



Introduction: Indigenous Futurisms in the hyperpresent now

Suzanne Newman Fricke

To cite this article: Suzanne Newman Fricke (2019) Introduction: Indigenous Futurisms in the hyperpresent now, World Art, 9:2, 107-121, DOI: [10.1080/21500894.2019.1627674](https://doi.org/10.1080/21500894.2019.1627674)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21500894.2019.1627674>



Published online: 06 Sep 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 6103



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 8 View citing articles [↗](#)

Introduction: Indigenous Futurisms in the hyperpresent now

Suzanne Newman Fricke*

Department of Art History, Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM, USA

Introduced less than two decades ago, Indigenous Futurisms envisions the future from an Native perspective in fiction and in visual arts. Usually described through the disciplines of anthropology, cultural studies, and comparative literature, scholars including Grace Dillon, Jason Lewis, William Gaertner, and William Lempert, have explored the concept. As it has moved more and more into the visual arts, scholarship from an art historical approach is necessary. Through Indigenous Futurisms, artists including Sonny Assu, Andy Everson, Suzanne Kite, Ryan Singer, Skawennati, Hoka Skenandore, Jeffrey Veregge, and Debra Yepa-Pappan have addressed a range of difficult topics, including the long impact of colonization, institutional racism, destruction of the environment, and genocide. While many of these artists work in historic media such as painting, drawing, beadwork, and photography, the field encourages artists to explore new media including digital art, virtual reality, and websites. This essay consider the term “Indigenous Futurisms” and its impact of the field of visual culture and art history.

Keywords: indigenous futurism; Grace Dillon; Jeffrey Veregge; Skawennati; contemporary Native American art

Introduction

Since Indigenous Futurisms was introduced as a term less than two decades ago, studies in the field have grown, moving from comparative literature, cultural studies, and anthropology into visual arts. Scholars including Grace Dillon, Elizabeth LaPensée, Jason Lewis, Skawennati, William Gaertner, and William Lempert, have explored how writers and artists in the field offer an Indigenous perspective in fiction and in visual arts. As it has moved more and more into the visual arts, scholarship from an art-historical approach is necessary. Through Indigenous Futurisms, artists including Sonny Assu, Andy Everson, Suzanne Kite, Ryan Singer, Skawennati, Hoka Skenandore, Jeffrey Veregge, and Debra Yepa-Pappan have addressed a range of difficult topics, including the long

*Email: suzanne@fricke.co.uk

impact of colonization, institutional racism, destruction of the environment, and genocide. While many of these artists work in historic media such as painting, drawing, beadwork, and photography, the field encourages artists to explore new media including digital art, virtual reality, and web-sites. This essay considers the term 'Indigenous Futurisms' and charts its impact on the field of visual culture and art history. The contributions of this special issue will explore different aspects of Indigenous Futurisms in *visual arts* and how artworks and commentary on them offer new visions of what the world could be as well as what it could have been since.¹

To anyone familiar with Native American cultures from the Southwest, it is no surprise that the first movie dubbed into Diné (Navajo) was *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Released in 2013, this version was part of an effort to encourage fluency in Diné, especially for children,² yet the choice of *Star Wars* suggests something more than just the film's popularity. Set a 'long, long time ago in a galaxy far far away,' *Star Wars* envisioned a universe where elemental forces and futuristic technologies co-existed, offering characters and settings that were both familiar and alien. Over the past few decades the film has inspired a number of Native American artists, so much so that the Museum of Northern Arizona is hosting a show about *Star Wars* imagery in art from Indigenous artists in the Southwest, including the painter Ryan Singer (Diné), Michael Toya Jr. (Jemez), Farlan and Alesia Quetawki (Zuni).

Ryan Singer, in particular, cites *Star Wars* in his work. Singer is a painter who is of the Tódich'iinii (Bitter Water) clan and born for the Kinya'aani (Towering House) clan. He grew up watching science fiction in movies and on television, such as *Star Trek* and *Flash Gordon*, but it was *Star Wars* that especially captured his imagination. '*Star Wars* was always with me. When I was a kid, I had a big imagination and my homeland blended into Tatooine' (Fricke 2016, 34). In his paintings, he combines elements from his homeland with the characters and locations from the movies, as seen in *Tuba City Spaceport* from 2011 (Figure 1). Tuscan Raiders and Jawas stand next to Diné women wearing turquoise jewelry and broomstick skirts at the trading post in Tuba City in Dinétah, which resembles the desert city of Mos Eisley. With landspeeders and horse-drawn carriages parked next to each another, Singer weaves together the historical and the fictional, allowing the past, present, and future to co-exist.

Singer's ability to envision a future from an Indigenous perspective encapsulates many ideas within the discourse of Indigenous Futurisms. As defined by the noted professor of Indigenous Studies Grace Dillon (Bay Mills-Garden River Ojibwe), 'Indigenous Futurisms offer new ways of reading our own ancient natures' (Dillon 2016, 6). Expressed in literature and in the visual arts, Indigenous Futurisms describes a world based on historic narratives, cultural beliefs, and aesthetics. The study of Indigenous Futurisms initially encompassed science fiction novels and



Figure 1. Ryan Singer, *Tuba City Spaceport*. 30" × 40", Acrylic on canvas, 2011.

short stories by Indigenous writers, yet it applies equally well to the visual arts. Images can contain narratives since, as Dillon (2016, 4) noted, Indigenous artists 'have emphasized how Indigenous knowledge is *embodied*. ... Native objects *are* information, and they convey political and aesthetic purpose simultaneously.' For Indigenous artists, science fiction provides the language to conceptualize a world outside of colonial influences, beyond the loss of homeland, resources, and the unethical treatment of the population. 'Indigenous Futurisms are not the product of a victimized people's wishful amelioration of their past, but instead a continuation of a spiritual and cultural path that remains unbroken by genocide and war' (Dillon 2016, 2). These works layer images and narratives from popular culture with specific Indigenous aesthetics and ideas, borrowing from *Star Trek*, *Doctor Who*, the Marvel Universe, and especially from *Star Wars*.

Indigenous Futurisms offer a vision of the world from an Indigenous (or Native American) perspective in terms of aesthetics and ideology. It offers a forum to address difficult topics, such as: the long impact of conquest, colonialism, and imperialism; ideas about the frontier and Manifest Destiny; about the role of women within a community; and about the perception of time. Science fiction ties into an Indigenous perspective. For example, the idea of the apocalypse, common to many science fiction

narratives, is not fictive to Indigenous cultures who have experienced the destruction of their homeland, genocidal attacks, and the attempt to wipe out their history. Indigenous Futurisms offer a place away from colonialism, or sometimes a place in which colonialism never occurred. For Lindsay Nixon (2016), Cree-Métis-Saulteaux curator and editor-at-large for *Canadian Art*,

The future imaginary and its catalogue of science fictive imageries affords Indigenous artists a creative space to respond to the dystopian now ... Indigenous artists have no problem portraying possible undesirable futures wherein colonial capitalist greed has resulted in the subjugation of life within all creation, because these narratives are evocative of our known realities. ... we are living in a dystopian settler-occupied oligarchy fueled by resource extraction and environmental contamination, completely alternative to our traditional ways of being and knowing. (see also Wikler 2016)

Beverly Singer, a Tewa and Diné filmmaker and professor of American Studies at the University of New Mexico, pointedly signals this when she borrows from *Star Wars*' iconic crawl at the beginning of the movie for her short film *Blank Stare at Movie Indians* from 2015 (Figure 2). In this piece, Singer considers how the federal government stole tribal lands and attempted to eradicate Indigenous peoples at the same time as these very same people were trivialized in popular culture, which continued to insist on their spiritual connection to the land. The crawl reads,

We are laughed at for suggesting genocide happened to our ancestors and continues into the present. Our societies are based on the cycles of the natural world. We know Earth, her land, her veins of water, and her breath belong to the Great Mystery which is still with US, the First Peoples of the Americas.

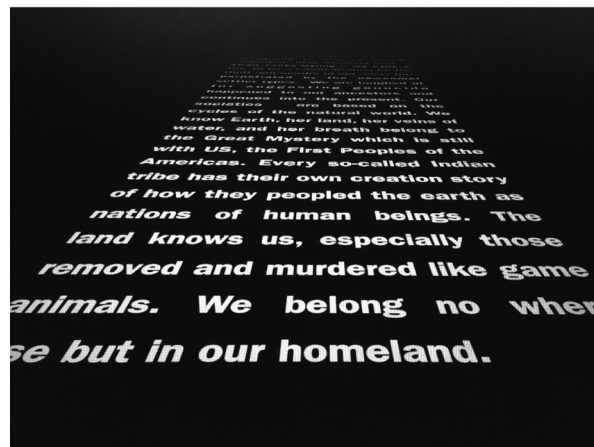


Figure 2. Beverly Singer, *Blank Stare at Movie Indians*, 2015.

Singer's use of *Star Wars*' signature introductory text ties into the basic tenets of the franchise, especially the idea of the Force, concluding with 'We belong no where else but in our homeland.' Tying her powerful message to *Star Wars* allows the filmmaker to make an unconscious association with a larger audience.

Star Wars imagery has gained wider traction, used by Indigenous artists outside the Southwest as well. Jeffrey Veregge, a member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe with Suquamish and Duwamish tribal ancestry (Coast Salish area), attended the Art Institute of Seattle. In his work, Veregge uses design elements from tribes along the Pacific coast. Veregge studied with Tsimshian master carver David Boxley. As an important carver and painter living in Alaska, David Boxley has been a major influence on the production of art in the region. He offers classes in Northwest Coast Indigenous design and Box Drum-making for younger artists. Since Veregge was a child, he has been fascinated by comics, television, and movies. Melding his passions for art and for science fiction, Veregge uses a broad concept of Northwest Coast design vocabulary to illustrate figures from popular science fiction, such as *She's Got It Where It Counts* from 2014 (Figure 3). Named for Han Solo's infamous claim about his rickety ship, Veregge captures the Millennium Falcon's personality: constantly on the verge of falling apart, then coming to the rescue at the last minute. Veregge adapts the historic Coast Salish and Northern forms, rendering the Falcon using u-forms, ovoids, and circles with crescent forms. Veregge has animated the ship, rendering her as a bird with a blue tail and a beak-like form with teeth and eyes, pulling humanity out of the darkness and towards light. The overall shape of the ship suggests the form of Raven, an important protagonist in many Northwest Coast stories. Raven serves as a trickster figure whose actions often inadvertently bring positive changes. As told by Haida artist Bill Reid, Raven releases the sun, which had been hidden away in a bentwood box (Reid and Bringhurst 1996). The piece draws a comparison between Raven and the Millennium Falcon; neither are reliable, yet both are capable of rescue.

Andy Everson, born in Comox, British Columbia, in 1972, is the grandson of the late Chief Andy Frank of the K'ómoks First Nation, located between the larger Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw. Everson applies historic styles from Northwest Coast design to his portraits of leading characters from *Star Wars*. In *Rise*, Everson embraces the Dark Side, printing mainly in black to depict Darth Vader in the guise of Raven, seen in two Raven beaks on the helmet. Everson splits the design of the bird into two halves, mirroring the elements on both sides. This is a common Northwest Coast approach to design used on hats and jewelry (Stewart 1979, 33). The cloak has two types of black feathers: stylized feather forms on the breastplate and a feathered collar represented in a naturalistic style. On the wall behind Darth Vader is an image of the Thunderbird, a giant

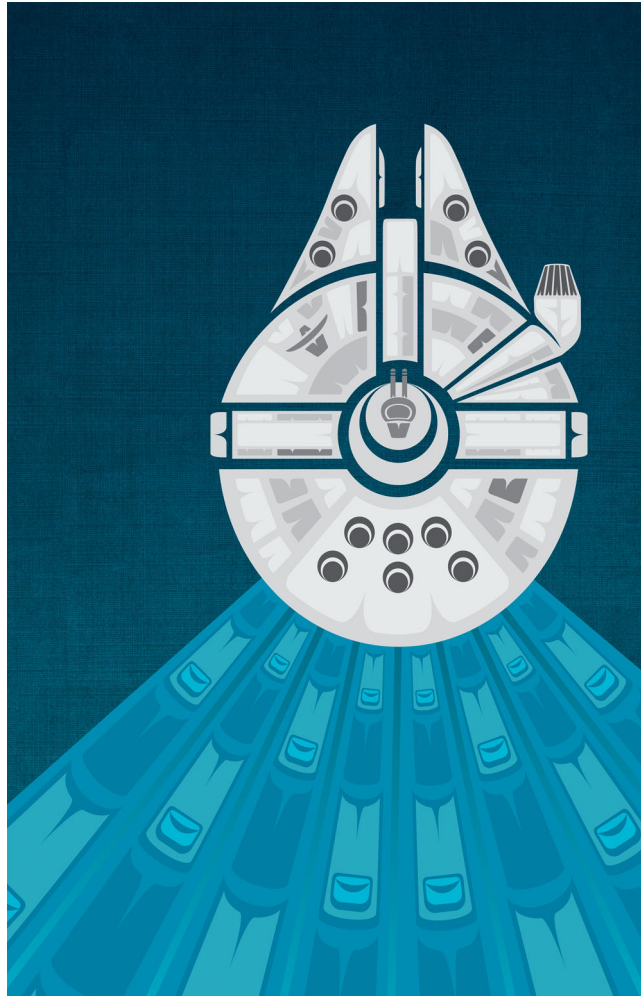


Figure 3. Jeffrey Veregge, *She's Got It Where It Counts*, digital print, 2014.

supernatural being with a curved beak and large wings. Symbolizing power and strength, Thunderbird feeds on Killer Whales, creates thunder by flapping his wings, and shoots bolts of lightning from his eyes. Standing behind Vader, Everson seems to reference the relationship between the Emperor and Vader, his Padawan or Jedi apprentice. The choice to show Vader as Raven with the Emperor as a Thunderbird behind him offers an Indigenous spin on the familiar story (Figure 4).

In addition to work with references to popular science fiction, the genre also includes images where artists create their own narratives about the future. In the 2011 series *Thunder Up Above*, Apsáalooke artist Wendy Red Star sewed elaborate dance dresses and constructed headpieces for a futuristic powwow, which she photographed in front of a galactic

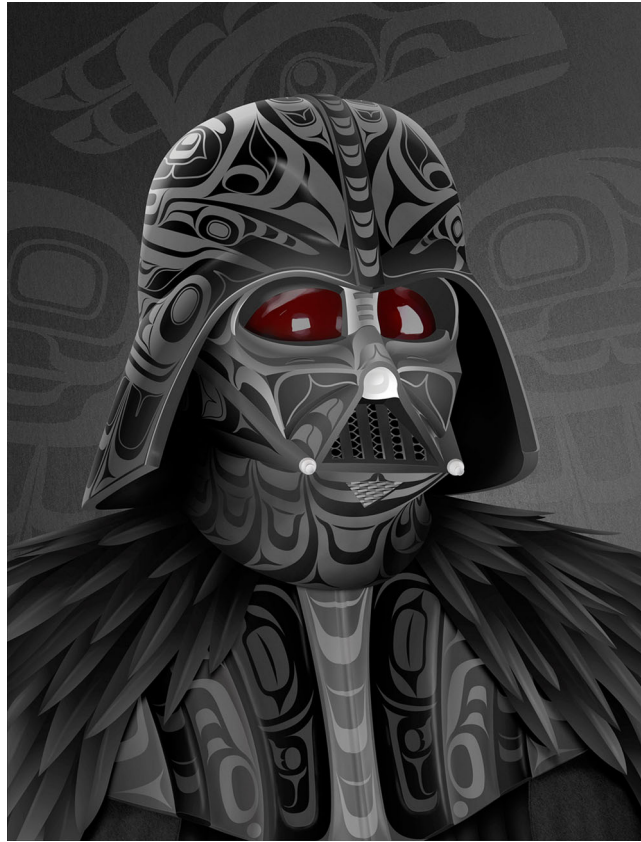


Figure 4. Andy Everson, *Rise*, Giclée, 2017.

landscape. Santiago X (Coushatta) builds installations such as *New Cahokia*, a revisioning of the ancient mounds from the Mississippian Culture using lights, screens, and videos.

Sonny Assu (Ligwilda'xw of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations) uses Kwakwaka'wakw style to consider Indigenous presence in Canadian history and contemporary life. For his series *Interventions on the Imaginary* from 2016, Assu appropriates the work of Emily Carr, the noted Canadian painter. Not a member of the First Nations, Carr nevertheless often included Indigenous people as though they were part of an ahistorical past. Carr appropriated First Nations people and art; Assu appropriates Carr's paintings, adding Northwest Coast elements to represent UFOs and video games as seen in *Yeah ... shit's about to go sideways* (Figure 5). In Assu's vision, the alien ship is about to abduct a group from the First Nations, not as an act of aggression but an act of salvation, a move to safety. Artist and writer Shaun Peterson (Puyallup) noted in an email to me that



Figure 5. Sonny Assu, *Yeah ...Shit's About to Go Sideways. I'll Take You to Amerind. You'll Like It, Looks Like Home*, 2016. Digital intervention on an Emily Carr Painting (Cape Mudge: An Indian Family with Totem Pole, 1912). Archival Pigment Print. Image courtesy of the artist and the Equinox Gallery. © Sonny Assu.

Although science has informed much of the way we see the world, sometimes science and sci-fi ... have to catch up to Indigenous knowledge in respecting nature and a science that is not written on paper but worked out of trial and error, refined into ways that much like Assu's paintings give way for the forms to be a stand-alone entity unto themselves that interact with the landscapes and environments that are equally so ever changing by many hands through the generations. (Peterson, pers. comm. 2018)

The term Indigenous Futurisms reflects ideas in Afrofuturism, coined by cultural critic Mark Dery in his 1993 article 'Black to the Future.' Dery marks the beginning of Afrofuturism in the mid-twentieth century, when

artists conceived of a future from an African-American perspective. The field includes musicians like Sun Ra, Grace Jones, and George Clinton, writers like Octavia Butler, and the artists Ellen Gallagher and Kehinde Wiley. Afrofuturism has become more popular in recent years, especially visible in the impact of the movie *Black Panther*. *Black Panther's* director Ryan Coogler created a space governed by African cultural styles, highly technological, financially rich, and where values like helping community and family are held in high esteem.

Given the recent origins of the term 'Indigenous Futurism,' it is important to consider its origin. The term was first explored in depth by Dillon in her 2012 *Walking the Clouds*, a collection of science fiction stories by Indigenous authors. Dillon (2012, 2) writes that her book '...weds sf [sic] theory and Native intellectualism, Indigenous scientific literacy, and western techno-cultural science, scientific possibilities enmeshed with Skin thinking.' This designation is used deliberately, to navigate the complicated, sometimes contradictory ways in which language is used in this field. To better articulate the resonances, I discussed the term with the contributing authors for this special issue. As a group, all adhere to the view that Indigenous Futurisms can encompass a variety of ideas and images.

The use of 'Indigenous' rather than 'Native' or 'Native American' allows the idea to encompass a wider range of cultures. As a designation, 'Indigenous Peoples' emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, especially with the formation of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations by the United Nations in 1982 (Teves, Smith, and Raheja 2015). The United Nations wrote that Indigenous Peoples 'retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.' Using Indigenous rather than Native American, Native, or American Indian stresses the ties to colonized people across the globe. Amber Hickey (pers. comm. 2019) cites Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne-Hodulgee Muscogee), who argued that 'Native American' is essentially a Eurocentric term since it positions Indigenous populations against colonizers.³ Tuscarora artist, curator, and professor of visual culture at Cornell University Jolene Rickard agrees with Harjo, arguing that 'Indigenous' serves as a link to the other colonized people across the globe.⁴ For some scholars and artists, the choice can vary according to the situation. Yvonne Tiger (pers. comm. 2019) observes,

I use the terms differently depending on my audience and about whom I am speaking. I can refer to myself as both Indigenous and Native American in the same conversation, but my decision to use a term is a deliberate choice, usually to emphasize relationships, either cultural or political. It is broader and more encompassing.

The word 'Futurisms' as used in literature and in forms of criticism suggests a fictional time that is to come, yet for art historians it can be

problematic. Within the visual arts, the term refers to an early twentieth-century art movement that distinguished itself by its energetic abstract art and by the maliciousness of its dogma. The Futurists championed misogyny, racism, and radical nationalism. In the manifesto published in 1909 on the front page of *Le Figaro*, France's leading paper, the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' equated museums with cemeteries and described war as 'the world's only hygiene.' The movement was short-lived, with several prominent members of the group dying during the First World War, yet it had a strong impact on the history of visual arts. For example, the cityscapes of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* owe a significant debt to Antonio Sant'Elia's drawings.

Indigenous Futurisms do not derive from the Futurist Movement, nor are they necessarily about the future or some time to come. Rather, the term suggests a time outside of the timeline we are in. It could even refer to the past, to a re-envisioning of what has already happened. As the artist and writer Andrea Carlson (2018) notes, '[t]he future, or the idea of the future, is an unoccupied space, or a space in theory only.' Indigenous Futurisms allow writers and artists to use ideas from science fiction in a meaningful way. Though science fiction is not usually seen as a serious genre, it has the potential to challenge cultural norms. As a means to move beyond the either/or analysis, these narratives show not only what is but also what could be. Cultural anthropologist William Lempert (2015) writes,

Indigenous futurisms are about more than simply being included in sci-fi films. By assuming that Native peoples are not just relics of the past, but have as many complex cultural and political futures as Western societies, Native sci-fi has the potential to help reimagine the assumptions that inform the social and policy treatment of contemporary Indigenous peoples.

Science fiction has long integrated tropes of Native life. Science fiction writer Rebecca Roanhorse (Ohkay Owingeh/African-American) observed that all too often mainstream science fiction

reads like colonial fantasy – conquering planets, hostile natives, the individual against the harsh terrain of a distant world. Even earth-based science fiction, like the new HBO series *Westworld*, seems to play out its future imaginings on the backs of Natives. (in Roanhorse et al. 2018)

This phenomenon is discussed at length in the podcast series 'Métis in Space,' hosted by Molly Swain and Chelsea Vowel, which explores just how often this happens. Looking through the four seasons of the podcast, there are few science fiction/fantasy/horror series that do not use stereotypes of Native Americans. The 2009 movie *Avatar* features

blue ‘natives’ from Pandora who seem to live a stereotypical tribal lifestyle, so much so that it has been mocked in a video by the Native American comedy troupe the 1491s in ‘The Avatars.’ In the episode ‘The Paradise Syndrome’ from *Star Trek: The Original Series*, Captain Kirk visits a planet inhabited by a group in buckskins, beads and feathers. Princess Leia’s iconic hair whorls from *Star Wars: A New Hope* have often been seen as inspired by the hairstyle of the Butterfly Maiden, a Hopi figure. This appropriation is, by any other name, cultural colonization.

The location of the future appears in many places, including indigenous lands, in space, and perhaps especially online. Jason Lewis, Professor of Design and Computation Arts at Concordia University, and Skawennati (née Skawennati Tricia Fragnito) constructed CyberPowWow (CPW), an interactive space with chat rooms and a digital art gallery. CPW, which opened in 1997 and ran online until 2004, connects indigenous communities in rural and urban areas, opening up a new space to share cultural ideas. For Lewis and Fragnito (2005, 29), ‘The first CyberPowWow exhibition declared our intention to be full participants in the ongoing evolution of cyberspace.’ It served as an online answer for communities who could not meet up in real space and indigenous people living away from their reservations. Users could create avatars with indigenous appearances and clothing, which was important for Tlingit curator Candice Hopkins. Hopkins (2006, 343) notes,

One of the first questions I am always asked upon logging on – even though I am represented by an avatar in cyberspace – is where I am located and where I am from. In the end, CyberPowWow is not an experience of shedding identity but an exercise in reaffirming it.

Lewis and Skawennati lead the Initiative for Indigenous Futures (IIF), a partnership between universities and community organizations to help bring an Indigenous perspective to new technologies. The IIF organizes workshops, residencies, and symposia, all aiming to ‘offer up alternative readings of past events as well as visions of a future that centre Indigenous peoples in the narrative, whose stories grow out of a cultural context that emphasizes the continuity and evolution of our cultures’ (Lewis 2016, 2). The IIF commissioned six artists to use virtual reality headsets to envision the future in short five- to six-minute video experiences, including Scott Benesiinaabandan’s (Wasauksing Ojibwe) *Blueberry Pie Under the Martian Sky*, Postcommodity’s *Each Branch Determined*, and Danis Goulet’s (Cree/Metis) *The Hunt*. Goulet filmed *The Hunt*, which takes place in a dystopian future, in Mohawk on Six Nations land with a Mohawk cast. Despite the bleakness of the story, the director believed the movie had a hopeful message because it demonstrated ‘the ability to imagine different futures other than what was literally programmed and

predetermined for us ... as soon as you can dream about the future, you have hope as well instead of despair' (CBC Radio 2017).

In addition to moving through different spaces, moving through time is also a key element in Indigenous Futurisms. Science fiction has long played with ideas of time, in terms of how the passage of time is perceived but also challenging its static nature; time travel and the specific predicaments it brings have long been a favorite topic. Video game designer and professor of media and information Elizabeth LaPensée (Anishinaabe, Métis, and Irish) notes,

Indigenous Futurisms recognizes space–time as simultaneously past, present, and future, and therefore futurism is as much about the future as it is about right now. In my work, it means telling alternate histories, dreaming about liquid technology, imagining a future where unceded territories are taken back. (in Roanhorse et al. 2018)

In conversation with Adrienne Keene, (Professor of American and Ethnic Studies at Brown University and member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma), LaPensée observed that Indigenous Futurisms 'reflects all spacetime-lines and sees how they are all connected' (quoted in Keene 2018). Dillon (2012, 3) notes how Indigenous writers bring unique approaches to science fiction, such as the Native Slipstream, where time flows in different ways; in her view, these enable a view of 'time as pasts, presents, and futures that flow together like currents in a navigable stream.' Stephen Graham Jones, who writes speculative fiction, describes himself a Blackfoot physicist, creating timelines that reflect (in Lindsay Catherine Cornum's words) 'a Blackfoot framework of loops, glitches, and the constant experience of Indigenous time travel: living in the past, future, and present simultaneously' (Cornum 2018). Professor of English Mark Rifkin (2017) considers the 'temporal sovereignty' of linear time, which he defines as settler time imposed by colonizers. Rifkin describes how time can be perceived differently, not moving from past to present with the future off in the distance but as cyclical and non-linear.

This special issue demonstrates the entanglements and fertile terrain of Indigenous Futurisms in visual arts. Chelsea Herr examines the *Pueblo Revolt 1680/2180* series by Virgil Ortiz (Cochiti Pueblo), which combines ceramic figures, videos, and installations to relate a narrative about the Pueblo Revolt from 1680 and again 500 years later. Using the idea of the temporal slipstream, Ortiz's figures move from the past to the future, enacting and re-enacting the events that challenged colonial norms from both the seventeenth century, the present, and moving into the future. Amber Hickey offers a deeper study of the work of Skawennati, including *Imagining Indians in the 25th Century* and *TimeTraveller™*, and Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe), paying attention to how both artists

challenge the incessant linearity of time. Hickey describes the break from Rifkin's 'settler time' to consider how objects embody information. Suzanne Kite (Oglala Lakl'óta) and Kristina Baudemann co-authored an article about Kite's work. Kite combines video, sound, sculptures, and movements into immersive installations, creating works like *Listener* and *Everything I Say Is True*, using technology to link the physical world with something more ephemeral and experiential. Yvonne Tiger's article on Indigenous graphic novels and comics considers how the medium allows a 'reimagining a pictorial tradition of relaying cultural ways of knowing of the stars and the universe to our youth, and charting new ways forward by connecting the past to present in the process.' Tiger compares graphic novels, considered a new form for Indigenous artists, to the pictorial history of many Indigenous cultures. The work of a wider range of artists is featured through the short format of the visual essay.

For Elizabeth Le LaPensée (in Keene 2018), one significant yet misunderstood aspect of Indigenous Futurisms is that 'it's about past/present/future – the hyperpresent now. That we look seven generations before, and seven generations ahead.' It offers different mechanisms to dream about possible futures, which helps both in the future and in the present. As Keene (2018) describes,

These pieces of indigenous art, writing, film, whatever it may be posit a future where our indigenous ways of knowing, being, and relating allow us to re-imagine, re-create, and *exist*—while also looking to the past and the present simultaneously.

In Will Wilson's MFA dissertation about fellow Diné photographer Milton Snow, he writes that Snow's work is 'as much about reading into the past, as it is about *remembering* the future' (Wilson 2002, 4). This is a sentiment that echoes the ideas of time for many Indigenous communities. Not just a way to view the past, Indigenous Futurisms offers a strategy to move forward. Roessel (2018) argues that Indigenous Futurisms 'demands we accept our blessings now that we will continue to be prayed into the existence of the future.' A long, long time ago is right now, and the galaxy far, far away is right here, right now.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. This special issue of *World Art* was inspired by the panel "'The Force Will Be With You ... Always': Science Fiction Imagery in Contemporary Native American Art' at the 2017 Native American Art Studies Association (NAASA). With

- presentations by Yvonne Tiger, Hoka Skenandore, Rory Wakemup, Chelsea Herr, and Suzanne Newman Fricke, the panel discussed both the production and reception of artworks broadly associated with 'Indigenous Futurisms'.
2. The importance of language as part of culture is discussed by the director of *The 6th World*, Nanobah Becker, who notes that it is key to cultural continuation (in Estrada 2014).
 3. Suzan Shown Harjo spoke with Oprah Winfrey in 1992. *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, 'Racism in 1992,' <https://youtu.be/dmPWOAoExzk> (15:30–22:00 contains the material that is most relevant).
 4. Dr. Rickard discussed the use of the term Indigenous at the College Art Association panel 'Indigeneity on the Global Stage,' 2013.

Notes on contributor

Suzanne Newman Fricke has a Ph.D. in Native American art history from the University of New Mexico and has taught at a university level for more than 20 years. In her research and curatorial work, she focuses on contemporary Native American art. As a frequent contributor to *First American Indian Art* magazine, she has written about a number of artists including Bob Haozous, Nora Naranjo-Morse, Fritz Scholder, and Luzene Hill. Her book of interviews based on an exhibition of the same name, *As We See It: Interviews with Ten Contemporary Native American Photographers*, is forthcoming from the University of New Mexico Press. Her museum shows consider contemporary Indigenous art in various media and have traveled through Russia, Japan, and the United States. She currently teaches at the Institute of American Indian Art.

References

- Carlson, Andrea. 2018. "A Mothership Connection: Past Futures of Resurrection and Absence." *MPLSART.COM*, February 21. Accessed July 7, 2018. <https://www.mplsart.com/written/2018/02/a-mothership-connection-past-futures-of-resurrection-and-absence/>.
- CBC Radio. 2017. "How Indigenous and Black Artists Are Using Science Fiction to Imagine a Better Future." *CBC Radio*, November 14. Accessed June 5, 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-november-14-2017-1.4400378/how-indigenous-and-black-artists-are-using-science-fiction-to-imagine-a-better-future-1.4400425>.
- Cornum, Lindsey Catherine. 2018. "The Creation Story Is a Spaceship: Indigenous Futurism and Decolonial Deep Space." *Voz-à-Voz*. Accessed June 3. <http://www.vozavoz.ca/feature/lindsay-catherine-cornum>.
- Dillon, Grace L., ed. 2012. *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Dillon, Grace L. 2016. "Introduction: Indigenous Futurisms, Bimaashi Biidaas Mose, Flying and Walking towards You." *Extrapolation* 57 (1–2): 1–6. doi:10.3828/extr.2016.2.
- Estrada, Gabriel. 2014. "Navajo Sci-Fi Film: Matriarchal Visual Sovereignty in Nanobah Becker's *The 6th World*." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82 (2): 521–530.

- Fricke, Suzanne Newman. 2016. "The Force Will Be With You ... Always: Science Fiction Images in Native American Art." *First Americans Art Magazine* 11 (12): 34–39.
- Hopkins, Candice. 2006. "Making Things Our Own: The Indigenous Aesthetic in Digital Storytelling." *Leonardo* 39 (4): 341–344.
- Keene, Adrienne. 2018. "Wakanda Forever: Using Indigenous Futurisms to Survive the Present." *Native Appropriations*, February 24. Accessed June 3, 2018. <http://nativeappropriations.com/2018/02/wakanda-forever-using-indigenous-futurisms-to-survive-the-present.html>.
- Lempert, William. 2015. "Navajos on Mars: Native Sci-Fi Film Futures." September 21. Accessed May 25, 2018. <https://medium.com/space-anthropology/navajos-on-mars-4c336175d945>.
- Lewis, Jason Edward. 2016. "A Brief (Media) History of the Indigenous Future." *Public* 27 (54): 36–50.
- Lewis, Jason Edward, and Skawennati Tricia Fragnito. 2005. "Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace." *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 29 (2): 29.
- Nixon, Lindsey. 2016. "sâkihito-maskihkiy acâhkosiwikamikohk." *GUTS*, May 20. Accessed May 25, 2018. <http://gutsmagazine.ca/visual-cultures/>.
- Reid, Bill, and Robert Bringhurst. 1996. *The Raven Steals the Light: Native American Tales*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Rifkin, Mark. 2017. *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Roanhorse, Rebecca, Elizabeth LaPensée, Johnnie Jae, and Darchi Little Badger. 2018. "Decolonizing Science Fiction and Imagining Futures: An Indigenous Futurisms Roundtable." *Strange Horizons*, July 9. Accessed May 20, 2018. <http://strangehorizons.com/non-fiction/articles/decolonizing-science-fiction-and-imagining-futures-an-indigenous-futurisms-roundtable/>.
- Roessel, Jaclyn. 2018. "Dream Medicine and Reflections of the Future." *Grownup Navajo*, April 22. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://grownupnavajo.com/2018/04/22/dream-medicine-and-reflections-of-the-future/>.
- Stewart, Hilary. 1979. *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Teves, Stephanie Nohelani, Andrea Smith, and Michelle Raheja, eds. 2015. *Native Studies Keywords*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Wikler, Alexandra. 2016. "Indigenous Futurism: Reimagining "Reality" to Inspire an Indigenous Future." *Exploring Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, November 28. Accessed June 8, 2019. <https://blogs.ubc.ca/fnis401fwikler/2016/11/28/indigenous-futurism-reimagining-reality-to-inspire-an-indigenous-future/>.
- Wilson, William. 2002. "Along the Beale Trail: A Photographic Account of Wasted Range Land. The Navajo Photography of Milton S. Snow: Photography and Federal Indian Policy, 1937–1958." Master's thesis, University of New Mexico.