



New Visions Artist Residency Comes to Nisga'a Museum

June 2, 2014

Laxgalts'ap, BC — The Nisga'a Museum is very pleased to announce that the First Peoples' Cultural Council has awarded the museum with a grant worth \$10,000 in order to develop the *New Visions Artist Residency* project. This initiative is being developed in partnership with the Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG) in Vancouver. Nisga'a Museum director Darrin Martens along with the CAG's curator of public programs Shaun Dacey will be working collaboratively with Okanagan/Upper Nicola First Nation's artist Krista Belle Stewart this fall to explore issues related to aboriginal identity and contemporary First Nations' representation.

The *New Visions Artist Residency* is framed as an exchange between a socially engaged artist, Krista Belle Stewart, and youth artists from across the Nisga'a nation. The artist will facilitate a series of exploratory hands-on art creation sessions that seek to expand cultural and visual arts literacy of the artist within the context of the Nisga'a Nation and its next generation of artists. The residency will take place in the fall of 2014 at the Nisga'a Museum. Issues surrounding cultural appropriation, traditional v.s. contemporary art practices, and the roles of the museum, art gallery, artistic research and collaboration will be explored through a series of dialogues with senior high school students who wish to make a career in the visual arts. Central to the project is an exhibition of photographic based work created by Krista Belle Stewart and her young artist apprentices at the Nisga'a Museum at the end of her residency. The exhibition, young artists and Stewart will then travel to Vancouver where their work will be presented alongside a public talk produced by the Contemporary Art Gallery's curator of public programs Shaun Dacey. The youth will be introduced to Vancouver's art community during their stay completing an itinerary of gallery visits (includes but not limited to: Grunt Gallery, Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, First Peoples, Spirit Wrestler Gallery) and studio visits (including but not limited to: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Shaun Hunt, and others within the Metro Vancouver region) with contemporary First Nations artists.

Krista Belle Stewart is a member of Okanagan/Upper Nicola Band, British Columbia. Stewart lives and works in Vancouver. She holds a BFA from Emily Carr University and is currently an MFA candidate from Bard College in New York. Recent exhibition and performance history includes *Music from the New Wilderness* at The Western Front, *Shelved* at the Burnaby Art Gallery (with Rebecca Belmore) and the *Fiction/Non-fiction* at the Esker Foundation (Calgary). Belle's work often explores First Nations identity, particularly by individuals and groups who have no direct links to North American Native culture, other than through romanticized/ fetishized interest such as health products that tap into the wisdom of the elders to help relieve your carpal tunnel syndrome; sculptures and trinkets that depict proud, ideal figures, and phenomena such as the German Indianer Klub, where members don elaborate buckskin outfits while interpreting Native American song and dance. Stewart's photographic practice creates a dialogue between past and present, the romantic and the real, creating an awareness of the implications of misrepresentation, stereotypes, and racism. Her work engages the complexities of intention and interpretation made possible by archival material. The work approaches mediation and story-telling to unfold the interplay between personal and institutional history.