



Rooted in Relations

June 2 – August 1, 2025

Curatorial Statement

Rooted in Relations is an exhibition of works from the University of Winnipeg's art collection created by eight Inuit and First Nations artists. The exhibition is curated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students of UWinnipeg's Indigenous Theory and Curatorial Practices course (GENG-7820/HIST-4833), taught by Associate Professor, History of Art, Dr. Cathy Mattes. As a cohort of emerging curators, the students also worked collaboratively with Gallery 1C03 staff. The exhibition reflects the core principles and teachings of the course which includes continuous learning, engagement with Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and decolonial practices.

Rooted in Relations emerges from the interwoven threads of familial ties, braided together through storytelling and visual imagery centering relationality and kinship. It is grounded in a central theme: pre-existing, inherited, and continuous bodies of Indigenous knowledges that incubate fortitude and pride, traversing and distributing through a root's system of reciprocal, interdependent relations between all forms of life. *Rooted in Relations* decenters and challenges the colonial notion that relationality is only viable in human-to-human form. It reinforces Indigenous understandings that kinship lives and thrives in the interconnectivity of all living things: land, water, plants, animals, ancestors, spirits, Creator and communities. Each piece in the exhibition illuminates the mycelium network that grows from the seeds of Indigenous Knowledges with the heart of resiliency, embodying worldviews that spread into expressions of cultural identity, voice, community, and shared kinship. A cyclical process of re-centering exists within these roots, revealing a continual narrative that all lifeforms are interconnected and growing within this network. As these connections continue to grow and spread, they undergo metamorphosis, shifting and transforming into kinships that are both displayed and embodied through artistic expression.

Although the artworks in this exhibition differ in outward appearance - varying from paintings to prints to sculptures - each work tells a compelling story as a stand-alone piece and voice. *Rooted in Relations* brings together eight artists from many Indigenous cultures and worldviews. Artists represented include Jackson Beardy, Clifford Edwin DuBois, Robert Kakegamic, Elizabeth Aulatjut Nutaraluk, Daphne Odjig, Simon Tookoome and David B. Williams. These works, as a collective, are a visceral declaration of entanglement, evolving into connection and community. The strength of the collective reaches inward, tracing deeply to the roots of relation - where moments of convergence and divergence between the artists become an invitation for visitors to engage in the decentering and recentering of relationality.

Rooted in Relations offers a holistic journey through time, relationships, and ongoing acts of building, attracting, and nurturing kin and community. Centered within this unyielding and resilient cycle, we are reminded that we are defined by our relations, and our relations are the roots from which the network of life originates and circulates.

List of Works

Works are listed on the wall in order of their appearance, beginning along the east side of the gallery, continuing clockwise and concluding with the sculptures displayed in the middle of the gallery. All works are collection of the University of Winnipeg.

Simon Tookoome, *Story*, 2001, woodcut, 58.5 x 70.3 cm.
Gift of Nunavut Gallery Inc.

Jackson Beardy, *Loons '81*, 1981, screenprint, 41 x 50 cm.
Gift of Anonymous Alumnus Donor.

Clifford Edwin DuBois, *Sacred Healers*, 1998, acrylic on paper, 57.5 x 42 cm.
Gift of Hon. Ruth Krindle.

Daphne Odjig, *Life in Harmony*, 1992, lithograph, 74.3 x 59.7 cm.
Gift of Anonymous Alumnus Donor.

Robert Kakegamic, *Family*, screenprint, 1982, 36.3 x 42.3 cm.
Gift of Hon. Ruth Krindle.

Robert Kakegamic, *Getting Acquainted*, screenprint, 1982, 36.3 x 42.3 cm.
Gift of Hon. Ruth Krindle.

Robert Kakegamic, *Courting*, screenprint, 1982, 36.3 x 42.3 cm.
Gift of Hon. Ruth Krindle.

Robert Kakegamic, *Nesting*, screenprint, 1982, 36.3 x 42.3 cm.
Gift of Hon. Ruth Krindle.

Daphne Odjig, *Song of Spring*, 1992, lithograph, 74.3 x 59.7 cm.
Gift of Anonymous Alumnus Donor.

David B. Williams, *Mutual Respect*, 1999, gouache on paper, 51.7 x 60.5 cm.
Gift of Anonymous Alumnus Donor.

Jackson Beardy, *Sturgeon Clan*, 1979, serigraph, 75.5 x 94.3 cm.

Simon Tookoome, *Decision by the Group*, 1998, woodcut, 63.5 x 82 cm.
Gift of Nunavut Gallery Inc.

Elizabeth Aulatjut Nutaraluk, *Untitled (Figure in Kayak)*, circa 1988, stone and antler, 10 x 30.5 x 11.5 cm. Gift of Larry Shields.

Artist Once Known, *Untitled (Seal and Bird)*, undated, stone and antler, 8.2 x 7.7 x 5.1 cm.
Gift of Larry Shields.

About the Curators

Rooted in Relations is co-curated by a collective of University of Winnipeg undergraduate and graduate students within the GENG-7820/HIST-4833: Indigenous Theory and Curatorial Practices course, taught by Dr. Cathy Mattes during the Spring 2025 term. This diverse cohort shares an expansive background, spanning the disciplines of Education, History, Art History, Business, Women's and Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, and Indigenous Studies. Under the guidance of Dr. Cathy Mattes and Gallery 1C03's Director/Curator Jennifer Gibson, the collective navigates their curation alongside conversations of Indigenous theory and curation practices, reflecting on kinship ties that extend farther than human to human relationships. *Rooted in Relations'* curatorial collective Shivanya Ra (she/they), Bridget Nattress (she/her), Laine Cosby (she/her), Margaret Firlotte (she/her), Mahlet Cuff (they/them), Brad Blackbird (he/him/2S), Krishma Sodhi (she/her), Breanna Markiewicz (she/her), Wyatt Chanowski (he/him), and Moeen Didehban (Amir - he/him) seeks to add to the evolving dialogue and practices of Indigenous curation.

Exhibition Hours

Monday to Friday between 1:00 and 4:00 pm from June 2 to August 1, 2025.
Closed July 1, 2025. Viewing also available by appointment outside of these hours.

Gallery 1C03

1st floor of Centennial Hall
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Phone: 204.786.9253
www.uwinnipeg.ca/art-gallery

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Acknowledgments

Gallery 1C03 is located on Treaty One Territory, heartland of the Red River Métis, and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Ininew, Anisininew, Dakota Oyate, and Denesuline. We acknowledge that our water is sourced from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

We wish to express our appreciation to the University of Winnipeg Department of History and the Office of Indigenous Engagement for their support of this project.

The curatorial collective is grateful to our professor, Dr. Cathy Mattes, for mentoring us throughout the curatorial process. We also wish to thank Gallery 1C03 staff members for their contributions to the realization of this exhibition: Director/Curator Jennifer Gibson, Art Gallery and Collections Technician Jamie Wright, and Art Gallery Education and Collections Intern Saskia Meuwese. Further thanks extends to the University's Communications department for graphic design and promotional assistance. We are exceptionally grateful to Elder Sharon Pelletier for bringing prayer and smudging the exhibition to open the show in a good way, and to Dr. Chantal Fiola, Associate Vice-President of Indigenous Engagement, for bringing remarks at the reception. Last, but certainly not least, we wish to express our gratitude to the artists whose works are featured in this exhibition – their creations are gifts that they have generously shared and it is a great honour to experience them.