native self-determination, requires indigenous people to produce tribal identification cards and undergo security inspection at settler borders.

With the completion of the Seaway Bridge in 1962 as part of the St. Lawrence Seaway project, the intertwined issues of free passage and the manipulation of Akwesasne by nation-states came to a head. The bridge appropriated additional Akwesasne territory on Cornwall Island and resulted in the construction of a Canadian border station at the 45th degree, that is, on the Mohawk island itself rather than on Canadian territory across the river. The inevitable resentment of colonial expansion further into Akwesasne territory by both states intensified when Canada broke with the Jay Treaty and began collecting customs duties on indigenous residents for any goods brought across the new bridge, regardless of use. Despite attempts by indigenous leaders to pursue negotiations over free passage, the state refused to budge on assessing duties on indigenous goods. Responding to this expansion of colonial power, as well as a range of other political, environmental, and economic grievances, Akwesasne citizens organized a full-scale blockade of the bridge on December 18, 1968. Sixty participants, along with allied members of the Indian Defense League of America, were arrested, bringing international attention—and outcry—in both mainstream media and activist information sources. The coverage of the first blockade combined with a follow-up blockade was successful in forcing Canada to realign its policies with the Jay Treaty in February
1969, and the broader effect of the direct action and the state’s reprisal was to transform the Seaway Bridge into a metonym of Akwesasne-settler conflict. Any number of additional direct actions related to indigenous rights have occurred at the bridge since the late 1960s, ranging from walks across the bridge without showing official identification cards to the assertion of indigenous autonomy inherent in the underground smuggling of cigarettes and other goods to a collaborative “illegal” border crossing with the New York City alternative globalization collective Ya Basta in 2001. In many ways, the bridge condenses the broad history and multiplicity of border strife, providing an outlet for addressing—in however limited a fashion—the anywhere and everywhere processes of high-tech social control.

A few weeks after Third Bank of the River was installed and the US Land Port opened, another major blockade of the bridge was organized by the Akwesasne. This came in response to the early 2009 Canadian decision to arm its border patrol employees stationed on the reservation, despite the location of the Canadian station in the middle of a residential district and irrespective of an Akwesasne law forbidding the carrying of weapons by non-residents of the nation. Ignoring the outrage of the Akwesasne government and the recent examples of US border agents horrifically killing indigenous residents of the American–Mexican border, Canada planned to implement the policy shift on June 1 of the same year. In response, on the evening of May 31, hundreds of Akwesasne citizens organized a large protest and encampment outside the Canadian port. Fearing for their safety, the agents on duty walked off the job, an ironic and short-term redirection of fear at the border. With no Canadian border agents willing to report to the station, the bridge was closed until July 13, when a temporary station was opened on the Canadian northern shore in the town of Cornwall.

Even after the temporary station opened, members of the Akwesasne community have maintained an encampment at the island land port, building a continuously burning “peace fire” and a small house for protesters at the bridge. In so doing, the more recent blockade has become a long-term feature of the border’s landscape, visible to all travelers through the Land Port and across the Seaway Bridge. Given this quasi-permanent assertion of Akwesasne territorial integrity and governmental autonomy at the Canadian station, it is not surprising that recent reports suggest that Canada may permanently relocate the land port across the river to Ontario, withdrawing its border agents from Akwesasne altogether. Yet at the same time this removal is being discussed, Canada and the United States have implemented a new border surveillance program that is far more intrusive than the station: US Predator drones now fly over Akwesasne’s skies, monitoring activities and conversations on the reservation and elsewhere at the border, despite the opposition of the Akwesasne government to yet another violation of indigenous rights (and, likely, Canada and the United States’ own privacy laws). Clearly, the elimination of official stations from Akwesasne land does not mark a reversal of colonial history, nor does it indicate a conflict-free future as much as it foreshadows a technological metamorphosis of sovereign power over Akwesasne.

This history of displacement and exile, with the gradual rebuilding of a diasporic Mohawk nation at Akwesasne—a location that brings it into omnipresent conflict with two nation-states and a position of inequality with regard to many aspects of their self-determination—is crucial for understanding the search for alternative yet historically grounded and possible futures that drives Third Bank’s engagement with its site. Installed in this technologically enhanced security zone overlooking the bridge, Third Bank of the River registers the structure’s role as a locus for the broader colonial and anticolonial strife between the three nations. Located at the far left of the composition, it is repeated three times in the white spaces as a diagonal cutting across the measured horizontality of the work. Its appearance in the center register is the most visually complex and addresses the section of the bridge connecting the United States and Akwesasne, immediately outside the lobby. Here, the bridge is split in two, running diagonally and in opposite directions, contrary to the resolute parallelism of the Two Row composition. The bridge transgresses the basic structure of the Two Row ideal, both compositionally and conceptually suggesting a structure of interference. This interruption of the fundamental principles of the agreement is further underscored by Third Bank in the less prominent
appearances of the bridge in the bottom and top rows of white. In these cases, the bridge is visually misguided, running off the edge of the picture plane without creating navigable routes between land masses: it is both visually disjunctive and useless for cross-national engagement.

Much as in daily life, then, the Seaway Bridge in *Third Bank* is a structure bound up with the many conflicts that undermine the indigenous—settler autonomy expressed in the historic treaty and Michelson’s work. If the primary spatial rhetoric of the border station is characterized by a neoliberal repression of borders and locality in favor of fluidity and amnesia, Michelson’s piece inscribes onto the wall the international conflict embodied in the bridge and the ambivalence generated by the larger border context. It suggests that what is most crucial for reimagining and refashioning the border is the broader ideal of cross-border justice embodied in the Two Row wampum and allied political projects.

**DECOLONIAL MEMORY IN CONTEMPORARY ART**

In turning to the indigenous past to find a different paradigm of relations, *Third Bank of the River* joins other forms of post-postmodern contemporary art in interrogating historical memory for a place to start again today. Perhaps the most exciting of these counter-memorial practices de-sublimate histories that range from uncomfortably marginal to radically repressed. Scholars in a number of fields have contributed to this discourse of counter-historical memory work, exploring sites and practices that build upon or problematize the national construction of memory associated with the seminal work of Pierre Nora and Maurice Halbwachs. The heavily politicized nature of these repressed memories, often linked to ongoing oppression of particular social groups in and between nation-states, stirs a kind of contemporary art that imaginatively proposes specific alternatives or counter-models. This is obviously true of *Third Bank’s* invocation of the Two Row model of justice, but it is also true in a range of contemporary art that challenges the entrenched histories or ideologies of states or neocolonial powers in disputed sites (the well-known practices of Steve McQueen, Matthew Buckingham, and William Kentridge, among many others, might be used to further illustrate this search for repressed counter-models to the oppressive localization of sovereign power). In these works, the political stakes of locational conflict are rendered explicit—registering in both the work’s formal composition and its broader discursive context—and the artwork points toward an alternative perspective on contemporary relations, a place to begin again from within difficult pasts.

A relevant example of this contemporary counter-memorial art is settler artist Sam Durant’s 2005 *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions, Washington, D.C.*, exhibited at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York (Figure 4). Durant’s piece takes the form of two installations accompanied by photographic and written material distributed as a kind of guide to the work. In the largest room, the artist arranged 30 matte-gray obelisk and tower-shaped sculptures, fabricated from fiberglass and medium-density fiberboard (MDF), in straight, parallel rows in an otherwise empty space. Ranging from less than a meter in height to around three meters, they repeat the shape and scale of 30 historical monuments to settler and indigenous people killed during colonial expansion across the United States. Installed in far-flung locations, most of these monuments were created generations after the particular violence they recall as ways to honor specific deceased individuals. Yet the artist’s replica sculptures are left blank, lacking the identifying inscriptions and plaques of the original memorials and disconnecting them from any specific individual or national history. Their primer-like color, shape, and lack of inscriptions only underscore this sense of incomplete, unresolved memory, interrupting the totalizing and imperially unifying construction of national history that such memorials evoke. Indeed, this referential unmooring is heightened by their grayness, scale, and largely obelisk shapes—all of which immediately bring to mind cemetery monuments yet Durant’s work only points to the unknown or unknowable in the national past rather than the memorialized. In so doing, the work fixes the viewer’s attention on the incomplete and amnesiac condition of memory at the heart of national memorialization, and associates this condition of representation with the public memory of American colonial expansion over Native American nations.
Yet, even as the sculptures of Proposal gesture to these mnemonic fissures and absences, the next room traces— provisionally, incompletely, but suggestively—the contour of the unresolved colonial pasts the work aspires to bring to public consciousness. There, a central diorama “transposes” the original monuments referenced in the 30 sculptures, relocating them to the National Mall in Washington, DC. In this hypothetical and unlikely public art work—Proposal is obviously less a plan than a provocation—the monuments are positioned in two rows along either side of the reflecting pool between the Washington and Lincoln Memorials. Located there, the obelisk and tower shapes of the original monuments echo the 550-foot-tall Washington Memorial obelisk, by far the tallest and most prominent structure on the Mall. Clearly a deliberate point of contrast, the dramatically discrepant heights of the monuments point to the oppressive mnemonic logic structuring American realms of collective memory. While the differences in size are not surprising—anyone familiar with social hierarchy would expect the king to dwarf the pawns—the transformation of the spatial dynamics of the National Mall is jolting. Lining the reflecting pool at which visitors are encouraged to contemplate the unified nation-state secured in the presidencies of Washington and Lincoln, the proposed transposition splits open this homogeneous historical narrative embedded in the site and points to the whirlpool of colonial and indigenous history that frustrates the collective memory of the nation-state enshrined at the Mall.

Durant’s gallery installations are accompanied by a photographic key of the original monuments, as well as an essay by controversial indigenist scholar Ward Churchill that elaborates the “proposal” at stake in the work. The key provides viewers with the inscriptions of the monuments and can be used to associate the blank sculptures of the installation with the original memorials scattered across the continental United States. Durant’s guided reading of the work fleshes out the basic premises of the logic of nationalism embedded in the official locations of American historical memory. Only the smallest monuments memorialize Native Americans, typically the “faithful Indians” as one inscription puts it, while the largest monuments are for individual white men from the military officer class. Relocated to the mall, these monuments convey a militarized, race-biased, and settler-fixated hierarchy of historical memory linked to the nation-state, one in which General Washington is at the pinnacle of the pantheon, while enlisted white soldiers and male and female civilians are near the bottom. Indigenous people are almost buried beneath the overwhelming mass of historical memory, relegated to a few markers that seem less concerned with Native America than with contextualizing the broader violent triumphalism embedded in
the memorial space. This visual erasure, of course, speaks to the very real absence of Native people and history from public spaces and discourse, frequently appearing only as an abject residue on settler memory. While this absence has been challenged with limited success for generations, it remains the case today that, as Durant commented, “the ‘Indian question’ is so threatening that it really can’t be posed—if you do, the very foundation of the republic … comes immediately into question.”

Yet, Proposal does not stop at underscoring the incompleteness of national memory and memorialization, a point that is well established in many kinds of academic and popular discourse. Rather, the central thrust of the work is its propositional reformulation of national memory in support of decolonization—regardless of what this would do to the so-called “foundation” of the United States. To this end, Churchill’s essay recounts the long-term seizure of Native territories and other resources, as well as the various governmental and economic policies that have victimized Native America both historically and today. Yet the main thesis of the essay is that while there is no way of ahistorically “starting over” in indigenous-settler relationships, the present and future are heterogeneous, rich with clear if politically challenging possibilities. Most notable for Churchill is a program of financial reparations, the practical administrative details of which he explains in the course of the essay. While such a reparations program is as unlikely as the relocation of the monuments, the point of Proposal seems to be that while the present may often seem like an archive of lost possibilities for stopping empire, refashioned historical memory stirs new possibilities for now and the future. In short, by including this reparations-proposing essay, Durant underscores that his own Proposal is bound up with the broader project of imagining and producing decolonized alternatives, and that some new means of publicly redirecting how memory and time manifest themselves in public locations is a crucial part of this future decolonization. Indeed, Proposal suggests that only by moving the history of colonial violence to the center of American collective memory can the decolonization of North America begin. It is on that counter-historical basis that the piece gestures toward a new model of national—or perhaps postnational—identity and memory.

Considering Third Bank of the River in the field of postwar and contemporary art practices represented by Durant underscores a shared set of concerns that respond to a fundamental part of the cultural present, even as they are brought into critical engagement with different locations from quite different social and historical positions. Provisional but suggestive for revitalizing the present, they draw attention to the generative heterogeneity of time and find in the unresolved, unfinished work of the past a new access point to the future. For the work of these artists, such past projects and aspirations may inhere in specific locations, buried beneath the amnesia of non-places like the Land Port or many other points in the network of global cultural flows. Indeed, from these half-submerged pasts, they create a way of productively engaging the intersection of time and space in sites that avoids the perils of nostalgia or melancholy so often seen in art of the late twentieth and early 21st centuries. For them, the past is heterogeneous and disruptive of linear time, not darkly foreclosed to the present or future as if the ruined prelapsarian utopia often imagined by many who direct their attention to the past.

Inspired by recent artists interested in buried history—he cites Robert Smithson and Anselm Kiefer as early influences—Michelson began working with historical memory in the context of critical postmodernism’s critique of representation. An excellent example of this earlier stage of his career—which sought less to find alternative models to the present than to interrogate the totalizing structures of historical representation—is the artist’s 1992 contribution to the Lower Manhattan Sign Project of the New York art collective Repohistory—a revolving “study group” of New York artists and others founded in 1989 and dedicated to challenging public amnesia in contemporary art and urban spaces (Figure 5). Composed of screen-printed metal signs hung around the streets of downtown Manhattan, the Sign Project was designed to “retrieve and relocate absent historical narratives at specific locations,” from Canal Street to Battery Park. The use of public signs to interrupt official narratives of history was pioneered by Edgar Heap-of-Birds in the 1980s, and Alan Michelson’s contribution to the public exhibition is clearly influenced by...
Heap-of-Birds’ use of short powerful phrases to trigger public memory of the history of colonialism in specific locations. Michelson chose to address the history of “John Jacob Astor and the Native Americans,” hanging the silkscreened aluminum sign at the location of the former headquarters of Astor’s American Fur Company, which monopolized the American fur trade from 1808 to 1842. From top to bottom, the piece records in eight phrases the way the fur trade—ostensibly focused on trading “Our blankets for your beaver”—devolved into colonial exploitation, resulting in “Our whiskey for your sanity” and “Our profit for your exploitation.”

By focusing on the material forms that visually communicate the local, Michelson’s contribution...
to the Lower Manhattan Sign Project invites more than a new knowledge of colonial history. Rather, the work combined past history and the present grammatical tense to assert the ongoing presence of Native Americans and the evolving ramifications of earlier colonialism. Indeed, Michelson’s piece—and the rest of Repohistory’s Lower Manhattan Sign Project—typified how memory came to be figured as structurally oppositional within postmodernism. This figuration of memory could be called “interruptive,” operating in an insurgent manner to disrupt a restricted linearity of time in which Native America and American colonialism were confined to an absent past. As critic Rosalyn Deutsche wrote of the 1980s guerilla projection works of Krzysztof Wodiczko, memory functioned as an “ethical interruption [that] fissures the spaces of city just as it fissures the space of the self, violating what is already violent: forgetting of the other in the privatization of urban space.” 

The interruptive or potentially divisive practice differs from the more relational, connective practice that we see in Third Bank and Proposal.

The search for counter-models to the present through strategies of active connection making and reorientation through the repressed indigenous past has been a major concern in Michelson’s work since the 1990s, when he began investigating how traces of indigenous history comprise transformative but unacknowledged resources in official sites of public memory. His 1991 Earth’s Eye—which he identifies as a crucial watershed in his practice—is an early forerunner of the strategies of counter-memory in Third Bank of the River, responding to the whitewashing of colonial history in Collect Pond Park in Manhattan, and by extension metropolitan memorial space more broadly (Figure 6).

The outdoor public installation is based on counter-historical research into the former location of Collect Pond, a 55-acre freshwater pond once lying in place of the present-day public buildings now standing between Centre and Lafayette streets near City Hall. Michelson’s piece traces a scaled-down outline of the buried pond by arranging 40 white concrete monoliths in what is now called Collect Pond Park, each cast in low relief with the fossil-like shapes of human and animal life at the pond. Shells, deer tracks, and wild plants mingle with ears of maize, pointing to the untold centuries of coexistence of humans and other life forms with the pond and underscoring its significance as a freshwater source on the island. Yet the maize and other traces of past indigenous life found on the blocks collide with...
very different fossils embedded on their surfaces. These indicate the recent and contemporary urban use of the pond site through a mixture of fossilized broken bottles and other litter, much the same as that which was (given the city park location) inevitably scattered among the monoliths themselves.

Articulating multiple times and radically disparate uses, Earth’s Eye underscores the break between the long life of the pond under indigenous inhabitation of the island and the relatively recent colonial settlement that has manifested in the destruction of the pond, the ongoing pollution of the site, and, of course, the loss of the island by Native Americans. Taking a cue from a passage of Thoreau’s Walden—“A Lake . . . is Earth’s Eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature”—the work employs the pond as a way of stirring consciousness of these heterogeneous pasts. Perhaps there is a meaningful link between indigenous land uses and ideas and the thinking of a canonical Euro-American writer like Thoreau? The artwork makes such questions possibly through re-inscribing the pond within the park—remapping the space in a manner reminiscent of Third Bank’s vision of the Three Nations Crossing—and reminds viewers that for centuries the Lenni Lenape and other Native American nations harvested oysters from its waters, leaving gigantic piles of refuse shells along its shores. These distinctive middens—stand-ins for the displaced indigenous population—were part of the local landscape until the 19th century, when a range of pollutants from local industry and rapid urban development transformed the pond into a public health hazard in the crowded Five Points slum.

In response, the city decided to cover the pond by dumping these refuse piles—the last visible traces of indigenous history and occupation at the site—into the disease-brewing water. Despite being subsequently covered by a prison, the buried pond refused to disappear completely; its spring still flows underneath the nearby Criminal Courthouse, naturally cooling the building while continuing to inhabit the city in ghostly vaporous form. The story of Collect Pond—the displacement and abandonment to settler-generated toxic conditions, the burial of Native presence and subsequent traces of indigenous history, and the survival of haunting cultural reminders and remnants across the land—is clearly an historical allegory of the colonial domination of Native America, and indicates both the non-linearity of time and the past’s heterogeneous eruption in paved-over and seemingly homogeneous locations.

Despite the obviously different cultural forms and historical moments represented in the indexes of Michelson’s casts, Earth’s Eye also asserts a continuity between times and cultural practices. It underscores that, from the perspective of indigenous conceptions of inter-special justice, the destruction of the island as a Lenni Lenape homeland by the Dutch and later settlers is continuous with the historical and contemporary pollution of the pond. Spread evenly through the blocks of the pond’s contour, 12 of the work’s monoliths are cast with a word spelling out another Walden line—“A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air”—emphasizing the work’s critique of contemporary social relations that exploit, contaminate, and bury. In so doing, the piece uses the pond to raise a question about the “spirit” of contemporary urbanism and to transform the park from an unremarkable interference mostly indistinguishable from other downtown parks into a place where viewers could be reoriented to the continuous, overlapping streams of history and power relationships they inhabit or confront in urban space. The work ventures that, with this reorientation to the contemporary manifestations of colonial spatial territorializations, the viewer would be motivated to consider possible alternative ways of inhabiting the city and take seriously the counter-model offered, or at least represented, by centuries of Native experience.

**A PLACE TO BEGIN AGAIN**

Developing a similar concern with opening up contemporary relations to the repressed realms of indigenous history, Third Bank suggests a vision of a radically alternative sociopolitical order and a poignant, untimely reminder of the non-colonial relationships that might have been. Created as a vision of the border restructured by the historic Two Row agreement, the political charge of historical memory intensifies in the many layers of its immediate location. Its simultaneously nationalist and transnational message engages the immediate context of the Land Port, a structure itself designed to organize international public relationships between the United States and the rest of the world. Although Massena has been
a major crossing point with a small border station for over a century, the new Port of Land Entry was commissioned in response to the crisis of national security and national image apparent after 9/11. Opened to the public along with Third Bank in 2009, the station is an early example of a comprehensive, ongoing refashioning of North American borders implemented by the post-9/11 DHS as part of the War on Terror (Figure 7).43 Continuing indefinitely into the future, this simultaneously military and ideological process entails building dozens of new and expanded US border stations on both northern and southern borders, using Predator Drones to monitor the borderlands from above, and vastly expanding security and military personnel at all border crossings and elsewhere on the borders.44

Installed outside a gallery or museum context, Third Bank literally participates in a contemporary spatial reorganization of American international relationships against the intensification of imperial control facilitated by the border station. Amidst the re-entrenchment of “national security” at the new border complex, the work suggests a simultaneously local and global, historical and future decolonization to a diverse public composed of indigenous and non-indigenous, “local” and far-flung travelers. This dynamic, critical, if not antagonistic relationship to the Land Port is a key element of the work, as it displaces and redirects the new international relations that the Port itself was designed to sustain. Employing the typical velvet glove of neoliberal management, the new building complex is designed to be “aware of anxiety and how it unfolds” prior to any possible disruptions of the security procedures at the border.45 Far from presenting itself as an apparatus of sovereign power, then, the complex’s main building was designed to be an architecturally advanced and disarming “front door to the United States,” in direct contrast to the much smaller and generically police station–like complexes built prior to September 2001.46 In other words, the Port’s entire raison d’être is to recode the border in neutralized, quasi-domestic terms, an act of depoliticization that stands in stark contrast to the cross-national political dialogue solicited by Third Bank.

At first glance harmonizing with the unified surface, overwhelming symmetry, and parallelism of Third Bank, the Port façade is cloaked in geometrically arranged, rectilinear sheets of ballistic glass. Throughout the structure, these planes of glass largely replace opaque walls, illuminating and protecting the interior while creating panoptic views of the newly expanded 56-acre grounds and the adjoining highway and bridge. This systematic use of fragmented transparency obscures in a veil of light the blast-proof concrete walls protecting the most secure locations, hidden away in the sprawling complex. These are the offices located in the center of the building, directly behind the wall on which Third Bank is installed. Even the canopies of the main building are notably slender, bringing to mind suspended “airplane wings,” in the apt words of a reviewer, and offering a vision of the border as light, fluid, and detached from any form of locality.47 This lightness and fluidity extend to the navigation of the grounds as well, where drivers follow yellow painted lines on the pavement instead of dodging through an obstacle course of curbs, as the latter were determined,
according to the architects, to connote the state-controlled barriers the Port is designed to downplay in the service of global internationalism.\textsuperscript{48}

If, as Deleuze and Guattari famously suggested, there is a differential relationship between the “smooth” spaces of nomadic capital and bodies and the “striated” space of state power, the Port represents the paradoxical indistinguishability between these seemingly opposed actors and their spatial manifestations in contemporary globalization.\textsuperscript{49}

The Port’s panoptic use of controlled openness for the ends of national security was even more apparent at the time that \textit{Third Bank of the River} was installed there (Figure 8). As can be seen in photographs of the complex, the main building was designed and built with a massive 21-foot electric sign attached to its St. Lawrence-facing façade. This yellow “United States” sign was deliberately planned to resist “patriotic” readings, seeking instead to code the building and the entire country in the more internationally appealing terms of American popular and commercial visual culture comparable to the “Hollywood sign.”\textsuperscript{50} Yet the sign, despite being so carefully conceived as an important part of the port’s messaging agenda, was removed only 3 weeks after the building opened in 2009—a controversial act protested by the architects (who include only photos of the building with the sign in their online portfolio), revealing the limits to which a national border can be visually and spatially depoliticized from above. (Not to mention the degree to which the market-recuperated Pop aesthetic—its designer compares it to an Oldenburg anti-monument—can be used to convey a specifically national message, particularly one first and foremost concerned with militarily securing a location.) That is, in the years after 9/11 in the United States, such representation must always take into consideration the means-ends logic of “security” from terrorism, according to a DHS spokesperson.\textsuperscript{51} This is where the sign presented problems, as its advertising-like size and glowing yellow color “attract undue attention” and thus “could be a huge target” for terrorist attacks on the station.\textsuperscript{52}

While the removal of the sign unquestionably demonstrated what \textit{New York Times} architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff criticized as post-9/11 state paranoia, it more tellingly reveals a pronounced anxiety surrounding contemporary national representation, and particularly official self-presentation.\textsuperscript{53} Undoubtedly, this uncertainty is bound up with forces long predating the 2001 terrorist attacks, most notably the long-intensifying structural dependence of the state on the external

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Smith-Miller and Hawkinson Architects, Massena, NY Land Port of Entry, 2009. Photograph courtesy Michael Moran and Smith-Miller and Hawkinson.}
\end{figure}
flows of global finance, military and agribusiness exports, and popular culture, as well as incoming flows of oil, cheap manufactured goods, and low-wage laborers. Recently, this intense contradiction in national self-presentation has been dramatically apparent in the United States’ assertion of a right to unilateral military action, while, on a micro-political level, it is marked by the grassroots growth of neo-nationalist and militant Christian evangelical ideologies embraced by the growing numbers of North American “losers of globalization.” The strife of ideology with structural reality is embodied in the dialectical goals of the Land Port’s spatial territorializations: a smooth “open” space that expands and intensifies the rigid striated space of state sovereignty.54 The architectural results of this spatial agenda register the paradox: even as few who pass across the border would question the ongoing significance of the nation-state, the complex more closely resembles the many transnational sites of transportation and nomadic inhabitation—what sociologist Marc Augé would call a “non-place”—than a particularly “national” site.55 This is even more the case after the removal of the “United States” sign, the primary signifier of the American nation-state at Three Nations Crossing.

Yet how does Michelson’s work, with its invocation of a specific political model, indigenous American cultural tradition, and historic political agreement, function in such a non-place context? While I have framed the work as oppositional—hardly unexpected in contemporary art history—the work might also be read as instrumentalized by the state and corporate power alliance of contemporary empire. Perhaps the piece’s quasi-utopian, arguably too romantic vision of nation-to-nation autonomy was subsumed within the border stations’ structure of control. Or possibly it may be claimed, even more reductively, that the work is simply a token of locality, not unlike those small displays of “local” color on view at nearly any American airport (e.g. the displays of Native American art at Albuquerque International in New Mexico or Fairbanks International in Alaska). Yet these reductive readings fail to engage the way Michelson’s piece charts a course between nomadism or ersatz localism, the way it, too, registers the irresolution of contemporary globalization but with an eye toward the critical purchases they provide.56 It places the viewer within a chronologically continuous and culturally specific history of political relationships and transforms the Land Port from an unmoored non-place into a conflicted border “place” bound up with millennia of indigenous history, as well as centuries of indigenous–settler political agreements, conflicts, and coexistence characteristic of North American spatial politics. It provides an indigenous perspective against the capacity of the post-9/11 security structures and discourses to erase ongoing matters of indigenous sovereignty across nation-state borders.

In taking this agonistic position against the “welcoming” and placeless architecture of the Land Port, Third Bank reminds us that, as critic Benjamin Buchloh asserts, given the broad instrumentalization of architecture by state and capital, virtually “any radical aesthetic practice [today] would have to define itself inevitably in a contentious relation, if not in manifest opposition to architecture.” Indeed, while the alterations of “security” practices embodied in the spatial dynamics of the Land Port might be understood as constituting a dramatic shift in sets of social relations, Third Bank of the River makes clear that this encouragement of managed flow and amnesia in fact reveals a simultaneous violent constancy in global imperial domination. The changes in contemporary power relations at Akwesasne and elsewhere are intensifications of already existing relations. Third Bank asserts that the amnesia and dis-identification of the non-place constitute less a break with the colonial past than the morphologically transformed continuation of a centuries-old globalization tending toward the domination of indigenous nations, as well as the marginalizing of indigenous politics and thought from public memory and discourse about the future of global political-economic relations and cultures.

Yet, even as Third Bank leads us to acknowledge the continuity of power and domination that structure contemporary spaces, its foregrounding of the wampum belt and its indigenization of international relations offer a seductive glimpse of historical alternatives and possible futures for more justly organizing the uneven political and social relationships of globalization. As Haudenosaunee diplomats underscored to Canada over two decades ago, the 17th-century belt “remains the basis for all treaties and agreements,” and, perhaps as they suggested, even in the world of postwar globalization it remains “possible to strike
up the Two Row wampum between us, so that we may go our ways, side by side in friendship and peace." Similarly, the artwork asks the viewer to consider what alternatives are available to the contemporary power dynamics represented by Three Nations Crossing, offering the Two Row wampum as one possible transformative starting point, blasted from the false continuum of history. What might such a transformed relationship between peoples look like, not just in an artwork but also in the wider field of globalized relations?

Notes
1. There is a vast literature on memory in contemporary art. Of particular influence on this essay are Lisa Saltzman, Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Andreas Huyssen, “Memories of Utopia,” in Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia, ed. Andreas Huyssen (New York: Routledge, 1995), 85–101; James E. Young, At Memory’s Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); and Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” October 110 (2004): 3–22.

2. Huyssen, “Memories of Utopia,” 88. Huyssen is engaging with the critical historical work of Ernst Bloch on the role of memory in sustaining utopian projects and aspirations. See Ernst Bloch, The Principle of Hope, vols. 1–3, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

3. I use the term “community of sense” in reference to the well-known idea proposed by Jacques Rancière that political relations are founded upon a sensory fabric that knits together multiple senses, bodies, and sensations. For a particularly insightful application of this concept to contemporary artworks see, Sarah Beth Hinderliter et al., eds. Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

4. Alex Frango, “Border Patrol’s New Look: Architectural Firms Balance Security and Design Needs in Revamp of Entry Stations,” Wall Street Journal (2004), http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB109399072766006232 (accessed April 15, 2015).

5. See Alix Ohlin, “Andreas Gursky and the Contemporary Sublime,” Art Journal 61, no. 4 (2002): 22–35. Also see Kate Morris, “Running the ‘Medicine Line’: Images of the Border in Contemporary Native American Art,” American Indian Quarterly 35, no. 4 (2011): 549–78.

6. Colin G. Calloway, First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History, 2nd ed. (Boston: St. Martin’s, 2004), 146.

7. Paul Otto, “Wampum, Tawagonshi, and the Two Row Belt.” Journal of Early American History 3, no. 1 (2013): 110. Grand Chief Michael Mitchell, “An Unbroken Assertion of Sovereignty,” in Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country, ed. Boyce Richardson (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1989), 110.

8. Kathryn V. Muller, “The Two ‘Mystery’ Belts of the Grand River: A Biography of the Two Row Wampum and the Friendship Belt,” American Indian Quarterly 31, no. 1 (2007): 132.

9. Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 139–64.

10. See Mitchell, “Unbroken Assertion,” 110. Also see the Akwesasne Nation’s explanation of the belt at http://www.akwesasne.ca/tworowwampum.html (accessed November 3, 2014) and the explanation provided by Mohawk philosopher Taiaiake Alfred, Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1999), 52.

11. Ibid.

12. Alfred, Peace, Power, Righteousness, 52.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.; and Wasáxe: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005), 266.

15. See George R Hamell, “The Iroquois and the World’s Rim: Speculations on Color, Culture, and Contact,” American Indian Quarterly 16, no. 4 (1992): 451–69.

16. Ibid.

17. Alan Michelson, Interview by Author (New York, NY, 2010).

18. Ibid.

19. Brian Deer, “Wampum and the Iroquois: A Brief Overview,” http://people.umass.edu/hist170/BrianDeer.htm (accessed April 11, 2015).

20. Michelson, Interview by Author.

21. Darren Bonaparte, “The Two Row Wampum Belt: An Akwesasne Tradition of the Vessel and the Canoe,” The People’s Voice August 5, 2005, http://www.wampumchronicles.com/tworowwampumbelt.html (accessed November 2, 2014). For the role of the Two Row wampum in contemporary politics, see the “Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign” project website: http://honorthetworow.org/ (accessed November 2, 2014).

22. Alfred, Peace, Power, Righteousness, 52; and Alfred, Wasáxe, 266.

23. Ibid.

24. See Kate Morris, “Running the ‘Medicine Line’: Images of the Border in Contemporary Native American Art.” American Indian Quarterly 35, no. 4 (2011): 551.

25. Mitchell, “Unbroken Assertion,” 110.

26. Michelson, Interview by Author.
27. Quoted in Hannah Feldman, “Excavating Images on the Border,” Third Text 23, no. 2 (2009): 309–22.
28. See Audra Simpson, Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
29. See Jesse Freeston, “A Voice from the Akwesasne Border Stand-off: ‘Start Listening to Mohawk People’,” Indian Country Today, June 22, 2009, 38, Deer, op. cit. For the need for indigenous people to propose alternative social orders, see Alfred, Wäsäse, 104.
30. Windsor Starr, “Predator Drones Patrolling Canada-U.S. Border,” National Post, July 24, 2009, http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=1727873 (accessed November 5, 2014).
31. See the references in note 1, as well as Pierre Nora, Realms of Memory, vols. 1–3, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). For a broad discussion of art and culture in transnational and intercultural contexts, see the John Sundholm and Adrian Velicu, “Introduction to the Dossier on Transnational Cultural Memory” in Journal of Aesthetics & Culture 3 (2011), http://www.aestheticsandculture.net/index.php/jac/article/view/7247 (accessed April 13, 2015).
32. The work and texts can be viewed on the artist’s website: http://samdurant.net/index.php/projects/proposal-for-white-and-indian-dead-monuments-tr (accessed November 2, 2014).
33. Sam Durant, ed. Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions, Washington, DC (New York: Paula Cooper Gallery, 2005).
34. Quoted in John LeKay, “Interview: Sam Durant,” Heyoka Magazine 3 (Winter 2006), http://www.heyokamagazine.com/HEYOKA.3.SCULPT.SAM DURANT.htm (accessed August 1, 2010).
35. Michelson, Interview by Author.
36. The work is archived on Repohistory founding artist Gregory Sholette’s website: http://www.gregorysholette.com/?page_id=71 (accessed November 2, 2014). The quotation comes from Lucy Lippard’s essay for the project, published as “Anti-Amnesia” in Cultural Activisms: Poetic Voices, Political Voices, eds. Gertrude M. James Gonzalez and Anne J. M. Mamary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 185–94.
37. Rosalyn Deutsche, quoted in Lisa Saltzman, Making Memory Matter, 41.
38. Michelson, Interview by Author.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Interestingly, the city still fails to mention this history. Its official account of Collect Pond refers to the pond being filled by “earth from an adjacent hill.” See the New York City Parks Department website, http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/historical_signs/hs_historical_sign.php?id=11238 (accessed November 2, 2014).
43. Frango, “Border Patrol’s New Look.”
44. Jaffer Kolb, “For Security Reasons, We Can’t Tell You the Name of the Country You’re Entering,” Architectural Review 226, no. 1352 (2009): 29–30.
45. See Smith-Miller and Hawthorne, “Architects’ Release: Land Port of Entry at Massena,” http://smharch.com/project_template.php?id=5&category=transportation (accessed November 5, 2014).
46. Nicolai Ouroussoff, “At a Border Crossing, Security Trumps Openness,” New York Times, July 27, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/27/arts/design/27 border.html?pagewanted=all (accessed April 15, 2015).
47. Ibid.
48. Yet even as these replacements of the many anxiety-producing design codes associated with security may project an image of the United States as remaining “open” despite the militarization of its borders, they were only approved by the Department of Homeland Security after the consideration of their security benefits: the careful contrasts between largely transparent “public” spaces and the muted fortification of the whole facility provide a mixture of increased surveillance capacity, longer sight-lines for ballistic weapons, and a decrease in energy costs (an increasingly important security concern).
49. For “the smooth and striated,” see Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (London: Continuum, 2004), 523–51.
50. See Ellen Lupton, “When Design is Too Good: Stunning Border Signage is Deemed a Threat,” Fast Company Magazine, August 12, 2009, http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/ellen-lupton/design-your-life/when-design-too-good (accessed November 5, 2014).
51. Ibid.
52. Ouroussoff, “At a Border Crossing.”
53. Ibid.
54. For a concise analysis of these contradictions in space and structure, see David Harvey, The New Imperialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
55. See Marc Augé, Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity (London: Verso, 1995).
56. Anita Seppä, “Globalisation and the Arts: The Rise Of New Democracy, Or Just Another Pretty Suit For The Old Emperor?,” Journal of Aesthetics & Culture (2010), http://www.aestheticsandculture.net/index.php/jac/article/view/5410 (accessed April 15, 2015).
57. Benjamin Buchloh, “Detritus and Decrepitude: The Sculpture of Thomas Hirschhorn,” Oxford Art Journal 24, no. 2 (2002): 43.
58. Mitchell, “An Unbroken Assertion,” 110.