

Indigenous Rights Conference

Saturday November 16th 2019 from 9am-8pm

Hosted by the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt

At the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University

15 Artists' Common, St. Catharines

Thank you to our partners: The Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, Celebration of Nations and The Film House @ First Ontario Performing Arts Centre, Brock Student Justice Centre, and Canadian Friends Service Committee, Niagara Quakers, CUPE 4207 (Academic Workers at Brock University).

Please note: Everyone is welcome to attend our free workshops, regardless of their position on the harvest. Let's come together to learn in a good way.

Agenda: Saturday November 16th, 2019

9:00am - 10:15am Welcome and Opening

Representative from the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority

Co-founders of the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt, Celeste Smith and Jodielynn Harrison

Mayor Walter Sendzik, City of St.Catharines ON

Representative from Brock University

Strong Water Women - Niagara Women's Drum Group

10:15am - 10:30am Break

10:30am - 11:30 am Honouring our relationships: Wahkotowin (Cree Natural Law) and the right of Indigenous peoples to hunt

Grounded in the teachings of Wahkotowin (natural law), this workshop will offer a Cree perspective on the right of Indigenous peoples to hunt. This session will be organized as a Cree teaching circle, including the use of smudge.

Dr. Robyn Bourgeois (she/her) is a mixed-race Cree woman born and raised in Syilx and Splats'in territories in British Columbia, and connected through marriage and her children to the Six Nations of the Grand River. She is an assistant professor in the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at Brock University.

11:30am -11:45am Break

11:45am - 12:45pm *Tracks in the Snow* (Shirley Cheechoo, 2001) - Film Screening and Conversations on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Food (In)security

Filmmaker Shirley Cheechoo shares her moving documentary, *Tracks in the Snow* (28 min). *Tracks in the Snow* is a personal account of filmmaker Shirley Cheechoo's journey with a group of Cree children and elders from James Bay, Canada. In an effort to raise money for the research of a tragic disease, Cree Leukoencephalopathy, that attacks Cree infants, the group follows a traditional trek along a trapline, living in the old ways and speaking only Cree. Following the documentary, Celeste Smith, co-founder of the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt, leads a workshop on Indigenous food (in)security, food sovereignty, and cultural rights.

Shirley Cheechoo (she /her) is an award-winning Cree actress, writer, producer, director and visual artist. She has been Brock Chancellor since July 2015 and was recently awarded the Order of Canada. She is the founder and executive director at Weengushk Film Institute (WFI), a non-profit, artist-focused film and television-training centre on Manitoulin Island, dedicated to unlocking the creative potential of Indigenous youth.

Celeste Smith (she/her) is Haudenosaunee, Oneida of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. She is an Indigenous Human Rights activist who is involved in multiple community projects and the co-founder of the Indigenous Solidarity Coalition @ Brock. Her passion for her work has most recently led her to Columbia University (NYC) to take part in the Indigenous Studies Summer Program on Indigenous Human Rights and Policy. Celeste is the co-founder of the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt and Coordinator, Weengushk Film Institute.

12:45pm - 1:30pm Feast provided by Beverly Hills' Catering: Specializing in Indigenous Cuisine

Please note: This lunch has been sponsored by our partners and is provided at no cost to participants.

1:30pm - 2:30pm Endangered Animal Species Across Latin America and the Gifts of Spirit

This workshop aims at familiarizing participants with animal species that are currently endangered across Latin America and their habitats in relation to larger ecosystems. We will explore together the gifts in various forms of these species for humans, most particularly as animal spirits.

Dr. Maria del Carmen Suescun Pozas (she/her) is trained as a visual artist (B.F.A Concordia 1993) and art historian (M.A. McGill University, 2006), with a joint PhD in History and Art History (McGill, 2005). Maria held a Postdoctoral position at Université de Montreal (Department d'histoire, 2005-2007) before moving into a tenure-track position on Latin American history in the Department of History at Brock University (ON) in 2007 where she works as a cultural historian. Affiliations: Associate Professor, Department of History, Brock University / Founder of Seedling for Change in Society and Environment.

2:30pm -2:45pm Break

2:45pm- 3:45pm Settler Environmentalism as Violence against Indigenous Women

In this session, Dr. Brant discusses ways in which settler environmentalism attacks Indigenous women as well as land-based knowledges through colonial violence that is inherently gendered. Participants will be prompted to make connections between the anti-seal hunting attacks on internationally award winning

Inuit Throat Singer Tanya Tagaq and the colonial and gendered violence that targets the women singers who support the Haudenosaunee deer harvest. This workshop is an extension of Dr. Brant's talk from last year at Short Hills that connected the exploitation of Indigenous women's bodies to the exploitation of land.

Jennifer Brant (she/ her) belongs to the Mohawk Nation with family ties to Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory and is an Assistant Professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. For Jennifer, writing *Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crises of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada* with Dr. Memee Lavell Harvard was an opportunity to become part of a national dialogue advancing the call for justice and speaking out against racialized, sexualized, and colonial violence.

3:45pm-4:45pm Reconciling animal liberation with Indigenous hunting rights

Does animal liberation inherently oppose Indigenous rights to hunt? A group of settler and newcomer animal activists discuss why they support the Six Nations right to hunt despite its seeming contradiction with animal liberationist goals. Topics include connections between colonialism and animal oppression, the importance of decolonization in the animal liberation movement, and animal activists' responsibilities toward consistent anti-oppression work.

Mo Constantine (he/him) is originally from Bakersfield, California and moved to St. Catharines to pursue a Master's in Sociology at Brock University with a focus on Critical Animal Studies. His research is on doing environmental justice work in politically conservative areas.

Kaho Nishibu (she/her) is an international student from Japan, currently in fourth-year Sociology with a concentration in Critical Animal Studies at Brock University. She works with a few grassroots organizations that focus on environmental/climate justice and animal liberation both in Japan and Niagara.

Stephanie Piovesan (she/her) is originally from Calgary, Alberta, and moved to the Niagara region six years ago to pursue education in Critical Animal Studies at Brock University. Her activism and educational pursuits include animal liberation, decolonization, and intersectional anti-oppression work. Stephanie is a member of the 2019 organizing committee for the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt.

Kate Spiegel (she/her) is a current Master's student in Critical Sociology at Brock University focusing on climate change organizing in Canada. From Erie, Pennsylvania, she came to the area in 2014 and came across Critical Animal Studies and has been interested in these issues ever since.

4:45pm - 5:45pm Break

Please note: We are unable to provide food during this break. Everyone is invited to bring their own food or to eat at local restaurants.

5:45pm - 6:15pm Introduction to the Film *Is the Crown at War with Us?*

This panel discussion featuring members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Team, is an introduction to the film, *Is the Crown at War with Us?*

CPT has been present both at the Short Hills during the Haudenosaunee Deer Harvest and has also worked alongside Mi'kmaq fishers in New Brunswick, (the subject of the film). We will learn about these two differing, yet similar, sets of experiences and how CPT works to support Indigenous communities as they organize against colonial violence. Elizabeth Chitty joins CPT members to talk about her experience visiting Esgenoôpetitj Reserve, acquiring video footage from both the community and CPT, for her performance, *Song For A Blue Moon*, and how working with The Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt is related to that art work.

Rachelle Friesen (she/her) is the Canada Coordinator for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). CPT is a peace and human rights organization that stand in solidarity with Indigenous groups around the world. This is the fourth year Rachelle is taking part in supporting the Deer Hunt at Short Hills. Previously, she spent 5 years living and working for human rights in Palestine.

Elizabeth Chitty (she/her) is a St. Catharines artist, cultural worker and is a member of the organizing committee of the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt. Her audio work, *Graciously Pleased*, was played on site at Short Hills Provincial Park in 2016 and 2017. *Song For A Blue Moon*, was performed at Tangente Danse Actuelle in Montréal in 2004 and a workshop of the Esgenoôpetitj and other sections at Niagara Artists' Centre in 2002.

6:15pm - 6:30pm Break

6:30 pm – 8pm Film Screening - *Is the Crown at War with Us?* (Alanis Obomsawin, 2003, 96 min)

Please Note: This film is hosted at the Film House, First Ontario Performing Arts Center, 250 St. Paul Street. The Film House can be accessed from St. Paul Street and also directly from the Marilyn I Walker School.

In this feature-length documentary by Alanis Obomsawin, it's the summer of 2000 and the country watches in disbelief as federal fisheries wage war on the Mi'kmaq fishermen of Burnt Church, New Brunswick. Why would officials of the Canadian government attack citizens for exercising rights that had been affirmed by the highest court in the land? Casting her cinematic and intellectual nets into history to provide context, Obomsawin delineates the complex roots of the conflict with passion and clarity, building a persuasive defence of the Mi'kmaq position. (Source:

https://www.nfb.ca/film/is_the_crown_at_war_with_us/)

Acclaimed Indigenous director *Alanis Obomsawin* came to cinema from performance and storytelling. Hired by the NFB as a consultant in 1967, she has created an extraordinary body of work—more than 50 films and counting—including landmark documentaries like *Incident at Restigouche* (1984) and *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993). The Abenaki director has received numerous international honours and in 2019 was named a Companion of the Order of Canada.

The Indigenous Rights Conference, hosted by the Supporters of Haudenosaunee Right to Hunt, has been affirmed by the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority.