

INDIGEE.
AS

NOUUS
COMMON

LAND
GROUND

**Indigenous Land as
Common Ground:
Understanding
Decolonization through
*Unsettled Landscapes***

by Ellyn Walker

The traces of many footprints lie buried at various levels with recent ones evident on and near the surface of that land. Deeply buried, the first human ones are those of Indigenous people—some are made recently; some longer ago than most of us can imagine. Since those first tracks were made, other sets of footprints have walked at different times on the same ground, layers upon layers upon layers. Through colonization, Diaspora, and immigration, feet of non-Indigenous peoples have arrived in traditional First Nations territories. In the layers, somewhere, our prints and perhaps those of our ancestors are lying. Regardless, we are all here now walking around in relation to one another and to the land.

— CELIA HAIG-BROWN

¹ Celia Haig-Brown, “Decolonizing Diaspora: Whose Traditional Land Are We On?” *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry*, 1.2 (2009): 15.
² J. Edward Chamberlin, *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?: Finding Common Ground* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2004): 1.
³ *Ibid.*
⁴ *Ibid.*: 29.
⁵ *Ibid.*
⁶ W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 1-2.
⁷ Candice Hopkins and Lucia Sanromán, “Inverted Landscapes,” in *Unsettled Landscapes* (Santa Fe, NM: Site Santa Fe, 2014): 35.

FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS, the land that I know and call “home” has in fact been home to many others, as “beneath all our feet is land which existed and does exist first of all in relation to Indigenous people.”¹ Beneath my own feet, in my hometown of Toronto, is the “meeting place” of many cultural groups and their respective histories, which continue to unfold on this land whose name means the “trees that stand in the water.” What is now known as Toronto is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation who “signed” a series of questionable treaties with the British Crown during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though the land had been home to numerous other Indigenous groups, including the Wyandot, Neutral and Petun peoples, long before Europeans arrived. This essay seeks to explore some of the complexities of the ways in which cultural and geographic histories collide through the representation of land, in particular, in the works in Site Santa Fe’s robust exhibition *Unsettled Landscapes*.

In *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?*, Canadian scholar J. Edward Chamberlin reminds readers of the importance of land, “how [its] stories give meaning and value to the places we call home.”² Illustrating his central point, he recounts an exchange that took place during a land-claim dispute between the British Columbian government and the Gitksan peoples—an exchange in which an elder asked B.C. officials, “If this is your land, where are your stories?”³ The elder gave an intimate account of his people’s history and the ways in which his ancestors’ stories continue to permeate the West Coast. Speaking in his native tongue, the elder at once distanced those who did not understand his language and made clear the long-standing relationship of Indigenous peoples to the land.

This book accompanied me on my trip to Santa Fe, unexpectedly providing many points of connection between the text’s underlying philosophical questions and Site Santa Fe’s exhibition.

Chamberlin illustrates the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on land, noting the European “classification of land as idle”⁴ when it is unowned or unused for agricultural or other purposes. At the same time, this Western ideology, which “has provided the basis for countless colonial adventures in the settlement of aboriginal territory,”⁵ reflects the fact that the West, too, appreciates the collective value of land. For Chamberlin, this recognition constitutes common ground across all cultures; land is as much shared as it is divided.

The land on which Santa Fe sits demonstrates the complexity of Chamberlin’s point. The region’s diverse historical identities—originally (and still) Indigenous land, subsequently claimed as a Spanish kingdom, a Mexican province and eventually an official territory of the United States—exemplify the ways in which histories collide, collapse and, for a time, prevail. These overlapping (and in many ways buried) histories make clear the fact that the genre of landscape is never neutral; rather, it is an “instrument of cultural power.”⁶ Like history, landscapes are highly subjective and have most often been framed by “a dominant perspective,”⁷ namely, settler-colonialism. The curators of *Unsettled Landscapes* disrupted this dominant narrative, animating the exhibition, instead, around critical discussions of land and its varied uses—an innately *unsettled* topic.

Addressing the subject of land and landscape through the mode of the biennial is especially significant as it allows the curators to call attention to the biennial’s origins as a World’s Fair and colonial exposition. Originating in Venice in 1895

⁸ Janet Dees and Irene Hoffman, "The Unsettled Biennial Landscape," in *Unsettled Landscapes* (Santa Fe, NM: Site Santa Fe, 2014): 27.
⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰ Ibid.: 30.
¹¹ Ibid.: 31.
¹² Ibid.
¹³ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*: 265.
¹⁴ Hopkins and Sanromán, "Inverted Landscapes": 48.

as a platform to display and celebrate the achievements of emerging nations, the biennial, in effect, has functioned as a larger-than-life cabinet of curiosities, a form that has largely positioned cultural and national identities in relation to grand narratives of settler-colonialism. Since its origins, the biennial has proliferated,⁸ and it continues to play an important role in the presentation of contemporary art on a national and international scale, a role that requires critical scrutiny.

Founded in 1995 by a group of private citizens, Site Santa Fe notably "provided an institutional platform for the only international biennial in the United States"⁹ and, since its inception, it has taken numerous artistic and curatorial risks in both its temporary biennial mode and its more permanent institutional programme. Site Santa Fe possesses an international reputation for presenting cutting-edge art and curatorial projects, and as such, has been a site of extra-national networking and collaboration. However, in the context of the international explosion of the biennial form, Site Santa Fe has continued to reflect on the meaning and function of the biennial, repositioning itself in 2011 with plans for a series of three thematically linked biennial exhibitions under the title *SiteLines: New Perspectives on Art of the Americas*. Focusing on the Western hemisphere, this six-year project reflects its commitment to presenting correlated biennials based on the rich framework of geography, which, in turn, allows curators the opportunity to "recuperate multiple histories and cosmologies ... often ... sidelined in the contemporary art world,"¹⁰ especially those of indigenous peoples.

Operating in tandem with this biennial series, Site Santa Fe's unique programming hub, Site Center, is a new venue that commissions ongoing site-specific projects and long-term artist residencies in an effort to link artists with

communities in more meaningful and lasting ways. As the biennial is an inherently temporary form, it has been criticized as a platform that produces merely provisional and superficial artistic "interventions" in communities. Committed to responsive practices of audience engagement, Site Center focuses on collaboration and connectivity between artists and communities before, during and after each biennial.

The first exhibition of the *SiteLines* biennial series, *Unsettled Landscapes*, was the result of four years of collaborative development between institutions and community organizations that included professional stakeholders from across the hemisphere. Allowing for a "diversity of voices at [the] curatorial table and in [Site's] exhibition spaces,"¹¹ a team of staff and advisors negotiated a strong curatorial vision despite the breadth of the subject. Incorporating local and transnational perspectives, curators Janet Dees, Irene Hofmann, Candice Hopkins and Lucía Sanromán demonstrated the multiplicity of "picturings" of land in order to challenge "the historical amnesia exacted by colonialism ... [, which] has obscured the full range of lived experience in the Americas."¹²

Art historian W.J.T. Mitchell, whose scholarship is cited as an important influence in the catalogue's curatorial essay, describes the genre of landscape as an apparatus for "turn[ing] site into sight."¹³ Implying that landscape has the ability to construct history as much as it can render others invisible, Mitchell's comment reinforces the exhibition's curatorial vision: that landscape is a device that is always framed by the perspective from which the land is seen.¹⁴ This ideological function has inevitably served the colonial project, which reflects both the political and cultural context that unites the exhibition's vast geographical range. *Unsettled Landscapes* looked at the historical

¹⁵ Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson, "Settler Colonies," in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000): 362.

narratives and current political conditions that inform contemporary artists working across the Americas, comparing regional differences and artistic practices from Nunavut to Tierra del Fuego as seen through the lenses of landscape, territory and trade.

While colonialism is a shared history for all who reside within the Americas, particular relationships to and experiences of colonialism are unique. In their text on settler colonies, scholars Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson contend that "the occupation of land formerly owned by others always translates into the cultural politics of representation."¹⁵ Presenting nuanced works

that demonstrate the ongoing effects of settler-colonialism in relation to land, *Unsettled Landscapes* thoughtfully explores such politics. Artworks by artists such as Brazil's Anna Bella Geiger, New York-based Pablo Helguera and Canada's Raymond Boisjoly, to name but a few, illustrate these effects through their diverse yet interrelated projects.

No Man's Land (2014) by Chilean artist Gianfranco Foschino and *Offensive/Defensive* (1988) by Canadian artist Edward Poitras, for example, comment on the shared history of colonization while engaging distinct materials and cultural histories. In Foschino's video work,

Installation view of the exhibition *Unsettled Landscapes* (2014) at Site Santa Fe. Photo: Eric Swanson
 COURTESY SITE SANTA FE



Gianfranco Foschino
Video stills from *No Man's Land*
2014

COURTESY THE ARTIST, CHRISTOPHER GRIMES
GALLERY (SANTA MONICA) AND GALERIE
MICHAEL STURM (STUTTGART)



Offensive/Defensive (1988)
by Edward Poitras
COURTESY EDWARD POITRAS



¹⁶ Louis Riel was a well-known Métis politician who led a resistance movement against the Canadian government on behalf of Métis rights, culture and homelands in the Prairies and founded the province of Manitoba. After the Northwest Rebellion's final battle—the Battle of Batoche—Riel was tried and hanged under the instruction of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's post-Confederation prime minister.

¹⁷ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*: 14.

viewers are guided along the remote coastal shorelines of the Guaitecas and Chonos archipelagos—mountainous and forested islands once inhabited by nomadic peoples—in Chile's Aysén region. Although the exquisite landscape appears pristine and untouched, the subtle buzz of Foschino's out-of-view motorboat reinforces the reality of human presence, and ultimately, of occupation. Similarly, by filming the islands from the water—the point of view of European explorers—Foschino replicates and calls attention to the particular perspective and power dynamic of the colonial gaze.

Poitras's photographic diptych *Offensive/Defensive* plays with the ideas of reversal and correlation. For this work, Poitras transposed rectangular strips of sod from his lawn in George Gordon First Nation and from the grounds of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, both in Saskatchewan. Before relocating each strip, Poitras cast the words “defensive” and “offensive” in lead on each of the lawns and buried them in the ground beneath the sod. Notably, lead was the material of the bullets

used in the Battle of Batoche, the infamous battle between the Canadian government and the region's Métis and First Nations people, led by Louis Riel, in 1885.¹⁶ As a result of this transposition, the replanted strip from the grounds of the gallery thrived on the reserve, while its counterpart quickly died, despite being carefully tended. Through the physical and conceptual inversion of these two sites and their ascribed histories, and their photographic juxtaposition within the exhibition, Poitras's work makes clear Mitchell's notion of landscape as a “medium of cultural expression ... in which [specific] cultural values are encoded.”¹⁷ By using the specificity of Poitras's own ancestral and geographic location, he renews the power of land and landscape to communicate invisible histories of place and, in turn, placelessness.

Mexico, like Canada and Chile, is a land that has been inhabited by complex indigenous societies since time immemorial, and it, too, has experienced similar processes of invasion and colonization during the past five hundred years. Throughout a long and illustrious career,

¹⁸ Their exploration was intended to find and document archaeological evidence that would counter the grandness of Egypt's pyramids.

¹⁹ “*Terra nullius*” literally means “land belonging to no one” and has greatly served the colonial project in the evasion of recognition of indigenous sovereignty.

²⁰ Roof-combs, prominently featured in Mesoamerican monumental architecture, are sculptural additions that sit on top of Mayan pyramids—each with its own unique narrative and meaning. The House of the Doves, which is located at the Temples of Uxmal, beside the Grand Pyramid, displays roof-combs that have been remarkably well preserved despite the building's relative ruin.

Argentinean conceptual artist Leandro Katz has explored some of the colonial realities of Latin America. In *The Catherwood Project* (1985–1995), he pays particular attention to the landscape of Mexico. The series of photographs that make up this project juxtapose past and present representations of prominent Mayan sites in the Yucatan Peninsula, as well as in Guatemala, Belize and Honduras, sites that were mapped out by English-speaking explorers Frederick Catherwood and John Lloyd Stephens more than one hundred and fifty years ago.¹⁸ Whereas Catherwood and Stephens used engraving to document their findings, Katz uses photography, which reflects both the

passing of time and the development of new technologies since the early depictions of explorers. Furthermore, the photograph allows Katz the opportunity to feature Catherwood and Stephens's works within his own images—an astute use of appropriation and juxtaposition that highlights the ways in which history has been constructed and by whom. Through the replication of a particular view, Katz's work plays with questions of who—the explorer, the archaeologist, the photographer, the tourist?—constructs history. Focusing on the “sight” of architectural and cultural ruin, he offers us the vantage point of the colonizer who “sees” the land and deems it to be “*terra nullius*.”¹⁹

Viewing Katz's poetic and subtle images within a darkened corridor allows an intimacy with the depicted landscapes to unfold. One of the photographs, *Uxmal—Casa de las Palomas* (1993), features a scene of deteriorating Puuc architecture—the remains of roof-combs from the House of the Doves.²⁰ The image also features the artist's fingers, which clutch Catherwood and Stephens's original etching in the foreground, an intervention and juxtaposition that allow Katz to compare the same landscape through different temporal lenses—one an example of colonial cartography, the other an example of cultural tourism. By representing both the past and present “remains” of the Mayan site, the photograph illustrates how colonialism and neocolonialism continue to displace the land's first peoples.

With colonization comes the notion of territory, a concept that implies ownership, authority, occupation or control of an area and thus reflects an inherently Western ideology in relation to land. The idea of territory represents a conceptual shift from the earlier notion of “land as commons” to the idea of “land as commodity”—what the exhibition's curators deem to be a kind of “alibi”

Uxmal—Casa de las Palomas
(1993) by Leandro Katz
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HENRIQUE FARIA FINE ART (NEW YORK)



Raymond Boisjoly
Left: *Rez Gas* (6336 Vedder Road,
Chilliwack, BC V2R 1C8)
Right: *Rez Gas* (Ir 10 Road,
Squamish-Lillooet C, BC V0N 2K0)
2012
Sunlight, construction paper,
acrylic glass
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND CATRIONA
JEFFRIES GALLERY (VANCOUVER)



Detail of *Composition (Overlooking Cape Dorset)* (2003) by Shuvinai Ashoona. Ink on paper. Photo: Scott McLeod
COLLECTION OF ED PIEN (TORONTO)



²¹ Hopkins and Sanromán, “Inverted Landscapes”: 40.
²² Matthew J. Martínez, “Honoring the Spirit of O’gha Po’oge,” in *Unsettled Landscapes* (Santa Fe, NM: Site Santa Fe, 2014): 77.

for colonialism.²¹ In his essay for the exhibition’s catalogue, “Honoring the Spirit of O’gha Po’oge,” scholar Matthew J. Martínez explains that indigenous peoples have always viewed themselves as innately connected to the land. Indeed, in many of their creation stories, the people themselves are described as “emerg[ing] from lakes and mountains.”²²

Shuvinai Ashoona, an Inuit artist who works out of the Kinngait Studios²³ in Cape Dorset, Nunavut, demonstrates the interconnectedness of humans and nature in her large-scale, minutely detailed drawing *Composition (Overlooking Cape Dorset)* (2003). In this work, she rejects the notion of territory as something bound by arbitrarily drawn borders and, instead, pictures an

ever-expanding cartography achieved through the piecing together of multiple, smaller drawings on paper that portray a monochromatic landscape from an aerial point of view. The scale of Ashoona’s work allows her to set a number of details against the backdrop of Cape Dorset’s boundless terrain; sealskin dwellings, gravel footpaths and electrical infrastructure are combined with landforms such as dark, ominous cliffs that virtually appear to be animate. This innovative combination of obsessive detail with narrative experimentation marks Ashoona as one of Cape Dorset’s new generation of artists. Recognizing the history of Inuit art making, however, *Unsettled Landscapes* also includes work by one of Kinngait’s more senior artists, Ohotaq Mikkigak.

²³ Kinngait Studios, located in Cape Dorset, Nunavut, is Canada’s longest-running print studio. Founded in 1958 by government employee James Houston, it was intended to augment Inuit cultural production (mainly stone carvings and handicrafts at that time) and the Inuit economy, and has since continued as one of the Arctic’s most active printmaking co-operatives.
²⁴ Nunavut was declared an official territory of Canada in 1999 by the Canadian Parliament after the passing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act and the Nunavut Act, both of which had been initiated years earlier.

The inclusion of works by two prominent Inuit artists alongside several other works that focus on the Arctic is hugely important to any exhibition that aims to address issues of colonization in the Americas—especially as the region has so often been overlooked—and it produces a much more nuanced exhibition. The Arctic—the northernmost part and one of the least-populated places on earth—has long been a site of indigenous inhabitation and today represents the new frontier of colonization, known as the “Warm War.” As global warming is causing the Arctic’s sea ice to melt at an alarming rate, circumpolar nations continue to battle over the expansion of resource extraction as well as the maintenance and control of what may soon be year-round shipping routes in the North. Engaging with the politics of the North, Canadian artists Kevin Schmidt and Charles Stankieveh each offer timely colonial critiques.

Echoing Chamberlin’s notion of land as common ground, Kevin Schmidt’s *A Sign in the Northwest Passage* (2010–ongoing) allies environmental with indigenous concerns. Consisting of photographic, video and audio documentation, the complex installation documents Schmidt’s intervention in Canada’s Northwest Passage, wherein the artist transposed apocalyptic messages from the Book of Revelation—for example, “The sun turned black” and “The sea turned to blood”—onto a giant makeshift sign supported by floating barrels. After transporting the sign to the remote Inuvialuit hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk in the Northwest Territories from his home near Vancouver, he dragged it out onto the ice offshore. Upon the melting of the ice in the following summer, the signpost was intended to pass through the waters of the North as a warning of impending disaster, should the region continue to be environmentally and economically exploited. The project,

however, remains incomplete, as Schmidt continues to search for remnants of his sign, last seen in 2010. The exhibited work therefore presents us with evidence of Schmidt’s intervention—an elegant, framed photograph of the sign perched on the ice, accompanied by a small single-channel video of the artist’s aerial search for the sign and headphones through which one hears the diegetic sounds of the artist’s quest.

Schmidt’s record of the distance travelled by the sign, as well as its transformation and disappearance, offers many points of comparison with Charles Stankieveh’s 35mm film installation, *The Soniferous Æther of the Land Beyond the Land Beyond* (2013), which also explores questions of colonial transformation. Nunavut, Canada’s most recently declared territory,²⁴ represents a particular model of decolonial governance (like Ecuador or Bolivia) that privileges indigenous world views, which conceive of humans as having an ongoing relationship with and responsibility for the land. However, long before the introduction of Nunavut’s territorial autonomy in 1999, the area of Alert, which lies just outside of traditional Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit territories, was co-opted by the Canadian Forces and transformed from a remote weather station to an occupied military and surveillance base known as the Alert Signals Intelligence Station. During the last thirty years of the Cold War, Alert, thanks to its relative proximity to the former Soviet Union as well as to its long periods of darkness, which allowed for clandestine observation, functioned as a listening station in order to facilitate the interception of Soviet communications.

Stankieveh’s film, exhibited in its own viewing room adjacent to the room in which Ashoona’s and Mikkigak’s drawings were displayed, highlights Alert’s function as an apparatus of the



MEN SLAYAY EACH OTHER
A GREAT EARTHQUAKE
EVERY MOUNTAIN+ITAIN+ISLAND REMOVED FROM FROM ITS PLACE
1/3 OF THE SEA TURNED INTO BLOOD
1/3 OF THE WATATERS TURNED BITTER
LOCUSTS GIVEN POWER TO TORTURE
A SEVERE EARTHQUAKE 1/10 E 1/10 CITY COLLAPSES
THE SEA TURNED INTO BLOOD
TO SCORCRCH PEOPLE WITH FIRE
DEATH+HADES KILL BY
THE SUN TURNED BLACK
1/3 OF THE EARTH 1/3 OF THE TREES AND ALL THE GREEN GRASS BURNED
1/3 OF THE CREATURES IN THE SEA DIED
MANY PEOPLE DIED 1/3 SUN 1/3 MOON 1/3 STARS STRUCK
4 ANGELS KILL 1/3 OF MAN KIND
7000 PEOPLE KILLED LIGHTNING, THUNDER EARTHQUAKE, HAILSTORM
EVERYTHING IN THE SEA DIED RIVERS+SPRINGS BECAME BLOOD
MEN GNAWED THEIR TONGUES IN AGONY
NO ONE BUYS THEIR CARGO ANY MORE
WILD BEASTS TURNED BLOOD RED
A STAR FELL ON 1/3 OF THE RIVERS+SPRINGS
1/3 DAY WITHOUT LIGHT
FIRE SMOKE AND SULPHUR
UGLY+PAINFUL SORES
THE SUN GIVEN POWER
BIRDS EAT THE FLESH OF ALL

Installation view of *S.S.s* (2014) by Blue Curry. Customized beach towels, nautical flagpole. Photo: Blue Curry
COURTESY SITE SANTA FE



nation-state through its ominous depiction. For Westerners, the Arctic has long represented a place of exile, uncertainty and harsh conditions—think, for example, of the final words of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* or the menacing descriptions of Siberia in popular science-fiction novels. In *The Soniferous Æther*, Stankieveh references cinematic tropes of sci-fi and horror in his portrayal of Alert as a dark and desolate landscape, akin to the settings in apocalyptic outer-space movies. This evocation of menace is heightened by the sound, which consists of the pulsations of military telecommunication devices and the subtle yet unsettling echoes of ice cracking. The camera leads us across a barren landscape made visible only through the illumination of sudden

flashes of light, which, like the pulsating sounds, underscore the reality of living in total darkness. The camera lingers on the relics of Alert’s former military occupation, but Stankieveh complicates this representation by his symbolic titling of the work. “The Land Beyond the Land” is drawn from the Inuktitut name for Alert, and, literally meaning “the land beyond the land of the people,” it defines its physical geography. “Soniferous Æther” refers to sound that seems to emanate from the upper regions of the sky or from behind the clouds. Allowing Stankieveh the opportunity to both acknowledge and privilege Alert’s indigenous history, this direct engagement with Inuvialuit language and epistemology can be read as a gesture toward decolonization.

²⁵ Chamberlin, *If This Is Your Land*: 3.

Likewise acknowledging the collision of indigenous and colonial histories, U.K.-based Bahamian artist Blue Curry evokes the transatlantic slave trade as a way to comment on the colonization of land. Approaching the biennial building, one barely notices that the flagpole one passes by is flying not flags but beach towels that ripple in Santa Fe’s desert wind. As one enters the building, one also sees a row of towels folded neatly on a shelf in the foyer. These bright and familiar beach towels—just like those commonly used on tropical vacation beaches—appear out-of-place yet banal in these settings. However, the towels serve as an emblem of an astute colonial critique that only takes shape through the work’s third and final component—a live-stream video of cruise ships arriving and departing from Nassau in the Bahamas that is projected over the inner doorway. This depiction of arrival and departure by ship evokes another, earlier movement of ships—that of the slave trade. In addition to this evocation of the slave narrative, the hoisted “flag” represents the declaration of territorial occupation, the neatly folded towels represent tourist objects, and the coming and going of the cruise ships references the abduction of bodies in the name of the conquest of new lands.

But, always, one must ask, whose land?

The first step toward decolonization is to reframe the question: To whom did the land traditionally belong? Doing so acknowledges indigenous sovereignty and opens the way to a deeper understanding of one’s own history and relationship to the colonial project. *Unsettled Landscapes* successfully demonstrated this reorientation; the exhibition’s extensive content and critical framing “unsettled” viewers’ perspectives on and assumptions about land, thus compelling them to consider anew the land on which they

stand. The diversity of landscapes presented in this outstanding biennial made explicit the fact that land is not a single, homogenous thing, but is, rather, many things to different people. It is the living and breathing history of how we relate to one another, “a place that separates and connects us [and] a place of possibility for both peace and perilous conflict.”²⁵ Throughout much of the world, but especially within the Americas, indigenous land is the land on which we all stand, and is thus our common ground.

Terre indigène et terrain d’entente :
comprendre la décolonisation avec
Unsettled Landscapes

Dans son essai, Ellyn Walker explore des questions de décolonisation en lien avec l’édition 2014–2015 de la biennale Site Santa Fe, intitulée *Unsettled Landscapes*. Prenant en compte l’histoire de la colonisation des Amériques aussi bien que les fonctions historiques et contemporaines de la biennale, Walker examine la présentation faite par Site Santa Fe d’un dialogue commissarial interculturel traitant de terre, de paysage et de territoire. Des œuvres d’artistes comme Charles Stankieveh, Shuvinai Ashoona et Blue Curry démontrent l’immense variété de talents créateurs représentée dans l’exposition, tout en mettant en lumière le contexte global du colonialisme. Adoptant une voix personnelle, Walker se penche sur la notion de terre qui, même si elle s’avère complexe, demeure notre terrain commun.