A New Drumbeat for Indigenous Artists

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"NDN Aunties" - photo credit: Mike Patten Used by permission of daphne art centre

Randy Kritkausky: Greetings, or may I say Bozho in Potawatomi, to those joining us for today's Indigenous Perspectives show. I'm Randy Kritkausky, an enrolled Potawatomi tribal member, and the co-host of Indigenous Perspectives. Our program today is titled "An New Drumbeat for Indigenous Artists."

Carolyn Schmidt: Indigenous Perspectives originates from Vermont in the United States. Vermont is located on lands that the Abenaki people call N'dakinna. It's the unceded traditional territory of the Abenaki people, who for thousands of years have been, and continue to be, stewards of the lands found here and across the border in Québec province in Canada.

We welcome our two guests from the indigenous art world today: Lori Beavis is the Executive Director of daphne art centre in Montréal. Lori has mixed indigenous – settler heritage. On her maternal side she is Michi Saagiig, Anishinaabe and Welsh.

Her paternal family is Irish-British. And Michelle Sound, a visual artist, is a member of the Swan River First Nation, a Cree nation whose territories are in the Canadian province of Alberta. Lori joins us today from Montréal and Michelle joins us from the Vancouver area in British Columbia. For listeners who would like to see the artwork we will be talking about, you can find a link at www.randykritkausky.com, Randy's author website.

Randy: So each of you represents a new drumbeat - new paths for indigenous artists. One of you is an artist and the other is a gallery manager. Can you describe your paths - how you met, how you're collaborating now?

Michelle Sound: Well, I had applied to daphne. I had heard there was a new, indigenous artist-run center, which was very exciting, and so I submitted my artwork to be included in hopefully an exhibition there. Because, you know, that's such an amazing new space; to have an indigenous- led artist-run center is so awesome. There's very few in Canada. And then, I was contacted by Lori and offered an exhibition there, which was amazing. So, it's currently up at daphne right now. And yes, it's been really great working with Lori, you know, through so many emails!

Lori Beavis: We have to admit that we've never met in person yet because I was sick *[when Michelle was in Montréal to set up her exhibition.]*

Michelle: So Zoom and emails; it's been a really great experience.

Randy: So Lori, what's your path to the position you're in now?

Lori Beavis: Well, I've - I started out my life as an art historian and I've also been an art educator and I've done - about 10 years ago I started doing independent curatorial work freelance. And then when daphne advertised the job as the director - I've always been involved with artist-run centers as well, and through the arts all through my life - and I applied. It was a lovely interview just the day before the pandemic lockdown started in March 2020. And it was great; I was hired and we just figured it all out and just figured it out from home. And in May of 2021 we had at daphne, we had our first exhibition. So things were delayed and postponed for a really long time, but I'm here, as the director of daphne.

And yes, as Michelle said, we put in a call for proposals in May last year and for our first - sort of to add to our first full year of programming that was already arranged. And, everybody just fell in with the idea of these amazing pastel furred covered drums - and just thought, ah, it'll look so great in our space. And it absolutely does. So it's a joy to come in every day and just see the rabbit furs sort of dancing a little bit in the heat vents through our gallery.

Randy: So Michelle, since our listeners, aren't seeing, you know, what Lori's talking about, can you describe - and I know this is really an unfair thing to do to artists, you know, say, okay, you've spent your life in recent months making these works, now put it into words for a listener! But can you describe essentially what you put into the work? And maybe even back up a little bit and explain how you got into the field of art and being an artist - when that happened?

Michelle : For sure. I guess it was - it must have been 22 years ago now that I started my undergrad degree, and went into visual arts. I actually - it's funny when Lori said she's an art historian. That was originally what I thought I wanted to do, and what I studied for two years was art history. And then I started taking visual arts classes - like non-credit courses - and realized that was what I actually wanted to go into, is art. I originally wasn't going to, because I just thought you can't have a career or a job as an artist. But then I realized that's what I actually really wanted to do. So I started the visual arts program, which meant I ended up being in school for a very long time. But completed my degree, and then I had my son, in 2007, and when he was two, as a single mom, I decided to go back to school and get my master's degree. I really wanted to recommit myself to my art practice. Because you know, as a young mom, it's pretty hard to have the time to do it. And so I wanted to focus on it. And then I started making drums.

I learned how to make drums during my master's degree. Elk hide and deer hide drums - I would dye them and paint them. And I wanted to make a series that was about my Chapan and my Kokum – my great-grandma and my grandma - and about how they had a rabbit trapline, rabbit snares. And how they used that to provide for the family - like the meat from the rabbits to eat. But then they also sold the rabbits' fur, or used the fur as a trim on moccasins that they would make. Just all the work that they did to provide for their family was just so incredible to me - the resourcefulness and the hard work they did.

"Trapline" - "Chapan Snares Rabbits"
Photo credit: Mike Patten Used by permission of daphne art centre

So I did a series of drums made out of rabbit fur. And they're not playable. They don't make a sound; they don't have the elk hide behind them to make that drumming noise. So they're the visual arts piece. So I made "Trapline" and that's taking up the big wall in daphne. I actually don't even know how many drums are in that one. I think it's like 20, maybe 22 drums on the walls, various sizes of rabbit fur drums. So the smallest ones are eight inches and the largest are, I believe, 18 inches. And the 18 inch drums are rabbit furs that have been sewn together. Cause rabbits are not that big! They're all pastel dyed, and for a series about my Kokum *[grandmother]* and Chapan *[great-grandmother].*

And then another series there is called "HBC Trapline" and that was made in 2019 and it's four rabbit fur drums and they're smaller. I think those ones are ten inches and they're in the four colors of the HBC logo, the red, yellow, blue, and green. And then there are four beaver pelts on the floor. And that piece was just acknowledging all the hard work that indigenous women contributed to the fur trade.

So this was about like my distant ancestors - further back ancestors that I didn't personally know, who worked in the fur trade and, you know, did all the harvesting of the pelts and the tanning of them. Just acknowledging the hard work that they did that is often not written about, when talking about the fur trade. It's often *[discussed]* as just men working in the fur trade. But women, indigenous women, did a lot of the work. And then the four beaver pelts are like the idea of trading - the trade was roughly that four beaver pelts would equal one HBC blanket. And the HBC blanket started to replace traditional ways of using blankets, like for little kids or smaller blankets, rabbit furs were sewn together to make a blanket, but they started to be replaced by the HBC blankets.

Carolyn: Okay! Just to clarify: HBC, that's the Hudson Bay Company, a major economic force in the British dominated settlement and expansion of the British in Canada westward.

Randy: So Lori, as a gallery director, how do you help an artist tell their story, especially in this Zoom-Covid era when you haven't met face-to-face and these things show up. I mean, this is really quite an intriguing story going on behind the scenes here.

Lori: Well, one of the things that we always do, we commission an essay. If the exhibition is curated by a curator, then that person would write an essay to explore and examine and explain the exhibition and the premise of why the work is together, and that sort of thing. And in this case, I asked Michelle who she would like to have write about her work. And we have a lovely essay that's also on our website, by Jas Morgan. It's delightful. It talks about - because the exhibition is called "Aunties do it better" in English, and in French, "Les tantes sont les meilleures." We also have a Cree title *[Note: Okāwīsimāk nawac kwayask itōtamwak]* and I don't know, I'm afraid I can't even attempt *[to* say it], but it is on our website and people will see. And we always also - just sort of as a side note - we always have indigenous language, in the exhibition, in the space in some way, whether it's through a title or through wall text or whatever.

So that's a way for people to sort of gather an understanding about what the exhibition is about. Whenever people come into the gallery, I always explain what we've got here and the show that we've got. And say let me ask you or answer any

questions for you or whatever. And so it's - there's always a really nice, interesting dialogue. And that's very much a part of, you know, one of the reasons that daphne came into existence as well. Because we were very interested in having people start to have conversations with one another and to dialogue and to talk about. So that people - because it's through talking with one another, and through talking about art as well, it's also an extremely good way to sort of ask questions and listen to the answers. And sort of come to an understanding about the histories that are hidden or the political and social issues that people are, as artists, are talking about, and that sort of thing.

Carolyn: I'm going to switch it here because I think you raised a really important point about political and social issues being intimately connected. Here's a quotation from the program, the write up about Michelle's show:

quote: "Together, drums are a force to honor and venerate. Drums dominate you. The drums are beautiful, but unplayable, as are the tough indigenous women who inspired Michelle Sound." end of quote.

I thought that was a fabulous insight into a lot of the strength that is a key point of your message as I understand it. So Michelle, want to comment a bit on that, the strength of the women, the strength of the aunties?

Michelle: Yes. I really love the essay that Jas wrote for the exhibition. I've always loved their writing and just was so honored that they took the time and the care to write that great essay. I just feel they captured so much of what I was trying to say. You know, as a visual artist, it's harder to translate what your idea is into words. And it's great when a writer can do that for you. And so with my work with the four pieces that are in daphne, and I call it Aunties. I just mean it - "Aunties" - to mean like all of them, like one piece is about my mother. And another piece, like I said, is my Chapan and my Kokum. And another one is about aunties. And so just, they are all aunties.

And so I just wanted to really honor the amount of work, and the unrecognized work, that indigenous women have always done and continue to do.

Photo credit: Mike Patten Used by permission of daphne art centre

You know, our moms and our aunties always take care of us. And I was always raised being told - and I know a lot of other indigenous people are told the same thing - that your aunties are your moms, so you have the same respect and love and care for your aunties as you do for your mother. And they have the same for you.

And that aunties extend beyond your biological family, right? Like you have a community of aunties that take care of you, and sometimes you don't even find out till you're older that someone you've been calling "auntie" your whole life is actually not even related to you, but, you know, it's your mom's good friend or your mom's - something. So I just really wanted to honor how much work and how much strength indigenous women bring and provide for their families and our communities.

Randy: So Lori, when you began to work on this project, did you imagine that this kind of storytelling about the social structure and culture of indigenous people would be hanging on the wall and be so eloquent? Or has this been sort of a discovery process as you go along?

Lori: No, I always knew that the work was going to be amazing and strong, and spoke to really important social issues. You know, I just – I think that one of the things that we've come through and towards - and certainly in all of the exhibitions

that I've curated as an independent curator - is that the underlying premise of it is always for people to represent themselves, for indigenous people to talk about their own experience. Because that is - so often, in the past, whether it's photographers *[who]* came and traveled around the countries, United States and Canada, and took photographs and positioned people in a certain way, or it was through Hollywood or whatever it was. And it just - it never - *[indigenous]* people never had a chance to sort of tell their own story and represent themselves in the way that they wanted to.

Photo credit: Mike Patten Used by permission of daphne art centre

And so - think about Michelle's piece, that is called the Aunties piece - and there they are in all their glory, in their leopard skin and their leather and their fringe. And, you know, my - my aunties didn't necessarily wear leopard print, but they were strong women and they were always somebody to admire in some way, and there is a great strength there. So yes, I think it's - the story that's on the wall is well worth coming and looking at and thinking about.

Carolyn: I'd like to hear from both of you on specific obstacles that indigenous artists have faced. Obviously you're working to overcome these and bring about more visibility and more credit, but can you be specific about the kinds of things that each of you have encountered as indigenous artists and art supporters?

Michelle: I think for me as a visual artist, what has been the most difficult, because it's a daily thing, is that I do not have a studio space. Vancouver's extremely expensive; I live in one of the most expensive cities in Canada. And I'm a single mom, and I don't have the extra $400 a month that sharing a studio would cost. So I work from a little table from Wal-mart in one of my rooms and that's my space to work. And so, I mean, having a studio space would be amazing and just really help my practice. I buy so many materials and they're hard to store; I have bags and bags and bags of jackets and rabbit pelts and other things to store that are just kind of all over my house. So on a daily basis, definitely not having a studio space and high rents and you know, affordable housing is definitely the everyday experience that I have with an obstacle to my art making, for sure.

Randy: So Lori, when we visited your gallery - I guess it was a couple of months ago now - we met a young artist who was in residence. Does that help to address this issue of a space to spread out - spread your wings and work? How is that a part of your model?

Lori: That was just a very ad hoc moment because we actually had space in our schedule. But in 2022 we have two artist residencies set into our schedule. One will take place at daphne and the other will take place in a studio that people have lent to us. But absolutely, you know, it's the same thing in Montréal - Tiohtià:ke[1] - as it is in Vancouver. Just, you know, artists are in spaces; indigenous artists make less money; indigenous women artists make less money. And so there's an issue about having space to do your work. And the fact that the studio spaces are not available, as well. It's just the places like that just get gobbled up by gentrification and then they have to move. And so there's all lots of issues like that. So -

Randy: We'll continue to explore these challenges and how you've overcome them and arrived at this marvelous display that hangs on the wall. It's not just as simple as someone sitting down and doing their work. We'll take a break and be back in a minute.

[1] - the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) name for the island area where Montréal is located

Segment Two

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives. Today, we're talking with two guests from the indigenous art world in Canada, Lori Beavis, executive director of daphne art center in Montréal and Michelle Sound, a visual artist who is a member of the Swan River First Nation community.

Randy: So Lori, before we switch topics here, I know there are a few things that you wanted to add to our discussion about supporting the arts in general. Why don't you go with that idea?

Lori: Okay. I just wanted to say that there are obviously obstacles and there are always issues about funding and things like that. And certainly the indigenous arts have always been chronically underfunded. But one of the things that happened around "Canada 150"[2] in 2017 was that there was a recognition of how poorly funded the indigenous artists, contemporary artists, have been. And so one of the things that happened was that the Canada Council *[for the Arts]* created "Creating, Knowing, and Sharing," which is a program that's directly related, and funds indigenous art projects across the country. And also even in Québec, while there was a little bit of a time lag, they caught up with the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec / Council of art and letters of Québec. And there's the recognition program for indigenous artists in this province as well. So, it sort of has helped.

But one of the things that we still need - it sort of ties into what daphne's doing as well - is that a lot of the exhibitions that we do are solo exhibitions, because it's very, very difficult for people to get solo exhibitions. And you know that's a marker of recognition. It's also a marker of this career to date, whether it's a very young artist, like the person that you met, Kaia'tanó:ron Dumoulin Bush, in October, or Michelle who's sort of a more mid-career artist. So there's that.

But then, you know, the other thing that continues, and needs to continue to happen, is that there need to be indigenous artists and curators and cultural workers on juries in the institutions. And in the bigger institutions, as well as the small ones. And so that's - it's moving forward in a good way, but it just needs to keep moving forward as well.

[2] "Canada 150" was a nation-wide celebration of Canada's independent status as the Dominion of Canada, starting in 1867.

Randy: Carolyn and I are part-time residents of Montréal and we go back and forth across the border. And the difference in support for the arts in general, not to mention indigenous artists , on each side of the border is absolutely astounding. I know there are still obstacles on your side of the border, but what Canada is doing really is a model, and I keep trying to draw attention to it globally. And we do have global listeners, who can learn a lot about what's gone on in Canada, and what is going on.

So to ever so slightly switch the topic - it's actually building on it - one of the things that daphne gallery artists do is to break the mold of the traditional indigenous arts exhibition: we go to a museum, and we see beaded moccasins, and we see the elk covered drum, and we are told that's what indigenous art was. Well, that's not exactly what we're seeing when we come to the *[daphne]* gallery. So can both of you talk about the evolution of art in a modern world, as seen through the eyes of an indigenous artist and an indigenous arts gallery manager?

Lori: Well, I'll let Michelle speak to this, but of course my first question is always, well, what is traditional? Because, like, what is traditional?! And that's, you know, the indigenous people have always been very adaptive and very resilient and moved and changed in really good ways. And, you know, I think that Michelle's work speaks to that as well in taking the hand drum and making portraits of people through the work that she's creating.

Michelle: I definitely think of my work as not like breaking the mold or changing anything. It's more of a continuation, right? It's just indigenous artists, indigenous people, have always embraced new materials and made it their own. For example, beadwork, that's obviously a post-Contact trade material and indigenous people have so made it their own art form, right? Recognizable and beautiful work and everything. And that's just an adaption of using different types of beads and shells and different quill work, and different materials that were already existing, and just incorporating new materials. And I just think that what I'm doing is a continuation of that. Because it's still the drum form, and just using new materials in that. It's just - I think I'm just continuing, you know, a very long tradition of trying new things.

Randy: So for indigenous people across the world – and we did a program on Mongolian Shamanism - drums are animate. They're not just things, you know, that

you tap on and make a sound. They communicate. They open a doorway. So when you're making your drums, is there a point at which the drum isn't the thing you are making, but the drum takes on its own life? Does it talk back to you? Does it guide you?

Photo credit: Mike Patten Used by permission of daphne art centre

Michelle: There's a couple different ways, in the making. One of the things is I'm interested in working with drums because I've always grown up with the idea that drums are the heartbeat of the people. Right? So when I am making these particular textile drums, one of the things I'm thinking about is, Lori touched on this a little bit, is that they are kind of more like portraits. So a lot of the times when I'm sourcing the materials, the specific jackets or the specific fringe or something, I'm thinking of a particular person. Or it's a memory for me, like someone, something I remember from my childhood, or sparks memory about someone that's been important to me. And so I think of the drums already as being - they're very animate; they're people to me, they represent these people. And so, that is definitely part of it.

And then in the making of the drum, I often think about my Chapan and my Kokum when they would process the - harvest and process the rabbit furs. That how they would do it was wrapping the sinew around the pelt, around four sticks tied together, right? Like how they would do, deer or, you know, they had circular ones for beaver, but it was the same little mini version of that. And I think of that when I make the drums, because I do a similar thing except around the - it's not the four sticks tied together, it's around a drum frame. And so I do a similar motion of wrapping the sinew around the fur and then wrapping it around the frame. And so I think of them a lot when I'm doing that similar hand motion. I just feel connected to them in that way. So for me, it's definitely not just, just an object.

Randy: Thank you. This is a marvelous description. I rarely had an artist explain so wonderfully and lucidly the actual process of creation. You're in a sense sort of recapitulating a very traditional process of creating something. You're making it come alive for our listeners. We'll take a break and be back in a minute.

Photo credit: Mike Patten Used by permission of daphne art centre

Segment Three

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives, talking with Lori Beavis and Michelle Sound about the indigenous women's art world, in Canada in particular.

Randy: So we've touched on the whole issue of indigenous women in the world of art and indigenous art, but I think there's a lot to be gained by digging a bit more deeply into this topic. Can you two reflect on, again, your experiences, your perspectives and your aspirations?

Lori: I just think that in terms of being a cultural worker as an indigenous slash settler woman, I think that there's role models in my personal life and there's certainly role models in my cultural life as well. I think about the women that I've had a chance to work with, Shelly Nero and Lori Blondeau, just among two of many. And, and just to think about the contribution that those women have made to contemporary indigenous art, and, again, speaking to the idea of self-representation, is just - is extraordinary and wonderful. And, you know, Lori Blondeau continues - Michelle and Lori are in an exhibition together in Vancouver right now as well. So there's always that sort of cross-generational thing, cross-cultural thing as well, and across territories and nations. And so there's really interesting things can come out of that as well.

Randy: Michelle, why don't you pick up and talk about your joint exhibition? That's an interesting topic.

Michelle: Yes, I was, asked by the grunt gallery *[Note: their website is https://grunt.ca/]* in Vancouver, if I would be interested in having an exhibition with Lori Blondeau and I was just like, jaw on the floor! Like, of course I would be interested! Lori Blondeau is like one of my art heroes and has been since I was an undergrad student, and I just love her work. It was so important and formative to me, that being in the art exhibition with her is amazing, and it's a video work performance of hers. And then I have a series of Deadly Auntie drums on the wall.

And I really like that it's across generations, and just me having a conversation with someone who's been so important to my own work. I consider Lori like one of my art aunties. She's always been really nice to talk to. We don't live in the same city or anything, but she has been very open to getting messages from me that are about like, How do you handle this artist mom life? How do you do a residency when you've got kids? And stuff like that. So she's been just such an important person to my practice. I have other art aunties as well that are really great at offering feedback and stuff. Anna Claxton - I just have so many indigenous women artists that I look up to: Shelly Miro is another one; Rebecca Belmore; artists who really

paved the way, like I don't exist without those artists. They are super important to my practice. And I know among my peers and the younger generation, these are all the artists that we look up to and are inspired by.

Lori: And the subject matter that these women are indulging in - not indulging, but working within the context of - is just so amazing. You think about Rebecca Bellmore and the way that she has talked about and performed, in terms of speaking to indigenous women who are missing and murdered. And that, again, speaks to what I said earlier about the idea that through art, we can enter into these difficult conversations and learn. And people who are viewers and visitors to exhibitions, and seeing this work by these amazing women artists, are just - they gain knowledge from that. And the other great thing about art of course, is that it's such an easy way to enter into a conversation. So the material is there, it's presented to people.

And then I also, you know, part of the work that I do, again, is I feel very strongly that by situating the art in such a way, and people come and visit it, and then it's up to them to go and find out whose territory they are on, to learn the histories and to ask good questions and to listen well to the answers. So it's all part of a learning process.

And you know, the REDdress Project, Jamie Isaacs, I think, was the artist who started that. *[NOTE: Lori mis-spoke, and later corrected herself; the artist is Jamie Black https://www.jaimeblackartist.com/exhibitions/]* It was like a flag. It was a way for people to start to be able to talk about these issues that have been part of our community for a really long time, and, it was really important for them to come to a larger audience, for people to be able to start to make recognition.

Randy: Can one of you explain what the REDress Project is for our listeners? I mean, it has incredibly high profile in Canada, and we've heard about it in the United States.

Carolyn: We saw the video, but it was when we were in Montréal. So explaining about it, I think would be really good.

Lori: It started out with the artist deciding that she wanted to make red dresses, collect red dresses and make them visible in public spaces. And I don't know - maybe, you know, Michelle for sure, but I don't know - whether the dresses hung

originally from places where women had gone missing…..? but certainly that's the idea that they – no? OK, sorry, do you want to speak to -

Michelle: No, but they're definitely - they're hung in public spaces and you can see them. Like, I've seen them just driving around; some people have hung them from trees in their yard or on their fences, or downtown spaces. It represents - a red dress represents - an indigenous woman that has gone missing or been murdered. And so it just makes them visible, that you know it's a person, right? So it's really important and powerful in that way. And so it's raised a lot of awareness. I've seen them in places that I did not expect to see them. So it – yes, really important work.

I've seen other artworks that reference that or are inspired by that. And of course, Rebecca did an incredibly important piece where she was wearing a red dress and nailed - not herself, I think her sister - and nailed it to a telephone pole and had to rip herself out of the dress. So it's a really important visual representation of the women.

Randy: What's coming through - and it's a wonderfully strong message in our program so far - is how indigenous artists are using various art forms, be they performance art or making drums, to deliver really, really strong messages about what it means to be an indigenous person. And I like the way Michelle's art balances the equation, because very often we hear about the victimhood, which unfortunately continues to be a huge part of indigenous life for indigenous women, but to flip that and make it affirmative and put the drums on the wall is so bold. And I have to say, it strikes me as courageous. And, and I – I want to personally thank you for doing that.

Let's take a break and we'll come back for the final segment in a minute.

Segment Four

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives, our final segment with Lori Bevis and Michelle Sound.

Randy: We're curious to know how the public has viewed this particular show, and perhaps others? Lori, why don't you lead off and talk about how people respond, standing there looking at the art.

Lori: I think people - well, of course, because of the fact each of the drums are covered, and many of them are in these absolutely gorgeous pastel colored, rabbit furs - people say, can I touch? But, hmm, sorry! No! But you can look at the way that the air vent is making this one in particular move a little bit!

But it's been lovely. It's the perfect antidote to a really cold January-February in Tiohtià:ke *[Montréal]* to come in and see this delightful work that is, as we said, like each individual piece is like a portrait of a person and holds a memory of somebody. And so that's really great. And we, you know, despite the cold, we've had a really nice number of people coming in and that's really lovely; we've had a little bit of press coverage.

We've had great press coverage. We've had great response to daphne generally since we opened our doors in May *[2021].* And generally people write really intelligently and really sensitively about the work, and with a growing understanding of what it is, in terms of, you know, what indigenous art and contemporary work is, what message it's trying to have or give out. And so, generally about daphne , people are very happy that we're here, and they're very encouraging of us being here, and to see us here in January and open. And with this exhibition, it's just been really, really lovely.

Randy: Michelle, you have an interesting take on this, which is truly contemporary Covid, Zoom! Why don't you give us your feedback on how people are responding?

Michelle: Yes, so I am not in Montréal, and so I don't get to be in the space while it was open to the public. So one of the responses I've had was just installing it when I was there and hanging it up. And the bright colors were really attracting people walking by, like people were popping their head in and stopping to look while I was installing, 'cause they were drawn to the colors. And I was like, that's a really nice response to see before the show's even up and before people can even, you know, walk in.

But for me, a lot of the response has been on social media. A lot of my work I post on Instagram and Facebook, so that has been where a lot of positive response has been. Especially when I first started making the drums, like I made the first textile drum in January 2021. And it's such a weird time because it's Covid and you can't

see anyone and I didn't know when, or if, the works were ever going to be in an exhibition anytime soon? And so I just kind of posted the first denim drum on Instagram and was just kind of thinking, you don't know what the response is going to be like, are people going to be like, 'what is this?', 'what did you do!?' Like 'that's, that's not okay' or whatever. And the response was so incredibly positive; people were just writing the best comments and just saying things like 'I'm obsessed with this', and 'this is incredible.' And it was so nice and encouraging to hear when you're making something and there's no other way to get any feedback.

So I - as I was making them, I would just post them up on Facebook, on Instagram, and, you know, just incredible comments, people were just so excited by them. And it's really nice too, that they've opened in Vancouver and people can actually see them in real life now. And I get tagged a lot on Instagram. Like people will post stories or tag me in the post. I've had a couple from daphne as well, where people are in the gallery and they post that they're there and stuff.

So that has been the way for me to connect with audiences that are going to the gallery in a way that probably wasn't possible before. And so that has been really nice to see - like so heartwarming, like when they tag me and there's little hearts in the posts and everything! And I'm just like, well, thank you so much! It's a great way to connect for sure.

Lori: Certainly one of the things that daphne's trying to do is we're contacting artists, and having a lot of our - the first three exhibitions that we did were Québec-based artists, but now Michelle's come from British Columbia and we've got artists coming from different territories and nations across the country. And so it will be really nice for people to be able to come into daphne in Montréal and see work from places that they may not have been able, may not be able to travel to, and bring artists here that may not have ever shown in Québec. So it's really - that's, you know, that's one of the things that we're really, really proud of being able to do.

Randy: One of the issues we've been struggling with all of us in our society is, you know, meeting virtually, but you're describing sort of an upside of social media and things like Zoom, which is the territory, the audience, gets expanded, but also, so does their response mode. I know for me, when I look at a piece of art, very often it's a day later, or two days later, or a week later, that it, you know, begins to sink in. Do

you get those kinds of reflective responses to the show?

Lori: I think one of the wonderful things about the fact that we're in a neighborhood, it's a very interestingly mixed residential and retail – the street that we're on as well. And so, the people pop in because they're on their way to shop or whatever. But one of the other things that we've made the decision that daphne is to do - to actually have longer-running exhibitions as well. So most generally our exhibitions are about ten weeks in length, which is sort of outside the norm. Their intention is that people can come see the exhibition - you know, if we'd have an opening, they could have come to the opening! - and then, but come and see the exhibition, go away, as you said, Randy, reflect on it, reflect on what they saw and then come back for another visit, bring a different friend with them or whatever. And so that's a really nice feeling in that people don't have to see it, like just once and it's over and it's gone and they'll never see it again, but they can come back and forth and visit us again and again.

Randy: Thank you both for what you're doing. It's really refreshing and encouraging to hear about this and we're looking forward to actually seeing Michelle's art on the wall.

Carolyn: So we want to thank our two guests, Michelle Sound, visual artist, member of the Swan River First Nation, a Cree nation from Western Canada *[Note: her website is: https://www.michellesound.art]* and Lori Beavis, executive director of daphne art centre in Montréal. daphne's website is https://daphne.art We'll also have a link to it from the transcript for this show.

Randy: I hope this broadcast has given you time and space to reconnect with your roots in Mother Earth, and with your ancestral roots as well. Before your busy day distracts you from this moment, I encourage you to take a few minutes to reach out and feel the presence of living flora and fauna, and perhaps even that of your ancestors or in this particular case, you know, Michelle's aunties and ancestors. Allow yourself to touch their presence, capture the moment and hold onto it. And also if you will, write to me and let me know about your experience. I can be contacted through my website, at www.randykritkausky.com where you can also find transcripts - printed transcripts and supplemental materials for all Indigenous Perspectives shows. Thank you.

Carolyn: Thank you all.

Michelle: Thank you!

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"Indigenous Perspectives" monthly podcast is hosted by Randy Kritkausky and Carolyn Schmidt, and broadcast on the fourth Thursday of each month, 12 noon Eastern Time (US & Canada), on HealthyLife.net.