

GHOST DAYS



An exhibition evoking colonial and non-colonial histories, awakening collaboration between artists, audience, and spirit through conjured memory, media, and ritual.

Ghost Days

*A companion reflection on Terrance Houle's
performative cyanotypes*

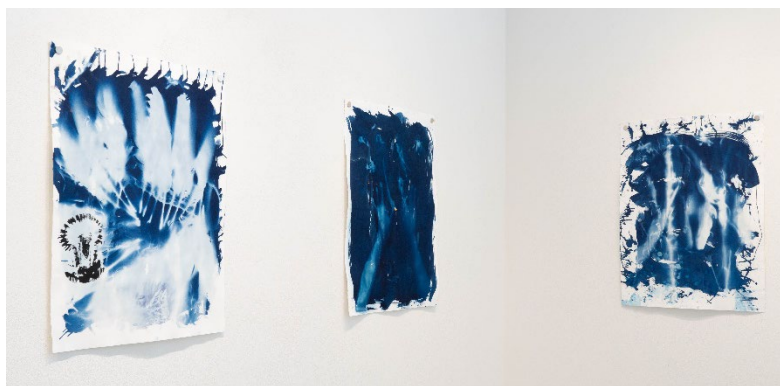
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In this newest chapter of *Ghost Days*, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) Kainai and Saulteaux artist Terrance Houle returns to the land where he grew up, Sandy Beach along Calgary's Elbow River, to create a series of performance cyanotypes. These works are not simply photographs. They are sun-activated rituals, developed in water and light, in collaboration with Natosi, the Sun, who gifts each day with illumination.

The cyanotypes are imprinted with Houle's body, spirit, and lineage. As he lays on the land, he dreams of his mother Maxine and his grandmother May Louise Weasel Fat (Standing Alone) - Aakaisttsiiksiiki - Many Snake Woman, whose portrait at age 17 and celebration at 100 are woven into this project. May passed in March 2025, presumed to be 108, and was the oldest recorded living Niitsitapi person. Her presence lingers in the work like a whisper, a shadow, a guide.

These images are ethereal, elemental, and deeply personal. They speak of ceremony, memory, warriors, love, death, and healing. They are offerings to the land and to the viewer, but not explanations. The use of feathers, regalia, and family heirlooms leaves traces of Houle's lineage imprinted in the work. He avoids direct interpretation, inviting the audience to discover the spirits, stories, and spaces for themselves.

The works are grounded in Blackfoot and Saulteaux spiritualism, yet they reach beyond cultural specificity into a shared human longing for connection, to ancestors, to place, and to each other. In this way, *Ghost Days* continues the series' legacy of haunting, reclamation, and tenderness.



Cultural Context

Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Nation)

The Niitsitapi, meaning “the real people,” are a confederacy of three Indigenous nations: the Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), and Siksika (Blackfoot).

Collectively known as the Blackfoot

Confederacy or *Siksikaitsitapi*, meaning “Blackfoot-speaking real people”, their traditional territory spans what is colonially recognized as southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, as well as northern Montana.

Historically, the Niitsitapi were nomadic bison hunters, living in tipis and following the rhythms of the land. Their culture is deeply rooted in ceremony, warrior societies, and spiritual practices such as the Sun Dance. Despite colonial efforts to suppress their traditions, Niitsitapi communities have preserved their language, stories, and ceremonies through oral history and cultural revitalization.

Today, the Niitsitapi continue to assert their presence and sovereignty through art, education, and land-based practices. They remind us that they are not peoples of the past, but of the present and future.

Saulteaux (Plains Ojibwe)

The Saulteaux, also known as the Plains Ojibwe, are part of the larger Anishinaabe Nation, whose ancestral homelands stretch across vast regions of Turtle Island. As they moved westward from the Great Lakes, the Saulteaux adapted to the plains, blending woodland and prairie traditions into a distinct cultural identity rooted in land-based practices, trade, and spiritual teachings such as the Midewiwin.

Their language, Nakawēmowin, is part of the Algonquian family and continues to be spoken in many communities. Despite the impacts of colonial displacement and imposed borders, Saulteaux peoples maintain strong connections to their lands, stories, and ceremonies. Their presence today is a testament to resilience, cultural continuity, and the ongoing assertion of sovereignty and identity across generations.



Bridging Cultures Initiative

Bridging Cultures is a community-driven initiative hosted by Prospect's Studio C that fosters meaningful cross-cultural engagement between Indigenous communities and Albertans from diverse backgrounds.

Through four free public events, we create welcoming spaces for learning, dialogue, cultural exchange, and collaborative creative projects.

The series begins with *Ghost Days*, an immersive exhibition by artist Terrance Houle, who will be in attendance for the reception. This opening event sets the tone for the gatherings to come, inviting reflection, collaboration, and connection through Indigenous perspectives and creative expression.

Together, we are building a more connected Alberta that celebrates Indigenous voices and supports ongoing intercultural learning.

These events offer a meaningful starting point for connection, reflection, and shared experience. If you feel inspired to continue learning, support Indigenous communities, or explore Alberta's diverse cultures, we invite you to stay engaged. Upcoming opportunities and resources will help deepen your journey and build lasting relationships across communities.











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"I am the Land Acknowledgement"

— Terrance Houle

**Explore more of Terrance Houle's work online at
ghostdays.com**