

For Immediate Release: August 1, 2024

KC Adams' exhibition *owîceskoyakinikewak* at the Art Gallery of Regina from August 8 to October 12 combines community creations, historical ceramics forms of First Nations people, and new media.

owîceskoyakinikewak, created with community members using clay dug from the earth our province, connects us with culture, spirit, land, and water embedded in the clay.



image from *owîceskoyakinikewak* courtesy of KC Adams. Not for reproduction.

Regina, SK:

Running from August 8 to October 12, 2024, at the Art Gallery of Regina, Winnipeg-based artist KC Adams' exhibition *owîceskoyakinikewak* includes work created in partnership with community members. Sponsorship from TD Managed Investments and a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts enabled the gallery to bring Adams to Regina not only to share her work but also to work closely with the land and people of this place.

At the heart of the exhibition is a symbolic fire pit—which includes branches and wood ash encircled by rocks. Nestled into a downy oval of ash are ceramic objects made by Adams, Indigenous women in Regina and individuals from Starblanket Cree Nation, all created from clay dug from the land. Adams' vivid photographs, adorned with potent geometrical designs, encircle the gallery. Her photographs chronicle workshops with local Indigenous communities when Adams imparted lost ancestral knowledge of pot-building she recovered through an experimental archeological process. An immersive soundscape embodying Air, Fire, Water, and Earth infuses the gallery with a harmonious symphony of these life-sustaining elements.

Adams has titled the exhibition *owîceskoyakinikewak*, which means *s/he shapes clay or mud*. The title draws attention to the artist's ongoing journey of learning her ancestors' language and cultural traditions, which, due to colonialization, were often not passed on to younger generations. It also honours the role of The Artist as one whose creations exceed their modest input of materials. To shape mud is to be a creator. Not to breathe life into the sticky mire of earth mixed with water but to touch and form it into a pot: a blessing that nourishes human life.

Often recognized for her work in new media and photography, Adams recovered lost ancestral knowledge of pot-building through an experimental archeological process, including digging local clay, using weaving to reinforce the crumbly ceramic body, and tending to a wood-fueled blaze to fire the pots. The artist, whose ancestry includes Ininew, Anishinaabe and British, describes how she was unaware that her people had a pottery tradition, which is often left out of mainstream university curricula. Yet, she enthuses, the first time she touched clay, it just "felt right."

With generous support from SaskCulture, Adams conducted workshops in Regina and Lebret, Saskatchewan, in June to share the healing power of clay with local Indigenous women. Adams describes the importance of creating ways for people to handle the clay of this land to "recall lasting pathways of blood memory and transmit knowledge of traditional relationships with water to future generations." A desired outcome of the exhibition and the workshops is to activate the Indigenous community to carry this knowledge into practice and share it widely so that it "never goes silent again."

Working with clay harvested from their traditional lands brought participants into direct, intimate contact with the earth, water, and fire. This sustained contact evokes a profound sense of gratitude and care.

Vessels created by workshop participants Sybil Alexson, Larissa Cyr, Geanna Dunbar, Chantell Dubois, Alison Elsner, Karlie King, Melanie Monique Rose, Ethel Starblanket, Denita Starr, Reah Starr, and Judy Upton are a significant part of the installation. They witness how these individuals have learned to value themselves as women by learning about their roles as water protectors, life-givers and nurturers.

Admission to the Art Gallery of Regina at 2420 Elphinstone Street is always free. Between August 8 and October 12, 2024, reflect on the rebirth of traditional knowledge and practices by visiting *owîceskoyakinikewak* during regular gallery hours (11 AM—7 PM Tuesdays through Thursdays and 1-5 PM on Fridays and Saturdays).

Gain a deeper understanding of the profound dialogue *owîceskoyakinikewak* stimulates between the past and the present through resources like an exhibition audio tour sponsored by SaskTel, a self-guided tour pamphlet and free activities sponsored by CultureDays. Share and participate in experiences that activate an understanding of First Cultures and stewardship of the valuable land and water resources, including an artist talk at the University of Regina, interactive sound and electronics performances, and hands-on clay workshops for youth and adults. For more information about the exhibition and related events, please visit www.artgalleryofregina.ca.

Join all of the artists for a public reception on Thursday, September 26, from 7 to 9 PM at the Art Gallery of Regina (2420 Elphinstone Street).

Media contact:

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Contact Moore to arrange interviews with the artist in English.

Please note that this email contains a link to a GoogleDrive folder of images that may be reproduced.

LINKS

Artist's bio:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QY1y-m5g2eZnR0oiKKaG7LDfSEY9deJaS2NORel8H1M/edit?usp=sharing>

(click link to access GoogleDrive)

Reproduction-ready images:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rD7LuQ4EUHccCijEuEcO5T4LUX1_5oJk?usp=sharing
(click link to access GoogleDrive)

Websites:

[exhibition webpage](#)
[KC Adams' website](#)

For Calendar Listings:

Exhibition title: *owîceskoyakinikewak*

Artist(s): KC Adams (with Sybil Alexson, Larissa Cyr, Geanna Dunbar, Chantell Dubois, Alison Elsner, Karlie King, Melanie Monique Rose, Ethel Starblanket, Denita Starr, Reah Starr, and Judy Upton)

Short description: The exhibition *owîceskoyakinikewak* at the Art Gallery of Regina connects community creations, historical First Nations ceramics, and new media, highlighting the value of traditional knowledge and practices.

Dates: August 8 - October 12, 2024

Opening reception: Thursday, September 26, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Cost: Free

Free Culture Days Events September 21 - October 5: <https://www.artgalleryofregina.ca/culture-days-2024>

Website: <https://www.artgalleryofregina.ca>

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images (clockwise from top): pot created in Regina for *owîceskoyakinikewak*, 2024 (photo Geanna Dunbar); Firing pot for *owîceskoyakinikewak* at Starblanket Cree Nation, 2024 (photo AGR staff); workshop participants at Starblanket Cree Nation form pots, 2024 (photo AGR staff); workshop participants in Regina form pots, 2024(photo AGR staff); workshop participants in Regina dig clay, 2024 (photo AGR staff).

AGR

Engaging.
Contemporary.
Art.

Located on Treaty 4, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Lakota and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis people, the Art Gallery of Regina (AGR) promotes the development and appreciation of contemporary art, primarily created by Saskatchewan artists.

AGR provides opportunities for Regina's citizens and visitors to engage with contemporary art through its free exhibitions and artist's talks, critical writing and educational programming.

The Art Gallery of Regina is an autonomous, independent public art gallery with non-profit and charitable status. We are a tenant in the Neil Balkwill Civic Arts Centre located within the vibrant Cathedral Village neighbourhood in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Art Gallery of Regina gratefully acknowledges the support of its core funders, project funders, partners and sponsors:

