

tīná gúyáńí (Deer Road), k'ō-dī iyínáts'idish (new agency), Article, Montréal

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tīná gúyáńí (Deer Road) *k'ô-dī īyínáts'īdish (new agency)*

From the street, the two-dimensional works in the storefront exhibition *k'ô-dī īyínáts'īdish (new agency)* are provocatively bright and alluringly minimal. The vibrant orange background evokes the vernacular of a construction site, a familiar hue in Montréal where complaints about unending roadwork are common. Driving by Article, an artist-run-centre in Mile End, one of the city's hippest and most gentrified neighbourhoods, one is reminded of rampant displacement caused by cycles of renovation, rent hikes, and real estate speculation. Three black-and-white, geometric, house-like structures against the orange backdrop reinforce the clash between the safety of the domestic sphere and the artificial urgency of building development. A yellow dotted line suggesting a roadway cuts across the lower half of the image, announcing another threat to the serenity of the hearth.

This installation by tīná gúyáńí (Deer Road), an artist collective formed by Tsuut'ina mother and son duo Glenna Cardinal and sETH cardinal dodginghorse, was presented in the throes of the second wave of COVID-19 in Québec. With galleries and museums closed by government mandate, Article transformed their window into an interactive environment. Passers-by were greeted by a repeating audio track where a woman's voice reflected on *agency*, *loss of agency*, and the possibilities for *new agency*: "loss of agency when Indian agents, government officials—municipal, provincial, and federal—make decisions for you and your family [...] new agency: to make decisions for you by you." Five QR codes, imbedded in the three architectural renderings with corresponding geographic coordinates, served as portals to more content.

Opening these webpages onto their phones, audience members could access a series of videos, postcards, and photographs that critically respond to the environmental and psychological effects of the South West Calgary Ring Road: the project to finish Highway 201, which traverses Tsuut'ina Nation

territories, forcefully removed residents and destroyed hectares of traditional land. In 2014, tīná gúyáńí were amongst those who lost their ancestral home.

One of the QR codes, representing 210 Chaguzagha tsi-tina (Weaselhead Road)—the family home—opened to a handheld camera video that combines storytelling, home video aesthetics, and a recurring overlaid audio clip of Tsuut'ina Nation Chief Roy Whitney announcing the sale of the land following the results of a fraught referendum. Capturing both the affective and material importance of their home, the artist collective juxtaposes the personal, geopolitical, ecological, and colonial implications of the infrastructure project.

This is taken up again in another video from the 2020 opening ceremony of the Ring Road. Sharing the media limelight with Chief Whitney and Premier Jason Kenney, both of whom celebrated the new section of highway, dodginghorse issues a powerful rebuke of the project and then cuts off his braids. Standing at a podium that reads "Alberta Recovery Plan" with ceremonially dressed Alberta Provincial Police hovering behind him, dodginghorse's action is poignant, moving, and an embodied reminder of continued settler violence in Canada. Effective in its virtual iteration, *k'ô-dī īyínáts'īdish (new agency)* adeptly transforms contingency and employs handheld technology as a conceptual and aesthetic opportunity to create a compelling visual experience rooted in the urgency of loss and colonial dispossession.

Didier Morelli

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tīná gúyáńí (Deer Road)
postcard from the
project *I am here*, 2019.
Photo : courtesy of the artists

k'ô-dī īyínáts'īdish
(*new agency*),
installation view,
Article, Montréal, 2021.
Photo : Guy L'Heureux