



Media Arts Centre

# Indigenous Solidarity Commitment Statement

Draft: December 2020

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## Purpose

This statement is to express the CDMLA's solidarity with Indigenous peoples and make concrete commitments. It also intends to honor, uplift, and commit to making visible Indigenous voices that have shaped VIVO as well as those voices that appear throughout the CDMLA holdings.

Finally, the statement intends to name the significant and ongoing work the CDMLA commits to as a caretaker of media arts histories in this area.

## **Implementation**

Implementing and continuing the vision articulated in this statement will require (continuing to) hire Indigenous people, work with Indigenous creators and producers, and (continuing) working outside of typical archival notions of ownership and value.

## **Revision History**

This statement was originally drafted by Syr Reifsteck (Archivist) and Karen Knights (Archives Manager), building upon the work of Emily Guerrero (Archivist) in their report "Indigenous records, art, and traces in the CDMLA: reflections and recommendations". We were shaped by many important resources and conversations - see the acknowledgements/endorsements, the further readings section, and our general annotated bibliography.

## **Background**

[IN PROGRESS]

## **Acknowledgments and Endorsements**

The CDMLA would like to acknowledge and endorse the calls for actions that have been put to the wider archival community as well as the protocols and processes others have already collaborated upon.

## **Video and Media Arts Community**

[In Progress]

## **United Nations Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

The CDMLA endorses and supports UNDRiP and joins calls for its implementation.

## **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The CDMLA has reviewed the recommendations of the TRC and endorses and supports the general calls to action particularly calls #67-70 which pertain directly to the archival community and its professional bodies.

## **Association of Canadian Archivists - Reconciliation Framework for Canadian Archives**

Fulfilling TRC call to action 70, in the summer of 2020, the Association of Canadian Archivists released the draft reconciliation framework for Canadian Archives for public comment. The CDMLA supports the seven objective areas of the framework: Relationships of respect, Responsibility, Relevance, and Reciprocity; Governance and Management Structures; Professional Practice; Ownership Control and Possession; Access; Arrangement and Description, and Education.

## **Protocols for Native American Materials**

The CDMLA endorses and is guided for the protocols, created in 2006 by a group of Native American and non-Native American archivists and memory workers to identify professional practices regarding Native archival material held by non-tribal organizations.

## **Commitments**

1. Committing to Indigenous solidarity and unsettling the archive's practices and collections is a work in progress, will take time, and will be returned to regularly.
2. As part of our acquisition policy, section 3.1, as a caretaker of alternative media arts histories, the CDMLA prioritizes collection of materials by those who are Indigenous, LGBTQ2+, people of color, woman-identified and/or from other marginalized communities.
3. Individuals and communities can always remove their records/works, request unique arrangements around privacy/access/protocol, and update donation agreements with the CDMLA.
4. The CDMLA will continue to broaden our descriptive practices, including crediting and naming communities and individuals whose works and perspectives appear in the collections.
5. The CDMLA will begin relationships with and deepen existing relationships when wanted and appropriate with those whose works/records are held in the archive as well as those who appear in the archive. The CDMLA will generally initiate and engage in relationship with Indigenous communities and organizations with "respect, responsibility, relevance and reciprocity" (Reconciliation Framework 6).
6. The CDMLA will be clear about how records and resources arrive in the collection and generally be transparent about our policies.
7. The CDMLA will regularly check in on this work, evaluate its effectiveness, and adjust.
8. The CDMLA will update names, subjects, locations and terminology used to describe materials. The updates will reflect desired naming and categories for Indigenous records. The CDMLA will also work to decenter and name western and settler worldviews present in our information structures and systems.
9. The CDMLA commits to enhancing records for Indigenous materials and producers, and to provide greater support and descriptive access for these records.
10. As one of the caretakers of media arts histories, the CDMLA will work to support and make visible the presence and histories of Indigenous artists and producers.

## Further Reading

Please see our annotated bibliography for the resources and individuals that have supported our work and conversations here and in the general policy updating and clarity work we've been doing.

Emily Guerrero's report reaches similar conclusions about the presence of Indigenous voices in the CDMLA and as a focus of the SVES.

The First Nations Video Collective fonds (currently at the CDMLA) as well as SVES institutional records (historic board minutes and management collective minutes) inform some of the conclusions drawn.

*Transference, Traditions, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual and Digital Culture.*

*Sovereign screens: Aboriginal media on the Canadian West coast* provides general information about the video and media arts scene. *Making Video In: The Contested Ground of Alternative Video on the West Coast* has a general history of VIVO, including most watched videos in the early library days.