

Maquette de couverture

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Biographie

Barry Ace is a practicing visual artist living in Ottawa. He is a *debendaagzijig* (citizen) of M'Chigeeng First Nation, Manitoulin Island, Ontario. Ace's work embraces the impact of the digital age and how it exponentially transforms and infuses Anishinaabeg culture with new technologies and new ways of communicating. His work bridges the precipice between historical and contemporary knowledge, art, and power, while maintaining a distinct Anishinaabeg aesthetic connecting generations. His work has been included in numerous group and solo exhibitions and is included in important public and private collections in Canada and abroad.

website: barryacearts.com

The Canada/Switzerland UNDRIP and TRC Collaborative Projects

In 2018 and 2022, Ace undertook two complex projects culminating in two collaborative works calling for collective healing as a result of the impact of residential schools and the recognition of Indigenous rights, as stated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (TRC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The collaborative workshops were held at the University of Windsor (Windsor, Ontario); North American Native Museum (Zurich, Switzerland) and Musée d'ethnographie de Geneve (Geneva, Switzerland).

The work *waawiindmawaa – promise (to promise something to somebody)* (2022) consists of three floor pottery vessels containing 46 beaded circular medallions affixed to vellum scrolls. The vessels rest on top of three mounds of sand mixed with cedar, sage and tobacco. Evenly spaced apart, each vessel is positioned directly below and in dialogue with the wall mounted work *For as long as the sun shines, grass grows and water flows* (2018), an 11.5 metre wampum belt with beaded black velvet floral decorated panels, vellum scrolls and tobacco pouches.

In Windsor, Ontario, Ace worked with 94 law students, art students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants who completed *For as long as the sun shines, grass grows and water flows* over a 4 day period, making 54 mixed media beaded panels with 94 handwritten calls to action scrolls mounted together in a continuous horizontal row set against a larger painted blue strip, referencing a wampum belt. For *waawiindmawaa - promise (to promise something to somebody)*, 46 international law students, artists and general public (23 in Zurich and 23 in Geneva) hand-beaded a floral motif on a circular medallion, wrote one of the 46 UNDRIP articles in graphite on a vellum sheet that was rolled into a scroll and affixed to the medallion with tobacco. These medallions were placed inside one of the three honouring floor vessels. At the start of all workshops, each participant confirmed their participation by, first, surrendering their rights to the collaborative work by signing a witnessed document and then symbolically accepting one Canadian Dollar or Swiss Franc in exchange for the extinguishment of their rights to the works. This surrender was a wry reference to the treaty-making process in Canada.

By creating these site-specific collaborative works, Ace and the participants aim to draw our attention to the need for reconciliation and honouring of Indigenous domestic and international rights and treaty rights. When read together, the two works are a contemporary visual and mnemonic *waawiindmawaa – promise*. In completing these works, the participants fulfilled TRC Call to Action #83, in particular “*for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process*”.