



The James Bay Cree Exhibition

Self-adhesive polyester fabric, 60" x 40" mounted floor-to-ceiling in clusters of 3 x 3 or 3 x 6 images, 4 large video screens with digital video players.

The exhibition can also be presented as framed photographs, works-on-paper consisting of 58 diptychs printed with archival ink on Hahnemühle paper, 44" x 20" each.

A video of the museum installation: <https://vimeo.com/186351565>

3 x 3 photographic clusters: <https://www.mat.ucsb.edu/g.legrady/glWeb/Projects/jb2/index.html#12>

The photographs as works-on-paper diptychs: https://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady/glWeb/Projects/jb_catalog/index.html

"The James Bay Cree in 1973" is an exhibition by media artist George Legrady consisting of photographs he realized in the summer of 1973 in four Cree Communities along the shores of James Bay in Northern Quebec, Canada. The images feature a broad range of cultural and by now historical visual records of the Cree way-of-life from a time prior to the introduction of mass media television culture. At the time the photographs were taken, the Cree were beginning to mobilize into a political entity, to enter into negotiations with the Quebec government over land rights due to the construction of the monumental James Bay Hydro-Electric project over sovereign Cree land. The photographs were taken 1 year prior to the formation of the Grand Council of the Crees, a political body that was successful in negotiating treaties with the province resulting in infrastructure autonomy, income from the hydro-electric project, self-governance and an internationally recognized nation-within-nation status for most of the northern territories in Quebec.

162 photographs are presented in the exhibition organized into 18 clusters,

each featuring 9 photographs in a 3 x 3 matrix, printed on self-adhesive smooth polyester fabric, 60" x 40" or smaller, and mounted on the gallery walls from floor-to-ceiling. The images have been selected from an archive of 2800 photographs, a photography project whose goal was to represent the Cree way of life, to convey social, cultural and aesthetic values that transcend journalistic, documentary, and artistic styles, with broad applications from news media to fine art exhibitions in museums. The photographs are grouped thematically to give a comprehensive representation of day-to-day life, events and scenes of everyday activities and situations. Images include photographs of tipis, village architecture, indigenous activities, social events, portraiture, weddings, families, youth, travel in the bay, environmental scenes in the bush, on water and ice.

The photographs have been digitized, catalogued and thematically organized as part of a knowledge repatriation project to Cree communities taking place in the summers of 2012 and 2014. The return visits were crucial experiences to

reflect and record how aspects of the culture in the northern indigenous communities have remained the same over a 40 year period, and how the impact of global culture and North American contemporary lifestyles have made their influence. The exhibition additionally includes color screens that feature over 70 short 1 and 2 minute videos taken during the 2012 and 2014 return trips to contrast the contemporary scenes with the photographs from 1973. The videos were taken by the artist George Legrady, and Andres Burbano Valdes, an artist, professor, and media historian from the Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Colombia.

The photographs can be presented in a contemporary installation format consisting of the 18 clusters mounted full-scale, floor-to-ceiling or else exhibited in the traditional photographic format of framed works on paper. A selection of 126 photographs have been produced as 58 diptychs printed with archival inks on Hahnemühle rag paper, 44" x 20".

