

Mullyane Nîmito - Alternative Text Catalogue:

Visual PDF available online: grunt.ca.

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Introduction to alternative text catalogue:

The alternative text catalogue project is created by the staff and contractors on the Accessibility Committee at grunt gallery. Our approach to alternative text is one of creative access, straddling the line between information and function. We are all artists, and while we try to minimize subjective language, we are working to provide a catalogue that creates an enjoyable experience for our non-visual audience and those better served by text!

We welcome feedback from our audiences. Please contact us at access@grunt.ca with any questions or feedback.

Creative Access Descriptions:

Cover (front):

A vivid pink catalogue cover with a single image at the top centre. Top text reads: [grunt gallery, September 17th - October 29th, 2022]. The bottom text reads Cheyenne Rain LeGrande, Mullyanne Nimito. Cheyenne's name in Cree is written below her name in English. The shapes of the syllabics of her name resemble the Roman alphabet uppercase letter P, an inverted capital L, a left-pointing equilateral triangle, and a dot floating and leading into a left-facing, open semi-circle. The image on the cover shows a handmade shawl comprised of pastel ribbons and aluminum can tabs installed on a black mannequin in a pale pink room. The walls have Cree syllabics that spell "she dances," painted in pale blue, and dramatic lighting and shadows.

The printed catalogue's cover paper has subtle vertical grains and a smooth, supple feel.

The front cover image credit is *Mullyane Nimito (2022), bepsi tab shawl*—photo by Dennis Ha.

Cover (back):

The catalogue's back cover is a bold and vivid pink colour, similar to a tropical hibiscus flower, with credits for the images that appear throughout the catalogue. These credits are listed on their respective pages below.

Inside Cover Spread:

The first open spread of the catalogue shows a landscape-oriented installation photo of the exhibition. The photo shows a corner where two walls meet, each wall with a mounted screen playing Cheyenne's video works Cahkipehikan (left screen) and Mullyanne Nimito (right screen), both frozen on frames that show close-ups of Cheyenne's face. The screens are backlit with glowing, white lights that create a rectangular halo. The walls they are on are bubblegum pink and covered in pale blue Cree syllabics. The concrete floor looks dark coppery orange, reflecting the warm colours and glowing lights.

Image credit text, pulled from back cover: *Mullyane Nimito (2022)*, video.

Page 1:

The page is all text. At the footer, the grunt gallery logo (the word grunt in lower case in white on a black brushstroke of black) sits above a line of gallery and exhibition funders. They are acknowledged in the text credits.

These interior pages are thinner than the cover and interior spread but still feel thicker than photocopy paper.

grunt gallery
Mullyanne Nimito
Cheyenne Rain LeGrande (Cree Syllabic name)
116 - 350 East 2nd Avenue
Vancouver, BC Canada
V5T 4R8
grunt.ca
Curator: Whess Harman
Writers: Whess Harman and Justin Ducharme
Design: Victoria Lum
Copy Editor: Katrina Orlowski
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Text © 2022 the authors
All images courtesy of the artists

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grunt gallery is located on the unceded and ancestral territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał/selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, who have lived in kinship with this land, water and air for thousands of years. We recognize and acknowledge their leadership and our own complicity in settler colonialism, its present occupation and its violent legacy. We acknowledge our responsibility to work actively in support of Indigenous sovereignty and towards a respectful relationship with this place.

grunt gallery gratefully acknowledges support from The Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, The Canada Council for the Arts, The British Columbia Arts Council, The City of Vancouver, the Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Vancouver Foundation.

Page 2 and 3:

A double-page spread shows a photo of the exhibition installation split across both pages. The photo shows a still of Cheyenne's video work, Cahkipehikan, displayed on a wall-mounted screen. In the still, Cheyenne is shown in a closeup, pressing the inside of her wrists to her cheekbones, with a spotlight and shadows of Cree syllabics projected onto her. She has on a turquoise blue eyeshadow, bold blue lines drawn on her forehead, and partially covered Cree syllabics drawn in the same blue on her cheekbones. She is wearing a translucent white chiffon-like robe and white hair clips separating her hair at her forehead. She gazes defiantly into the camera.

Image credit text, pulled from back cover: *Mullyane Nimito (2022)*, video.

Page 4 :

A large pink rectangle fills the majority of a white page. In the pink rectangle, there is a portrait-oriented installation image with a thin black border. The image shows

Cheyenne's handmade shawl, composed of silver bepsi can tabs and pastel ribbons that resemble the colours of the sky at dawn (pale shades of purple, pink, blue, and orange). The shawl is displayed on a black mannequin torso, rotating on a small white platform and lit in a pink spotlight from below. Behind the shawl, the rest of the gallery is visible, all of the walls are painted a pale bubblegum pink and have baby-blue syllabics written repeatedly across their surface. At the corner of the two walls on the left side of the images, wall-mounted screens display stills of Cheyenne's video works Cahikipehikan and Mullyane Nimito.

Image credit text, listed on the back cover: *Mullyane Nimito (2022)*, installation view at grunt gallery.

Page 5:

A white page with no images. Thin, large, serif title text placed on the bottom of the page reads:

Whess Harman

Knowing From a Language of Embodiment: Mullyane Nimito.

Page 6 and 7:

A white page with no images. Whess Harman's writing is split into two thin columns on the page, which reads:

Contemporary Indigenous art has yet to shake the limited trappings of being framed within traditional versus nontraditional, art versus craft. This positionality places Indigenous artists in an awkward and often vulnerable position; modern Indigenous identity is *and* is not compromised, it is *and* is not contradictory, and we must embody and speak from both in whatever art language is deemed most appropriate at the time. It is no small feat continuing to be in and continuing to resist a state program of on-going colonization. Within it, Indigenous artists strive to prove our work to ourselves, our communities and to an extractive art audience leaving us, at times, in what feels like a haphazard state of medieval quartering.

However, there is a distinct difference with artists like Cheyenne, and many others both currently and historically, who ascribe to a different methodology altogether; a marked disinterest in continuing to cater and appeal to the oppositional narrative of contemporary vs traditional, and embracing instead plurality and pleasure while casually refuting any lesser or more than narratives of authenticity.

The trajectory of many Indigenous artists over the last ten years has been heavily situated in a process of “Indigenizing” and is often done through a process of identifying an absence of representation in popular culture and reconfiguring the source material to make space for inclusion. This method of intervention relies on countering what an audience expects; why haven't we seen an Indigenous superhero? What would Indigenous Sailor Moon look like? What does the catwalk look like with Indigenous designers and models?

This reflection is not accusatory; representation *matters*. The many people who will still revolt against Indigenous inclusion in contemporary culture as being inaccurate, inauthentic, and unoriginal haven't gone away. But what makes me the most hopeful in the present heavy emphasis on representation and identity art, are the Indigenous artists and curators who are uninterested in competing with others to justify their experiences as individuals in colonial, capitalistic industries.

What I love about Cheyenne's work is that it is about *her*. To me, her work *is* about Nehiyaw culture, decolonization, intergenerational trauma, family, surviving genocide but it's also about who she is *as an individual*. No one looks, talks or thinks like Cheyenne Rain Legrande and she is *not* interested in responding to the oft implied call of positioning herself as a professionalized figurehead to represent the whole of her nation. Instead her work proposes that we can be a *person*. We can have fashion, niche interests, and extraterrestrial fantasies. We can love and explore our cultures without ascribing to established ideas of what looks “Indigenous enough.” We can look fabulous on the 'gram. Loss and grief, while devastating and always carried on the backs of our community, does not have to look a certain noble, solidly consenting, Indian way. In Cheyenne's work, I am reminded that my contemporaries and I can just *be*, and what we are is beautiful Indigenous humans, living with and in a nuance that is not a contradictory or shameful position to be in. No permission is needed to put down the battles to give time to revel in the joy of who we are and the relationality to one another in this small, pluralistic, hybridized sphere of NDN country. This is because the work, even when it is joyful, still arrives as an unapologetic confrontation.

Page 8:

A large pink rectangle fills the majority of a white page. In the pink rectangle, there is a portrait-oriented installation image with a thin black border. The image shows a closeup of the woven bepsi tab shawl across the shoulders of a black mannequin torso. In real life, the ribbons that run through the shawl and hang as fringe are soft pastel colours, but in this image and warmly lit room, they reflect a lot of light and have almost a glowing neon quality. The shawl is woven with several layers of silvery tabs and

resembles the texture of chainmail armour. The image's background is a single pink wall with the same Cree syllabics.

Image credit text, listed on the back cover: *Mullyane Nimito* (2022), bepsi tab shawl.

Page 9:

A white page with no images. Thin, large, serif title text placed on the bottom of the page reads:

Justin Ducharme
NDNs in Pop Culture & the Icons We Deserve

Page 10:

A white page with no images. Justin Ducharme's writing is split into two thin columns on the page, which reads:

When one thinks about how Indigenous people have been represented either within or through pop culture you may oscillate through the more commonly known & overused stereotypes such as the Noble Savage (popular examples like *Dances with the Wolves*), or the Red Indian (think racist mascot fuckery). These conversations around how Indigenous peoples are represented or how we choose to represent ourselves within the contemporary pop culture zeitgeist are often followed up by questions around a theoretical tension between traditional vs. contemporary points of reference or work in general. I've heard people question within my own career as a writer and filmmaker how that might affect one's ability to create work that feels both *Indigenous* and *contemporary*... as if we as Native people don't currently exist within a modern or current narrative. I find there's a very distinct link between that question being posed to Native artists making work that's labelled by audiences as "contemporary" and the way that ndns have been represented within media and pop culture since contact, but diving into that we'll maybe leave for another time.

With these thoughts in mind, enter ndn pop culture icon Cheyenne Rain LeGrande [her name included in the Cree syllabus here as well] with her solo exhibition at grunt gallery titled *Mullyane Nimito*. Blending new and archival video performance work and hand created items that are featured in LeGrande's new performance piece – this show breathes new contextual evidence into the cannon of my aforementioned belief that we as ndns can make work within spaces that feel ndn to the core in both a traditional and contemporary context. Since getting to know Cheyenne as both a person and an artist

I've been privy to the razor sharp focus and steady hand at which she curates both her individual persona and that of a performance artist and creative. Anyone who knows her work can probably visualize her signature staple attire consisting of sky high platform boots, babydoll dresses and complex, unique-to-herself make-up. This is credit to an artist's commitment to brand and individuality. That kind of *Angelyne* like visual iconography when someone can identify you based on key signifiers in how you choose to represent yourself through style and fashion is something that I personally admire from a performance artist like LeGrande. It's in these key details where iconography has the chance to be born, and in the context of this work, where the connection to both traditional and contemporary ways of expressing Indigeneity meet.

Page 11:

There is a pause in Justin Ducharme's essay with 3 pages of image. Page eleven is a white page with a large pink rectangle filling most of its surface. In the pink rectangle, there are two stacked landscape-oriented images with black borders.

The photo at the top shows Cheyenne's handmade platform moccasins with a glass vitrine. The moccasins are lit from below, creating shadows on the ankle straps and the metal studs that attach the boot to its platform. The presenting plinth and the wall behind it are painted pale pink, with large blue syllabics overlaid onto them in pale blue.

The photo at the bottom shows a wall-mounted screen with a still of the video work Mullyanne Nimito, in which Cheyenne is pictured with the pop tab shawl, reaching her hands toward the camera. The screen on the wall is backlit in white, creating an ethereal halo around the video.

Image credit text, listed on the back cover: *Mullyane Nimito (2022)*, installation view at grunt gallery.

Page 12 and 13:

A spread with a large pink rectangle across 2 white pages. The image inside the rectangle has a black border and is split at the seam of the two pages. The image shows an installation shot of the exhibition Mullyanne Nimito. From left to right, there is the vitrine with the platform moccasins, the bepsi tab shawl on the mannequin torso, and a wall-mounted screen displaying a still of Cahkipehikan, in which Cheyenne, with her blue makeup on, gently wipes a tear from her cheek. The dramatic lighting on each of the objects casts multi-directional shadows, making the pale pinks and blues on the walls look at varying degrees of darkness.

Image credit text, listed on the back cover: *Mullyane Nimito* (2022), installation view at grunt gallery.

Page 14 and 15:

White pages with no images. Justin Ducharme's writing continues in a thin two-column layout, which reads:

With her new performance piece, *Mullyanne Nimito*, we are given further examples around the ways in which she blends these two concepts so that perhaps the larger art world may understand. First off for example, the handmade shawl created out of silk ribbon with Pepsi and beer can pull tabs weaved throughout to create the base. The shawl adorns her shoulders through the performance (and is on display in the exhibition) as a visual and aesthetic ode to the Fancy Dance shawl commonly worn by powwow dancers. The marriage of an everyday almost mundane object like the tin can pull tabs with the silk pastel ribbon to create a fancy dance shawl might seem flippant to others but for natives these two objects and their coming together in this way have deep connections into how we see ourselves represented or how we choose to represent ourselves within a modern pop culture context. We see this again in the handmade wooden platform moccasins she wears (also on display at grunt). Making moccasins is a skill most learnt ancestrally, passed down by family members and aunties who know the shortcuts and show you how to do things right. LeGrande once again takes the idea of bringing the traditional into a contemporary context by blending a traditional hide moccasin with her signature sky high platform, this time made out of wood. Indigenous people's relationship with making our own clothing ages back since time immemorial and hand crafting platform hide moccasins using ancestral teachings is yet another example of the artist proving the aforementioned thesis of blending these two ideas. Finally and perhaps my favourite part of the entire show is the song performed during *Mullyanne Nimito*. Produced by Blackfoot singer, songwriter, producer and overall musical icon Chandra Melting Tallow (aka *Mourning Coup*), we are given what LeGrande has said to be her singing debut in a dreamlike, airy and whimsical cover of Fleetwood Mac's *Dreams* sang in the Cree language. Translated by her mother and kokum from English into their ancestral dialect, this song is probably the most obvious-to-white-people example around the ways in which Indigenous artists can exist and make work that feels and IS both contemporary and traditional. The track is beautiful... smooth vocals carry you throughout with a synthy pop like backtrack that solidifies my previous claim to ndn pop culture icon status.

To bring about meaningful relationships to these objects and personal lived experiences takes an artist with a clear sense of self and individuality. In her artist statement LeGrande laments on ancestral histories, touching on things such as shared fashion, teachings, and language to weave together an understanding of what makes the work tick, of what shapes her as an artist. She gives contextual evidence to back up everything we experience as a viewer with these generous stories. Artists like Cheyenne Rain LeGrande ᑭᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ and countless others around Turtle Island and the world continue to make work like this, work that feels so deeply personal yet relatable, so traditionally connected yet wildly contemporary. I like to think we make this work in a subconscious group effort, not like some kind of devised plan or anything. But an unspoken group consensus to try and rid the world of the horrid stereotypes that exist within pop culture, because of pop culture — like the Noble Savage and Red Indian — in hopes that one day we too can be afforded the luxury of being able to make work without having to speak for an entire race of people.

Pages 16 and 17:

A large image spread over two white pages. The image shows a closeup of the walls of the exhibition. The wall and paint have an eggshell finish, with a slightly porous texture and a more matte than glossy finish. In this lighting, the wall is a delicate pink, perhaps the colour of a strawberry smoothie or a fresh rose. The Cree syllabics, which spell out “she dances,” are a pale blue but, in this lighting, look almost silver, like clouds at dusk. These syllabics were painted dozens of times across the walls by Cheyenne, the hand-painted nature coming across through the thinner areas of paint and the slight variations in the repeating shapes.

Image credit text, listed on the back cover: *Mullyane Nimito (2022), mural syllabics.*

All images are credited to Dennis Ha.

Page 18:

A white page with a short biography of the artist written at the top. Her name is bolded in black in both English and Cree, with text in thin sans-serif font that reads:

Cheyenne Rain LeGrande is a Nehiyaw Isko artist from Bigstone Cree Nation. She currently resides in Amiskwaciy Waskahikan, also known as Edmonton, Alberta. Cheyenne graduated from Emily Carr University with her BFA in Visual Arts in 2019. Her work often explores history, knowledge and traditional practices. Through the use of her body and language, she speaks to the past, present and future. Cheyenne’s work is

rooted in the strength to feel, express and heal. Bringing her ancestors with her, she moves through installation, photography, video, sound and performance art.

Page 19:

A white page with “thank yous” in a black sans-serif font that reads:

Special thanks to Cheyenne, her mother and kokum for their translation work and support of the project, to Kay and Keimi for their exceptional work in providing additional access supports to make this exhibition available to a wider audience; to Katrina for their work on this publication as well as for their work as our communications manager. Thank you to the rest of the grunt staff for helping bring this exhibition up, to Victoria Lum for designing this publication, and to the Western Front for hosting Cheyenne and Amrita Hepi’s performance adjacent to the exhibition.

Page 20:

A white page intentionally left blank, to mark the end of the publication and allow a moment of reflection.