

New York Exhibition

**LAWRENCE PAUL YUXWELUPTUN:
NEO-RESERVATION LANDSCAPE PAINTING
AND OVOIDISM**

In collaboration with Macaulay + Co

January 12 – March 16, 2024



Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Cut-off Lands, Outstanding Business, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 in.

Arsenal Contemporary Art New York is pleased to present *Neo Reservation Landscape Painting and Ovoidism*, a solo exhibition of new paintings, drawings and sculptures by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, mounted in collaboration with Macaulay + Co of Vancouver.

Of Cowichan (Hul'q'umi'num Coast Salish) and Okanagan (Syilx) descent, Yuxweluptun (pronounced yook WAIL upen) is among the most celebrated, outspoken and influential contemporary Indigenous artists working in Canada today. He presents his ideas through polemical, but also playful artworks that span a forty-year career. With his distinctive melding of modernism and what he calls "visionism," Yuxweluptun makes surrealistic and animated landscapes, as well as abstractions based on the ancient ovoid form lines of his people. Through highly original images of a spirit-rich, but troubled world, he is noted for his distinctive use of color and for his magical *mises-en-scènes*. The British Columbia-based artist is widely collected in Canada and, increasingly, abroad, both institutionally and privately.

Writing in 2016, here is Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun in his own words:

I have been an artist all my life. It's been my life goal to portray the negative and positive realities of this world. I'm interested in recording history: residential schools; worldwide concerns, global warming, deforestation, and pollution; humanity, humour, and existentialism. I'm involved in history painting in a way that is dealing with these issues, because they were born before my time. I think that we have to record this history. If you only allow the colonialists to record history, they record it to their own glorification. I wanted to take that position of power, of historical painting, and put it into my own hands - take possession of history. I'm just an Indian trying to emancipate myself, but I still will look at these things.

My artwork is a vision from a Native perspective. The symbolic forms are interchangeable, based on my needs when I make a painting. Its a free style that has emerged from a traditional style to create a new art form; the modernity of primitivism...The symbolism transforms into landscape and other forms to create a vision; it transforms into realism, which is Native visualism in symbolic form.

Throughout my career, I have created my art practice, and I've created Ovoidism - and written the "Manifesto of Ovoidism" - which is an abstract concept dealing with the traditional ovoid form (The ovoid is one of the basic shapes of traditional Northwest Coast art. Concave on the base and convex on the top, the corners are rounded.) as an exercise in existentialism (free thinking). Truth and empowering one's own self are important to me—to have my own voice. I'm a modernist. I'm not making Native art, and I don't claim to...Somebody has to translate the world we live in from our Native perspective to a European one, and so I embarked on this modern journey. It was the only way to get a message out. And Native people are going to benefit from this translation.

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (b.1957) is Cowichan (Hul'q'umi'num Coast Salish) and Okanagan (Syilx) descent. He lives and works on unceded, traditional and ancestral x̣ṃəθḳəỵəm (Musqueam), Sḳẉx̣ẉú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) territories. The artist has participated in more than 24 important exhibitions at such venues as the Heard Museum, Phoenix, AR (2023), Philbrooke Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK (2023), Eiteljorg Museum Indianapolis, IN (2022), the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany (2023), McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinberg, Ontario (2021), Montreal Museum of Fine Art, Montréal, Québec (2020-21), Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR (2018-2020), SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM (2018), the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario (2017), the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia (1997, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2020), the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (2013, 2014) and Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta (2003). In 2016, the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia mounted a major 30-year survey of his work titled *Unceded Territories*.

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