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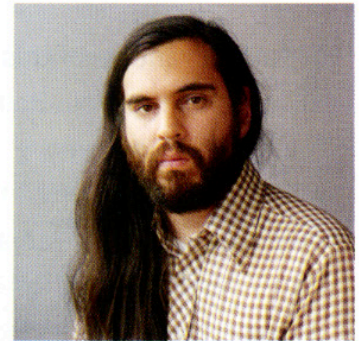


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RAYMOND BOISJOLY
17–18 *An Other Cosmos: Disaggregation*, 2012. Ink-jet print, Plexiglas, 91.5 × 122 cm.
19 *The Writing Lesson: Kanesatake*, 2012. Sunlight, construction paper, acrylic glass, 61 × 51 cm.
20 *Expanding Fields*, 2008. String lights, plywood, hardware, 307 × 152.5 cm.

drama, saw as the paradox of tragedy, and what the French thinker Julia Kristeva called “a vortex of summons and repulsion.” Often, we can’t take our eyes off something we find deeply disturbing. Rubens and Goya (and, more recently, Paul McCarthy, Damien Hirst, and Marc Quinn) have dealt with this powerful sensation. In Schmidt’s case, we are lured in by a desire to better understand the image, hit by revulsion but in the end staying for the catharsis—admiration of the perfection of her technique.



JODY ROGAC

RAYMOND BOISJOLY

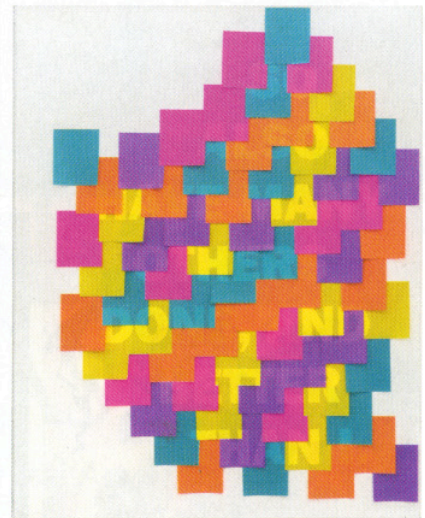
IN THE SUMMER OF 2010, carver Robert Yelton floated a suggestion, taken up by the chief of the Squamish First Nation, to rename Vancouver’s Stanley Park Xwayxway, after the village that once occupied the site. The public reaction was sadly predictable; the idea was dismissed, and many responses were laced with ignorance and racism. Less predictable was Raymond Boisjoly’s riposte. His *Writing Lesson* series was a sharp, economical satire in which he rendered familiar Aboriginal place names, such as Nanaimo, Spuzzum, and Chilliwack, in a visual grammar that Internet trolls might find more acceptable: that of Norwegian black metal. Some musicians who practise it may have won the Eurovision song contest, but others were implicated in the burning of medieval stave churches because they occupied the sites of former pagan shrines. Even now, you can buy a candle cast in the shape of one of the churches that was set ablaze.

Boisjoly’s methodology harks back to the mocking style of the Dadaists and their cousin Marcel Duchamp, who opened up new possibilities for art. The notion they hatched—that the idea, not the form, should have primacy—has become a convention. Many Vancouver artists, such as

17–18 COLLECTION OF THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY, PURCHASED WITH THE PROCEEDS FROM THE AUDAIN EMERGING ARTISTS ACQUISITION FUND AND THE SUPPORT OF THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; PHOTO BY RACHEL TOPHAM, VANCOUVER ART GALLERY 19–20 COURTESY OF CATRIONA JEFFRIES GALLERY, VANCOUVER

N. E. Thing Co., Rodney Graham, Brian Jungen, Steven Shearer, and Myfanwy MacLeod, have taken up this ideas-first model with, as others have observed, “humour and erudition, coherence and eclecticism.” Still, the form has revolutionary origins. The artists who presented the Cabaret Voltaire in 1915 used cathartic satire to point out the absurdity of the slaughter taking place all around safe, neutral Switzerland; indeed, they ended up in Zurich because of it.

The son of a Haida mother and a Québécois father, Boisjoly finds himself at the boundary between their two worlds. In a sense, he serves as a translator, compassionately presenting the complexities of contemporary Aboriginal experiences via a form rooted in the present day. This seems to parallel the literary critic Craig Womack’s call for criticism that is loving, imaginative, and grounded in material reality. Boisjoly’s is also an art that thinks. These tendencies can be seen in his series *An Other Cosmos*. Here, Northwest Coast First Nations designs are overlaid on images from the Hubble telescope, the latter a reference to the cosmic album art of the music collective Parliament-Funkadelic, which espouses an inclusive take on Afrofuturist notions of black space travel and liberation.



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RAYMOND BOISJOLY
21 *Buffy Sainte-Marie (Illumination: 1969/2013) Keeper of the Fire 01*, 2013. Screen resolution LightJet print mounted on Dibond, 101.5 × 244 cm.
22 *All That Was, Will Always Have Been, Somehow Never Again*, 2010. Public signage, 152.5 × 274 cm.
23 *As It Comes (so also)*, 2013. Ink-jet prints, staples, 228.5 × 178 cm.