

## TANYA LUKIN LINKLATER



### *The Treaty is in The Body* 2017

In the winter of 2012–13, Chief Theresa Spence (Attawapiskat First Nation, James Bay, Ontario) began a hunger strike in Ottawa, a forty-four-day political action centred on treaty. In response, Tanya Lukin Linklater began interviewing Agnes Hunter, Marlene Kapashesit, and Lillian Mishi Trapper, her Omaskêko Cree relatives from James Bay, regarding their experiences trapping, hunting, tanning hide, sewing, and beading. These interviews with her relatives became an honouring of oral traditions and learning as she translated their experiences into visual poems that resembled bead work on the page. The texts became banners made of canvas tarp, which were used to create a shelter on the land. These visual/poetic works are a small form of activism, a series of reflections on Indigenous women's work that consider treaty, family, and place. Excerpts of the text, *The Harvest Sturdies*, became the basis for negotiated performances between the artist and dancers in Montreal, Vancouver, and Minneapolis.

*The Treaty is in The Body* (2017), a video and installation work, arises from the artist's investigation of treaty since 2012 in text, performance, and installation projects. She understands that within Indigenous knowledges surrounding treaty, the treaty is held within the body. Treaty speaks to our ancestors' agency and sovereignty, to the land, to sharing, to the past, present, and future, in an expanded sense of time.

The artist facilitates space for Indigenous knowledges held within orality to be activated and shared between families, youth, and children through a gathering of Omaskêko Cree families in northern Ontario. Through sharing knowledge regarding treaty between families, the video documents the learning of Omaskêko Cree youth as they activate learning physically.





Julie Nagam, Jamie Isaac, *Insurgence, Resurgence*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Canada, 2017