**Seth Thomas Sutton**

Professor of Visual Studies & Critical Theory

Chair – Arts & Humanities Department

Montcalm Community College

**Seth Thomas Sutton**, the 2024 *Michigan Humanities Award* recipient, is an Emmy Nominated Métis artist, scholar, author, and activist. He holds Masters degrees in both Visual and Critical Studies from Kendall College of Art & Design and is currently a professor and chair of the Arts & Humanities Department at [Montcalm Community College](http://montcalm.edu/). MCC also sees Seth as the Chair of the Sugar Council for Montcalm Community College, where he oversees and leads the college's collaborative project, *The Sugar Bush*, in the long-standing traditions of maple sugar making. Seth also sits as a member of council on the [*Native American Advisory Council*](https://www.gvsu.edu/naac/) at Grand Valley State University, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 2017 Seth was involved in a collaborative documentary film project for WGVU, a Grand Rapids PBS affiliate, and was nominated for an **Emmy Award**for their full-length film, *[wiinwaa niizhaasing](https://www.pbs.org/video/mutually-inclusive-we-7th-complete-edition/" \t "_blank) (We the 7th).*Then again in 2021, their four-part documentary series, [*Shaping Narratives*](https://www.pbs.org/video/ngiiwe-shaping-narratives-bpysdi/)was nominated for *two* **Emmy Awards.** These projects highlight West Michigan's vibrant Indigenous communities, along with their artwork, lifeways, social and cultural activism, and food reclamation. Seth, along with this film crew was among the first Indigenous-based journalists to document and report on the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests in Standing Rock, North Dakota. Seth has had several articles published in various scholarly journals and often guest lectures on similar and related topics around the country. His first publication, [*the Deconstruction of Chief Blackhawk: A Critical Analysis of Mascots & the Visual Rhetoric of the Indian*](https://seththomassutton.com/projects)was published and released in 2021, and as a **Follett Author**, is currently finishing work on several academic monographs, such as, *"Indians for Sale! Cigar Shop Indians & The Commodity of Indigenous Culture,*" as well as concluding editing on, *"The Sacred Fire of the Odawa,"* A narrative on the Waganakising Odawuk // The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, both set to be released in 2025 and 2026, respectively.  Although Seth's academic and scholarly writings largely focus on Indigenous-based land learning, art, activism, and representation in contemporary American culture, this does not holistically define him, or restrict his academic, creative, or personal pursuits. As a professional commercial artist and photographer, Seth's robust client portfolio includes Anchor Hocking, Amazon, Home Depot, HGTV, Log Home Living, AIM (Active Interest Media Group), Necco Candy Company, CBM Motorcycles, ERA Sculpture, Mezco Toys, the City of Greenville, WGLM 106.3 FM & 1380 AM, along with several other national and global publications, and global Internet commerce sites.

Contact

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www.seththomassutton.com

Degrees & Certificates

Doctor of Philosophy // Humanities Intended

Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL Start date – Fall 2026

Certificate // Archeoastronomy Current

Politecnico dí Milano, Milan, Italy.

Master of Arts // Visual & Critical Studies 2020

Kendall College of Art & Design (Ferris State University), Grand Rapids, MI.

Bachelor of Fine Arts // Visual Arts – 3D & Critical Theory 2010

Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI.

Bachelor of Arts // Art History - Indigenous Studies 2010

Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI.

Associates of Applied Sciences // Multi-Media Technologies 2003

Lansing Community College, Lansing, MI.

Current Position

2017 – Present Professor – Tenured Faculty; Chair. Arts & Humanities

Montcalm Community College

2010 – 2025 Owner / Artist Big Thicket Media

Media Production

2014 – 2017 Program Director Digital Arts Department

Montcalm Community College

2010 – 2014 Adjunct / Substitute Instructor Montcalm County Public Schools

Clinton County Public Schools

EduStaff

2011-2013 Marketing Coordinator Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Development Board

Greenville, MI

Content Areas, Concentrations

Cultural Criticism, Postcolonialism, Critical Race Theory, Tribal Sovereignty, Indigenous Art & Activism, Visual Arts, Art History, Cultural Anthropology, Architectural History, Sociology, Philosophy, Visual Rhetoric, Cultural Rhetoric, Indigenous Studies, Historic Preservation, Ancient Civilizations & Cultures, The Humanities, Archeoastronomy, Maple Sugar Production

Academic Publications

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

Sutton, Seth Thomas. “Edward S. Curtis: The Paradox in the Making. Pictorialism & the PostIndian Survivance of Will Wilson.” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* vol. 7, no. 2, 2021.

Sutton, Seth Thomas. “Indians for Sale! Cigar Shop Indians & The Commodity of Indigenous

Culture.” *Southwestern Social Science Association,*

BOOKS / LITERATURE

*Fun at the Sugar Bush: Jumbo Coloring & Activity Book*. Grand Rapids: Big Thicket Publishing, 2025.

*The Sugar Makers Field Notes: A Sugar Making Journal.* Grand Rapids: Big Thicket Publishing, 2023.

*The Deconstruction of Chief Blackhawk. A Critical Analysis of Mascots & the Visual Rhetoric of the Indian*. Grand Rapids: Big Thicket Publishing, 2021.

NON-PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

*Acknowledging First Peoples &Traditional Territories: Land Acknowledgement Guide.* Grand Rapids: Big Thicket Publishing, 2019.

Sutton, Seth Thomas. Academia.com

WORKS IN PROGRESS

*Appreciating Art: A Reference Guide to Understanding Art & Developing Visual Literacy*. (Book, 2nd draft stage. Follett Publishing date, 2026).

*Indians For Sale! Cigar Shop Indians & The Commodification of Indigenous Culture.* (Book, beginning draft started. Follett Publishing date, 2027).

*The Scared Fire of the Odawa*. Editor. (Book, Independent Release, date 2026).

*Horses, Dogs, & Indians: Boarding Schools, Blood Quantum & the Politics of Indigeneity*. (Book, currently in research phase).

*The Image Makers: A Critical Analysis of Indigenous Art Makers.* (Book – currently in research phase / beginning draft started).

Commercial Publications

ARCHITECTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY

*Timber Home Living*. 2020 Calendar. Hilliard Photographics Group. Farmington: New Energy Works, 2020. Cover.

*Timber Home Living*. 2018 Calendar. Hilliard Photographics Group. Farmington: New Energy Works, 2018. Cover.

*Cabin Living*. July/August 2017. Hilliard Photographics Group. Boulder: Active Interest Media Group, 2017, 28-32.

*Log Home Living*. 2017 Buyers Guide. Hilliard Photographics Group. Boulder: Active Interest Media Group, 2017, 78.

C*abin Living*. October 2016. Hilliard Photographics Group. Boulder: Active Interest Media Group, 2017, 44-50.

*Timber Home Living*. October 2016. Hilliard Photographics Group. Farmington: New Energy Works, 2016, 44-49.

*Log Cabin Homes*. July 2016. Hilliard Photographics Group. McLean: Homestead Communications Inc, 2016, 36-45.

*Log Home Living*. March 2016. Hilliard Photographics Group. Boulder: Active Interest Media Group, 2017, 20-29.

*Timber Home Living*. 2016 Buyers Guide. Hilliard Photographics Group. Farmington: New Energy Works, 2016, 1-2.

*Log Cabin Homes*. September 2015. Hilliard Photographics Group. McLean: Homestead Communications Inc, 2015, 73.

*Timber Home Living*. August 2015. Hilliard Photographics Group. Farmington: New Energy Works, 2015, 38-43.

*Country’s Best Cabins*. August 2014. Hilliard Phototgraphics Group. Boulder: Active Interest Media Group, 2014, 34-40.

Documentary Work

FULL LENGTH FEATURES

Avila, Mariano, writer. *wiinwaa niizhaasing (We the 7th)*, “Mutually Inclusive.” Directed by Mariano Avila, featuring Seth Thomas Sutton, Belinda Thomas Bardwell. Aired December 19th, 2016. Grand Rapids, MI: Public Broadcasting Service, WGVU Public Media, DVD.

EPISODES

Avila, Mariano, writer. *Cultural Ingredients,* “Shaping Narratives.” ep 1. Directed by Mariano Avila, featuring George Walker III. Aired December 7th, 2020. Grand Rapids, MI: Public Broadcasting Service, WGVU Public Media.

Avila, Mariano, writer. *ngiiwe*, “Shaping Narratives.” ep 2. Directed by Mariano Avila, featuring Belinda Thomas Bardwell, Seth Thomas Sutton. Aired January 14th, 2020. Grand Rapids, MI: Public Broadcasting Service, WGVU Public Media.

Avila, Mariano, writer. *Meeting God*, “Shaping Narratives.” ep 3. Directed by Mariano Avila, featuring Belinda Thomas Bardwell, Rishi Singh. Aired January 21st, 2020. Grand Rapids, MI: Public Broadcasting Service, WGVU Public Media.

Avila, Mariano, writer. *Color Out Here*, “Shaping Narratives.” ep 4. Directed by Mariano Avila, featuring Alice Lyn. Aired January 28th, 2020. Grand Rapids, MI: Public Broadcasting Service, WGVU Public Media.

Avila, Mariano, writer. *Behind the Scenes*, “Shaping Narratives.” ep 5. Directed by Mariano Avila, featuring Belinda Thomas Bardwell, Seth Thomas Sutton, Rishi Singh, Alice Lyn, George ` Walker III, Mariano Avila, Sherisse Szymczak. Aired February 4th, 2020. Grand Rapids, MI: Public Broadcasting Service, WGVU Public Media.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Avila, Mariano, writer. *Citizenship*. (full length feature – currently in production).

Sutton, Seth Thomas, Belinda Thomas Bardwell, writers. *Truth & Reconciliation: A Look into Indian Boarding Schools* (Working Title). (full length feature – currently in production).

Commercial Music Publications

PERFORMANCE

The Journeymen. *The Journeymen.* Big Thicket Records, BTR19, 2019. Compact disc.

Luke Gitchel. *Luke Warm & the Not So Hots.* Big Thicket Records, BTR16, 2016. Compact disc.

Midnight Cattle Callers. *Aloha to the Stars.* Big Thicket Records, BTR14, 2014. Compact disc.

Goldmine Pickers. *The Goldmine Pickers*. Self-release. 2013. Compact disc.

Midnight Cattle Callers. *Midnight Cattle Callers.* Big Thicket Records, BTR11, 2011. Compact

disc.

ARTWORK & LAYOUT

*The Sacred Fire of the Odawa*. Book, 2025/6.

*Fun at the Sugar Bush: Jumbo Coloring & Activity Book*. Book, 2025.

*The Sugar Makers Field Notes: A Sugar Making Journal.* Book, 2023.

*The Deconstruction of Chief Blackhawk: A Critical Analysis of Mascots & the Visual Rhetoric of*

*The Indian.* Book, 2019.

The Journeymen. *The Journeymen*. Big Thicket Records, BTR19, 2019. Compact disc.

Luke Gitchel. *Luke Warm & the Not So Hots*. Big Thicket Records, BTR16, 2016. Compact disc.

Soltré. *Wherever You Are*. Self-release. 2015. Compact disc.

Midnight Cattle Callers. *Aloha to the Stars.* Big Thicket Records, BTR14, 2014. Compact disc.

Goldmine Pickers. *The Goldmine Pickers.* Self-release. 2013. Compact disc.

Bass + Mandolin. *Onward*. Self-release. 2011. Compact disc.

Oregon Mandolin Orchestra. *LIVE 2010.* Self-release. 2010. Compact disc.

Midnight Cattle Callers. *Midnight Cattle Callers.* Big Thicket Records, BTR11, 2011. Compact

disc.

EXHIBITIONS

*Stigma Art Show*. 2024

Corewell Health, Montcalm Community College, MI.

*Standing Rock Solid: Protection of Land & Life.* 2017-2018

ZiibiwingCenter of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, Mt. Pleasant, MI.

*Water is Life: Exhibitions of Native American Protest Art* 2017

Raíces Cultural Center, New Brunswick, NJ.

Reviews

Gya Isdlaa: Potlatch. Bull Frog Films 2023

Gyaange: Beyond Being Silenced. Bull Frog Films 2022

Guest Lectures/Speaking

Southwestern Social Sciences Annual Conference: New Orleans, Lo. 2024

*“Indians for Sale! Cigar Shop Indians & The Commodity of Indigenous Culture”*

Kalamazoo Institute of Art, Kalamazoo, MI. 2024

*“And Artful Evening: Indigenous Art & Activism”*

Hope College. 2023

*Environmental Justice & Indigenous Peoples Lecture Series: “Racial Reckoning: Activism & Justice in Academia, The Environment, & The Politics of Knowledge”*

Grand Valley State University: Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies 2022

*“Democracy and Religion”*

Bowling Green State University 2022

*In The Round: “Racial Reckoning: Activism in Academia & The Politics of Knowledge”*

Montcalm Community College 2021

*“Re-Teaching Thanksgiving”*

Montcalm Community College 2019 *“Indigenous Imagery: Lifeways in Art and Literature”*

Honors & Awards

Michigan Humanities Award Recipient 2024

Honorarium: $2500.00

Semi-finalist – Dan David Prize 2022

Nomination – EMMY Award: Best Human Interest, Long Form Content: 2021

*Shaping Narratives* ep. 2*: ngiiwe.*  ep. 3*: Meeting God*

Joyce Kitchenmaster Scholarship 2018

Honorarium: $500.00

Nomination - Outstanding Faculty of the Year 2018

Montcalm Community College

Nomination - Outstanding Faculty of the Year 2017

Montcalm Community College

Nomination – EMMY Award: Best Human Interest, Long Form Content: 2017

*wiinwaa niizhaasing (We the 7th)*

W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2017-2023

WGVU Public Media, Grant: $400,000.00

Album of the Month – Midnight Cattel Callers, *Aloha to the Stars*.June 2014

*Country Music Magazine.*

Nomination – JAMMY Award: Midnight Cattle Callers, *Midnight Cattle Callers*: 2012

Album of the Year

Best Americana Album by a New Artist/Group

Female Vocalist of the Year – Dee Foster Sutton

Song of the Year – *Ramblin’ Cat*

Producer of the Year - Seth Thomas Sutton

Album of the Month – Midnight Cattle Callers, *Midnight Cattle Callers.* May 2011

*Country Music Magazine*

Committee Appointments

MONTCALM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

*Vice President, Faculty Council:* We serve to represent, protect, and advocate for the rights and interests of our faculty members, including negotiating contracts through collective bargaining with the college’s administration regarding wages, benefits, working conditions, and other terms of employment. Our Faculty Council also provide a platform for our faculty to voice their concerns, address issues like workload, turnover, succession planning, as well as advocate for improvements in areas like compensation and healthcare.

*Curriculum Committee*: We are an advisory committee that oversees, discusses, and makes recommendations on course content. Including, but not limited to, new courses, revised courses as well as course prerequisites and program criteria for all academic disciplines.

*Co-Curricular Committee:* This committee is responsible for enriching the academic experience for the Montcalm Community College student by broadening their social awareness to contemporary issues and refocusing their cultural experiences. The committee oversees and coordinates all cultural events on campus.

*Diversity Committee*: The purpose of this committee is to examine current policies and procedures at Montcalm Community College. The goal is to evaluate current language used in Montcalm Community College’s policies and procedures in the context of modern values regarding inclusivity and diversity. The intent is to review current policy and procedure language, shed light on problematic language, and offer equitable resolutions.

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

*Native American Advisory Council*:This council oversees the creation and regulating of curriculum and policy put forth by the office of Multi-Cultural Affairs through GVSU in regards to Native American Student populations. NAAC also oversee and advises GVSU’s Native American Student Association, NASA. We are responsible for the coordination and implementation of native derived community involved events. Including but not limited to:

annual *All Walks of Life Traditional Pow Wow*, Norton Mounds clean up and preservation efforts, Grand River cleanup projects, local and regional conservation projects, events and activities through the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs.

REGIONAL SERVICE

*C-THEM (Collaborative of Tribal and Higher Education in Michigan)* – Board Member: This collaboration seeks to improve Indigenous student outcomes by combining the strengths and resources of Michigan’s two-year, and four-year colleges and Indigenous communities to build relationships, foster collaborations, share resources and create new infrastructures to better support Indigenous students at all phases of their academic journey. C-THEM is a sub- committee within CMTED (Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors).

*FNMIEAO (First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario)* – Member: The First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario is a subject association for educators teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies, and Native Languages in Ontario, Canada. We support and help all educators understand issues related to First Nation, Métis and Inuit Peoples in Canada and the Great Lakes Basin, as well as offer strategies for teaching this content to all learners. Our purpose is to support and promote the provision of quality education on histories, worldviews, and knowledge systems that is rooted in the experiences and perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples.

Goals: To promote strong First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies and Language programs across Ontario and the Great Lakes basin. To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among those involved in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education. To provide leadership in and advocacy for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education and languages. To create and facilitate authentic learning opportunities and professional development. To liaise with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit educational organizations. To collaborate with community partners to create high quality, comprehensive resources. To support the process of reconciliation in classrooms and school communities

Courses Taught

FACULTY MEMBER: MONTCALM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTH 266 - Indigenous Cultures of North America

VISUAL ARTS

ARTS 122 - Drawing I

ARTS 123 - Drawing II

ARTS 140 - 2-Dimensional Design & Color

ARTS 190 - Art Appreciation

ARTS 215 - Art History: Primitive to High Renaissance

ARTS 216 - Art History: French Revolution to Contemporary

ARTS 265 - Introduction to Film

ARTS 270 - Arts Entrepreneurship

ARTS 275 - Portfolio

ARTS 280 - Internship

DIGITAL ARTS

DART 101 - Introduction to Digital Arts

DART 110 - Photographic Foundations I

DART 120 - Commercial Design I

DART 130 - Digital Imaging

DART 210 - Photographic Foundations II

DART 220 - Commercial Design II

DART 250 - Studio Photography

DART 270 - Architectural Photography

DART 280 - Digital Arts as a Business

SOCIOLOGY

SOCI 235 - Social Problems

PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 220 - Introduction to Philosophy

PUBLIC SCHOOLS (K-12)

Montcalm County School District

Kent County School District

Ionia County School District

Clinton County School District

Professional Affiliations

State of Michigan Historical Preservation Office – Certified Cultural Anthropologist, Historian.

Michigan Archaeological Society – Member in good standing.

Michigan Maple Syrup Association – Member in good standing

International Association of the Humanities and Social Sciences – Member in good standing

Social Science Association – Member in good standing

Languages Spoken

English – Native speaker

Anishinaabemowin – 2nd language, Conversational fluency

Spanish – Limited Conversational knowledge

References

**Mariano Avila**, Producer/Reporter

Milwaukee PBS, WMVS, WMVT

1036 North 8th Street  
 Milwaukee, WI 53233

616-617-1017

**Dr. Kimn Carlton-Smith**, Professor Emeritus

Ferris State University

2211 Union Ave

Grand Rapids, MI 49507

616-780-4645

carltonk@ferris.edu

**Belinda Thomas Bardwell,** Native American Student Initiative Coordinator

Office of Multicultural Affairs

Grand Valley State University

1 Campus Drive, 1240 KC

Allendale, MI 49401

616-331-3673

bardwelb@gvsu.edu

**Taylor Male**, Director of Operations

Montcalm Community College

2800 College Drive

Sidney, MI 48885

989-328-1275

Taylor.male@montcalm.edu

**Dr. Gary Hauck,** Dean Emeritus, Arts & Sciences

Montcalm Community College

2800 College Drive

Sidney, MI 48885

616-914-2043

garyh@montcalm.edu

**Joseph Hilliard,** Owner, Operator

Hilliard Photographics Group

56800 Elk Park Drive

Elkhart, IN 46516

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