

OPEN SPACE

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE THROUGH
April 29, 2017

Artists **Sonny Assu, lessLIE, and Marianne Nicolson**

Event ***Awakening Memory***

Place **Open Space, 510 Fort Street, Second Floor**

Date **March 24 to April 29, 2017**

Opening **Friday, March 24, 7:30 PM**

Admission **By donation**



Sonny Assu. *The Paradise Syndrome, Voyage #32*, 2016,
Courtesy of the Artist and the Equinox Gallery.

Awakening Memory

Victoria – Open Space presents ***Awakening Memory***, an exhibition featuring Coast Salish artists **Sonny Assu, lessLIE, and Marianne Nicolson**. The exhibition is curated by **France Trépanier**.

Awakening Memory has been designed through a collaborative process about remembering the role of art within Indigenous communities. It made use of a creative method for Indigenous people to engage with objects that ‘belong’ to them. In response to this process, each artist created new artworks, which are part of the exhibition.

Awakening Memory focuses on both customary and contemporary stories to explore the history, agency and value of an art object from Indigenous perspectives. The exhibition also considers the dynamic relationships between historical Indigenous cultural objects and contemporary Indigenous art practices.

Through the process of remembering, reclaiming and reactivating knowledge, memory-stories are awakened about how we—all of us here—inhabit this land.

FMI: France Trépanier
Aboriginal Curator in Residence
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Project Funders:



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Bios:

Sonny Assu is a Ligwilda'xw Kwakwaka'wakw contemporary artist. He graduated from Emily Carr University (2002) and was the recipient of their distinguished alumni award in 2006. He received the BC Creative Achievement Award in First Nations art in 2011 and was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2012, 2013, and 2015. His work has been accepted into the National Gallery of Canada, Seattle Art Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Burke Museum at the University of Washington, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Hydro Quebec, Lotto Quebec, and in various other public and private collections across Canada, the United States and the UK.

lessLIE is the decolonized name of Leslie Robert Sam, a Coast Salish artist from the Cowichan tribes. He works in a variety of media, but is best known for his serigraph prints. His artwork draws on traditional iconographic elements and often adds contemporary titles or text infused with humour and irony.

While working on his undergraduate degree in 1995, lessLIE began studying Coast Salish art and continued this focus with graduate work at the University of Victoria. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in First Nations Studies from Malaspina University-College and has done graduate work in Interdisciplinary Studies at UVic. He recently branched out with curatorial projects including guest curating, writing, and lectures and has exhibited both nationally and internationally.

Marianne Nicolson ('Tayagila'ogwa) is an artist of Scottish and Dzawada'enuxw First Nations descent. The Dzwada'enuxw People are a member tribe of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Her training encompasses both traditional Kwakwaka'wakw forms and culture and Western European based art practice. She has completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University of Art and Design (1996), a Masters in Fine Arts (1999), a Masters in Linguistics and Anthropology (2005) and a PhD in Linguistics, Anthropology and Art History (2013) at the University of Victoria. She has exhibited her artwork locally, nationally and internationally as a painter, photographer and installation artist, has written and published numerous essays and articles, and has participated in multiple speaking engagements. Her practice engages with issues of Aboriginal histories and politics arising from a passionate involvement in cultural revitalization and sustainability.

Project Funders:



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