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**Canadian
Indian
Cultural
Magazine**

Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine (1970–1981)

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The word “Tawow”, in the language of the Cree, means “there is room” or “Welcome” – in this first issue of the magazine, this means welcome to all Indian people who want to write.¹

With these words, editor Jean Cuthand Goodwill greeted the readers of Canada’s first Indigenous cultural magazine. The 1970 launch of *Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine* marked a remarkable shift in Canadian policy, but as a young reader I had limited awareness of its significance. Now, forty-five years after *Tawow*’s debut and thirty-five years after it ceased publication, I still have six dog-eared copies I have hauled from one end of the country to the other. Over the years, I have made conscious choices to not only keep them, but take them with me, packing them in boxes, moving them from home to home, office to studio, and back again. Most recently they moved from Montreal to Winnipeg, where they now hold pride of place in a growing Contemporary Aboriginal Art History Archive Project.² They are old friends and I enjoy revisiting the stories and images, but the movement of Indigenous art history into the academy (and me along with it) has caused me to reevaluate *Tawow*’s value to contemporary scholars, curators and students. Once current, it is now an archive – an invaluable, albeit small window into a decade of emergence.

The 1960s was marked by a radical shift in Canada’s “Indian” policy. Since Confederation, federal administration of the *Indian Act* and the lands and people under its jurisdiction was the responsibility of “Indian Affairs.” Initially an independent department (1880–1936) and later an “Indian Affairs Branch” that shifted from one department to another, it became the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1966. In 1951, a new edition of the *Indian Act* quietly deleted its most oppressive sections, specifically those that criminalized religious and cultural practices and restricted movement and freedom of association.³ Residential school attendance was still mandatory, but a legislative framework for the integration

Detail, cover of *Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine* 3:1 (1972). Wilma Simon painting, courtesy of Wilma Simon. (Photo: author)

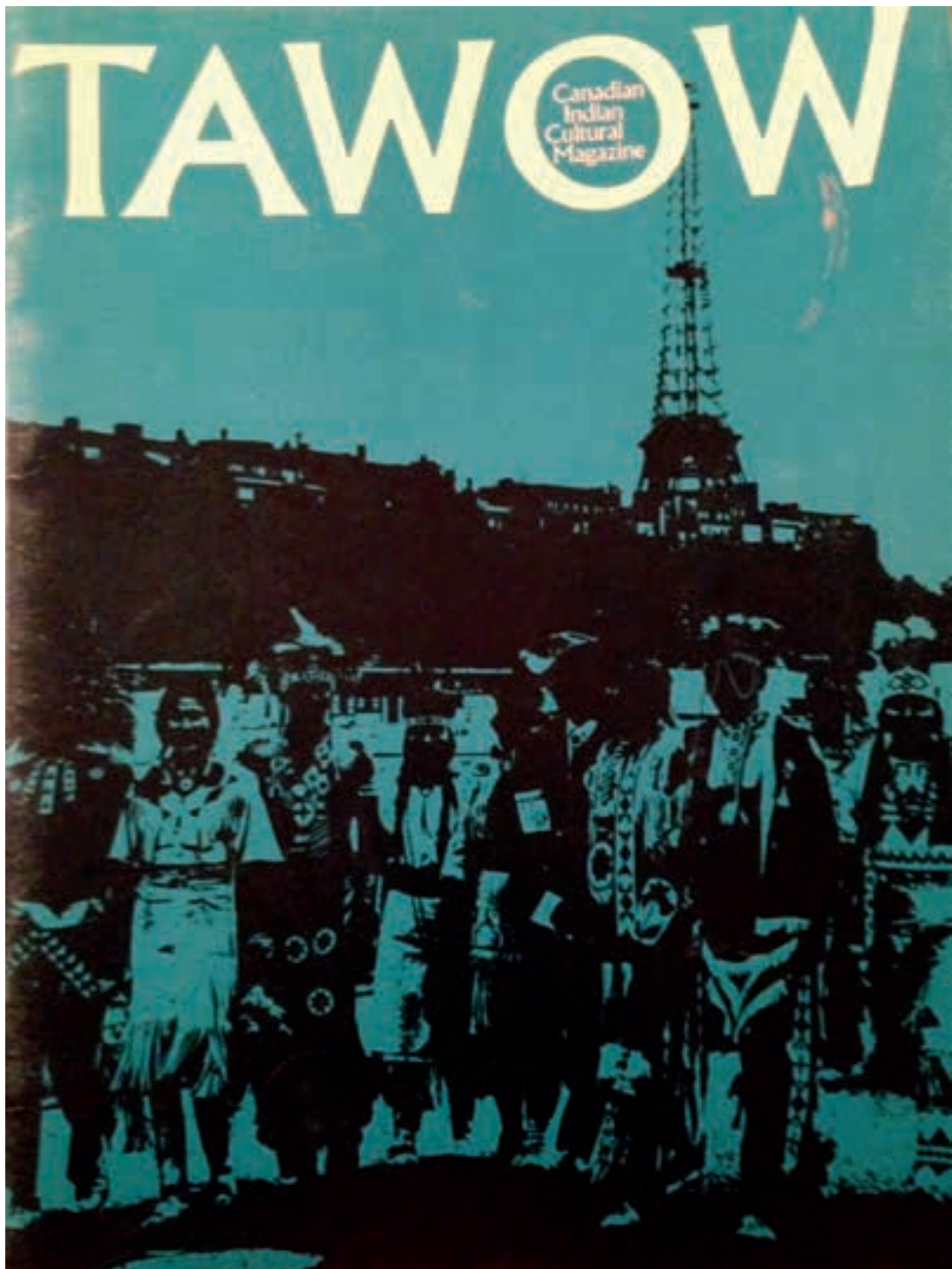
of First Nations children into provincial school systems was in place and, in some provinces, tentatively underway.⁴ In 1958, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker appointed James Gladstone, a Cree/Kainai rancher and politician from Alberta to the Senate, and in 1960 the right to vote in federal elections was extended to First Nations who lived under the *Indian Act*.⁵ In 1966, the country stood poised to celebrate its centennial and a new unit within the Department of Indian Affairs was to play a role.

Tawow was an initiative of the Cultural Development unit in the newly created Division of Social and Cultural Development. Established as part of a departmental reorganization in 1968, the division originated in the Cultural Affairs Section (est. 1965).⁶ Tom “Jobin” Peltier (Anishinaabe), a cultural advisor in Lester B. Pearson’s Liberal government, played a key role in creating space for First Nations arts within the department.⁷ The Canadian Centennial provided further impetus, and Peltier’s vision of an Indians of Canada pavilion at Expo ’67 was the program’s first major project.⁸ After almost a century of forced assimilation and hyper-control, the Canadian state, rather abruptly, now wished to celebrate and promote the cultural expressions it had so enthusiastically attempted to eradicate.

The annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs placed the launch of *Tawow* within the context of its program of support for visual artists. In addition to participation in Expo ’67, the Cultural Development Section had acquired artworks, organized exhibitions, and facilitated the production of films. In 1968, the program expanded to include writers. According to the 1970 *Annual Report*, the section “co-operated with private publishers, purchased manuscripts” and provided publicity for authors.⁹ Anticipating the launch of the magazine, the report declared, “the Indian spokesman will now be able to reach the Canadian public as a whole. For poets, short story writers and historians, a new magazine ‘Tawow’ is to be launched on a quarterly basis in the spring of 1970.”¹⁰

“A Chance to Express Themselves”: *Tawow*’s First Year

The press release issued by Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs, stated: “Indian people must have a chance to express themselves . . . Very few people of Indian ancestry are acclaimed as authors and there is a great need for giving these people a medium through which they can express their ideas.”¹¹ The public stance of the Department of Indian Affairs was one of apparent amnesia regarding the relationship between government policy and the marginalization of the people under their jurisdiction. However, their intentions for the new Cultural Section were ambitious, with the goal



1 | First issue of *Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine* (Spring 1970). Canadian Prairie Indian Dance Troupe in Paris. Among the dancers are Jean Cuthand Goodwill, *Tawow*'s first editor, her husband Ken Goodwill, and brothers Wilfred and Gordon Tootoosis. (Photo: courtesy of Okiysikaw Tyrone Tootoosis)



2 | The Canadian Prairie Indian Dance Troupe, Paris, 1970. (Photo: courtesy of Okiysikaw Tyrone Tootoosis)

of hiring as many First Nations people as possible. They found *Tawow*'s first editor among their own employees.

Jean Goodwill, a former nurse and health activist employed by the Department of Indian Affairs, moved from co-editing the department publication *Indian News* (1954–82) to become *Tawow*'s first editor. The early issues reflect the network of individuals and groups she could draw upon to provide content. The inaugural issue's cover featured a bold high-contrast photograph of smiling men and women wearing traditional dress with the Eiffel Tower in the background (Fig. 1). Printed in deep turquoise with bold white text, the pop-influenced design announced the vibrancy and relevance of Indigenous cultural practice. The group, one discovers in the feature article, is the Canadian Prairie Indian Dance Troupe on their whirlwind European tour, where they performed at festivals and museums (Fig. 2). The twenty-three dancers were "Cree, Sioux, Saulteaux, Peigan and Blood" from Saskatchewan and Alberta, including Jean and her husband Ken Goodwill.¹² Individuals who played key roles in cultural survival and revitalization can be found among the dancers – John Tootoosis, Joe Saddleback, Wayne Goodwill, Vivian Ayoungman, Bill Piegan, and Gordon, Wilfred, and Irene Tootoosis –

embodying the resilient knowledge that endured criminalization to receive a standing ovation at the International Folklore Dance Festival.

This was Jean Goodwill's family network – Cree by birth, Dakota through marriage. She was born on Little Pine in 1928, a Cree reserve in western Saskatchewan. Her maiden name was Cuthand, as she had been adopted and raised by her mother's sister, Harriet Cuthand. Her father was John Tootoosis, a longtime political organizer and leader. It was a rich lineage that demanded excellence and strength. Jean was the first Aboriginal nurse in Saskatchewan, graduating in 1954, but she was equally committed to cultural continuity.¹³ Dancing with her that summer, along with her husband and brother-in-law, were her brothers, Wilfred and Gordon Tootoosis, and her father. As descendants of Chief Poundmaker's brother, the blanket of resistance had fallen upon their shoulders.¹⁴

Throughout the 1930s, the Department of Indian Affairs tried to restrict John Tootoosis's travel in order to halt his activism and political organizing. The Catholic Church had threatened to excommunicate him for the same reason.¹⁵ In 1966 Wilfred had fought vigorously to save the Buffalo Child Stone, a sacred site in Saskatchewan.¹⁶ Gordon was part of the emerging Indigenous theatre movement, and would become one of Canada's best recognized actors.¹⁷ The songs they sang had been outlawed until 1951. Now, the Department of External Affairs funded their triumphant tour. None of this is stated explicitly in the article, but the captions underneath the photographs of dancers in regalia posed along the Seine River, women in white buckskin dresses, a spinning hoop dancer, and men around the drum, state their names. Readers could smile with recognition.

Other Saskatchewan connections appear in the first issue. Lecturer and activist Mary Ann Lavallee from Cowessess wrote "Yesterday's Indian Woman," a tribute to the grandmothers who "had to be tough. She was bone and sinew; she was stout of heart . . . because of her we are able to sit here today."¹⁸ "Tahahsheena Rugs," an article about a rug hooking co-operative on Standing Buffalo, included a rare interpretation of Dakota imagery.¹⁹ The first issue emerged from Goodwill's prairie network and experiences. It is celebratory with subtle political overtones.

The second issue has a gatefold cover with an Arthur Shilling painting wrapped around the front and back and a short essay about the artist on the fold. The issue introduced a recurring design element, a signature of coloured matte paper that became the space for creative writing where featured short stories, poetry, and retold legends were visually distinct from the glossy white of the other pages. The section is further set apart by a title page. Under the header "Tawow," the words for "story" in Abenaki, Ojibwe, Montagnais, Mi'kmaw, Cree, Dakota, and Mohawk were listed in bold typeface above

the table of contents. The signature was in the middle of the magazine, with articles, interviews, and book reviews on either side. The first one was a soft golden tan; later insertions were similar earthy shades of green or brown.

The editorial in the second issue offered a sharp critique of the recently released film, *A Man Called Horse* (1970) starring Richard Harris. Describing the final scene, Goodwill writes, “He rides out of the battle as the hero. So what else is new?” She goes on to declare, “For many years we have been saying – We have heroes too. Men who lead and guided in all honesty with dedicated spirits, braving the elements and change, under adverse conditions. Surely in this century the film industry could begin making a sincere effort to depict the true history . . . Maybe it’s time we became script writers?”²⁰

In addition to the signature of creative writing, the second issue included articles on leadership, early Indigenous writing systems, a short feature on a new CBC radio program, a book review, and an excerpt from a soon-to-be published manuscript written by ninety-eight-year-old Dan Kennedy, a Nakoda elder from Saskatchewan. A report on the “First National Indian Cultural Conference” held in Ottawa provides a glimpse into the early work of people whose contributions are legendary: Simon Baker (Squamish, 1910–2001), Ahab Spence (Cree, 1911–2001), Smith Atimoyoo (Cree, 1915–1998), Adam Cuthand (Cree, 1913–1994), Gerald Tailfeathers (Kainai, 1925–1975), Eli Taylor (Dakota, 1905–1997), Dorothy Francis (Saulteaux, 1912–1990), Ernest Benedict (Mohawk, 1918–2011), Harold Cardinal (Cree, 1945–2005), Max Gros Louis (Huron-Wendat), and Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki) to name only a few.

Under the subheadings “Is Culture a Word or a Reality?” “Languishing Languages Are a Major Concern,” and “Self-Identity through Self-Expression,” the report summarizes the discussions. Participant concerns and priorities have echoed down through decades of similar gatherings but here, the memories of cultural repression are still raw, as seen in Smith Atimoyoo and Eli Taylor’s advocacy for traditional dance and ceremony. The loan of a drum to conference delegates from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Band was a symbolic act that caused the author to reflect, “It seemed like only yesterday that the R.C.M.P. received orders to confiscate drums . . . in an attempt to ban some ceremonial functions . . . This gesture was well received by all.”²¹

In the third and final issue of the first year, Goodwill’s editorial reiterated the need for Indigenous writers to respond to the lack of non-stereotypical and culturally grounded texts, and the growing audience for such material. To the magazine’s contributors she wrote, “You are on your way. Don’t stop now.” Among the writers in the third issue were Robert Houle (Saulteaux), “a senior fine arts student at McGill University,” Mary Jane Peters (Mi’kmaw), a third-year student at the University of New Brunswick, and Roger Jay (Algonquin), a graduate of the journalism program at the University of Nevada. Poet Wayne Keon (Anishinaabe) also made his debut.

A royal visit created a stir during the summer of 1970, as reflected in “Amy Greets the Queen” and “Indian Princess Canada Pageant,” two articles reporting on events on the royal tour. Both Manitoba and the Northwest Territories were in the midst of centennial celebrations, many of which coincided with the tour’s schedule. Amy Sinclair Clemens, the venerable community organizer and descendant of Chief Peguis, was presented to the Queen during the Peguis Memorial Day at the Old Stone Church (St. Peter Dynevor) near Selkirk, Manitoba.²² The Queen was presented with a scroll describing Peguis’s contributions to Manitoba; Amy Clemens represented his female descendants. Brian Orvis, the author, described her as “a very regal lady herself, resplendent in a white gown.”²³ The accompanying photograph shows a smiling older woman in a white buckskin dress, holding an embroidered shawl and feather fan.

The National Indian Princess Pageant held later that week at Yellowknife featured “ten charming princesses.”²⁴ The contestants attended a barbeque with the Royal Family. Prince Charles and Princess Anne, who were in attendance at the final event, were the first to congratulate Laverna McMaster (Siksika), the new National Princess, and runner-up Cindy Kenny (Dene). At initial perusal, the beauty pageant seems regressive and trivial, but this was not a typical pageant. The author, Delia Opekokew, who would become one of Canada’s preeminent Indigenous lawyers, had been a contestant herself when the pageant was held in Montreal during Expo ’67. She provides readers with the history of the pageant, highlights of the “tremendous and thought-provoking presentations,” and the evaluation criteria: “the ability to speak her own language, authenticity of her tribal dress,” cultural knowledge, and community involvement.²⁵ It was, in many ways, a celebration of women’s resilience. Both event participants and *Tawow* reporters manipulated the royal visit to remind the Crown of their special obligations to First Nations as secured through the treaties, a recurrent whisper found throughout Goodwill’s tenure as editor.

The 1971 *Annual Report* touted the magazine’s success: “The all-Indian cultural magazine . . . received wide acceptance from the Indian population. Favourable publicity from the news media brought it to the attention of educators, librarians and the general public. Circulation reached 15,000” and declared *Tawow* “one of the most widely requested departmental publications. An artistically informative periodical representing Canadian Indians, it provided a national outlet for Indian writers of short stories, articles and poetry.”²⁶ The Cultural Division had assertively promoted the magazine, particularly to universities, and issued press releases that were reprinted in publications with a First Nations audience such as the *Saskatchewan Indian*, which announced the new publication in its own debut issue.²⁷ *Tawow*’s first year also revealed the challenges of producing a quarterly magazine.

Goodwill was not able to manage a fourth issue, and the third is noted as Autumn/Winter 1970. Although the copyright information consistently stated, “published quarterly by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs,” it appears that goal was not met. Three issues per year became the norm for the first three years of publication.

Reconstructing *Tawow*’s publication record is somewhat challenging. The Department of Indian Affairs’s last public statement about the magazine is one sentence in the single paragraph devoted to Cultural Development in the 1973 *Annual Report*.²⁸ Perusing the annual reports, one can see the internal shifts as land claims, resource development projects, and decentralization changed department priorities. The Cultural Development Section disappeared in one of many organizational restructurings but the Aboriginal Art Centre/ Centre d’art autochtone (formerly the Indian Art Centre), which manages the department’s art collection, continues to operate. Interestingly, neither the Centre’s archive nor the Department of Indian Affairs library has a complete set of *Tawow*. However, with the help of director Linda Grussani and the staff at the Aboriginal Art Centre, a tentatively complete list has been compiled.²⁹

Volume and number identified each issue of *Tawow*, but several are either undated or confusingly dated, leaving the puzzle of different volumes with the same publication date and a ten-year publication span that produced eight volumes.³⁰ Only Volume 4 met the goal of quarterly publication, and it appears to have straddled two years. By 1976, publication had dwindled to two issues per year and, in 1975, 1977, and 1979, ceased entirely. In 1974, the Cultural Division began to contract guest editors and *Tawow* increasingly became a series of special issues.

Editors and Special Issues

*don’t rhyme the words too closely
when you tell our story
leave time and space for us to install
our bit of truth*³¹

In 1971, Sheila Erickson of Fort St. James, British Columbia joined *Tawow* as assistant editor. In the subsequent four issues, this excerpt from one of her poems was included on the inside front cover with the table of contents and copyright information. By the end of the year, Erickson had taken over as editor with Mary E. Jamieson as assistant. Erickson’s first (and only) editorial was an eloquent discussion of the importance of teaching Indigenous history. She compared people who had been separated from their history to



3 | Sarain Stump, Indian Art Camp performance, 1974. (Photo: Christine Welsh)

amnesiacs: “There is the vacuum in the memory and resultant impediment in the perception of the past; there is the impairment of the quality of living . . . the void, the negation, and the disruption.”³²

By 1972, Erickson had also moved on, and assistant editor Mary Jamieson took over as editor. A Mohawk from Six Nations, Jamieson was to serve as editor until 1974, bringing seven issues to print. With Jamieson at the helm, *Tawow* drew from her eastern networks. Joan Lickers, who reported on the Third National Indian Cultural Conference for the spring issue, was hired as assistant editor. Jamieson announced, “We have contracted a very talented, young Seneca Indian from Southern Ontario.”³³ Tom Hill, also from Six Nations, was the cover artist. Although unstated in the accompanying article, Hill had actually been working with the Cultural Affairs Section since 1968.³⁴ His diverse artistic and curatorial practice and his involvement in a wide range of section projects may have influenced *Tawow*’s distinct weaving of literature, art, media, and theatre, which acknowledged the interdisciplinarity of contemporary Indigenous arts.

In 1974, Mary Jamieson initiated the process of hiring guest editors charged with creating special issues in their areas of expertise. The first, Lee Williams, created a beautiful minimalist issue printed on cream paper with sepia photographs and text. Untitled, the first page stated, “This edition of *Tawow* is an expression of contemporary Indian women, focused on poetry, organizational structure, impressions of the young and a pictorial past.”³⁵ The issue opened with an essay by Jean Goodwill and featured poetry by Williams, Skyros Bruce, Sheila Erickson, and a woman identified only as “Loucheux.” It was illustrated with archival photographs and children’s drawings. The second special issue on communications marked the return of Sheila Erickson as guest editor. The third was published posthumously as guest editor Sarain Stump, who had been a regular *Tawow* contributor, passed away before the issue was sent to press (Fig. 3). Ironically, Stump had chosen the title “Immortality of Indian Art.” On the cover insert that memorialized Stump, Jamieson declared the issue “a profoundly moving work of art” (Fig. 4).³⁶

Although a thin twenty pages, Sheila Erickson’s special issue on communications and media offers a rare documentation of the emergence of Indigenous communications as a field but, more importantly, the thinking that has driven it over the following decades. The issue opens with a short story retold by Genevieve Bird describing the telepathic communication once common among northern elders, implying that radio and television were new versions of ancient traditions. The issue includes “Indian Communication in Canada,” an overview written by now-veteran journalist Doug Cuthand, a photo essay by Wayne Couchie from Nipissing First Nation, then a student at NSCAD, and an article about the La Ronge Communications initiative in northern Saskatchewan from the vantage point of its tentative and experimental origins. Theresa Nahanee’s essay “Mind Benders” uses the phrase “media massacre” to describe the negative impact of representations in literature, film, and the press, proclaiming, “what the gun failed to do in the last century, the media can take credit for.”³⁷ Of particular importance is Erickson’s Yellowknife Interview,” a roundtable discussion with Phoebe Nahanni, Brian Thompson, Roy Erasmus, and others in the aftermath of the release of a Secretary of State national communication policy that excluded the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. This early discussion about community-driven communications networks, “our way and in our language,” traces the origins of the quest for self-governed media.³⁸

After Jamieson’s departure, Tom Hill took over as editor, continuing the focus on special topics. In 1975 and 1976 *Tawow* produced two issues per year, all edited by nationally recognized guest editors. Oji-Cree actor and journalist Johnny Yesno was guest editor for a special issue on “Native Performing Arts



4 | Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College Art Camp, Cypress Hills, 1974. (Photo: Christine Welsh)

in Canada,” followed by Mi’kmaq artist Vivian Gray’s “Micmac People” and Anishinaabe writer Basil Johnston’s “View of Life,” a special issue on spiritual traditions. George Sioui (Huron-Wendat) was assistant editor on “View of Life” and by 1979 had taken over as *Tawow*’s final editor. He oversaw three special issues.

Anishinaabe poet George Kenny’s issue on “Northwestern Ontario: The People Then and Now” featured visual artists Josh Kakegamic (Anishinaabe, 1952–1993), Don Ningewance (Anishinaabe), the Triple K Cooperative of Red Lake, and the newly-formed Kemetewan Theatre Company. It provides a valuable window into the creative impetus that emerged in Northwestern Ontario and moved outward to urban centres, a reversal of typical conceptions of centre-periphery. The final two special issues, Melissa Lazore’s “Year of the Child” (1980) and Bill Caves’s “The Prison Experience and Canada’s Native People” (1981), shifted significantly from the arts focus of previous issues, though “Year of the Child” featured an interview with cover artist Arthur Shilling (1944–1986), Christine Sioui’s *Autumn Tale*, and an article on Leo Yerxa (Anishinaabe). “Prison Experience” included the article “The Prison Experience and the Creative Process,” which highlighted arts-based programming and the work of incarcerated artists.

Funding for *Tawow* appears to have fluctuated wildly. In 1972, when editor Mary Jamieson introduced Joan Lickers, she described how Lickers had “spent three months travelling from British Columbia to the Maritimes” to facilitate the magazine’s goal to provide inclusive coverage and “bring artists, craftsmen, language instructors, writers and other individuals who are involved in the promotion of their culture to the forefront.”³⁹ Similarly, in 1978, while preparing “View of Life,” the special issue on spiritual traditions, guest editor Basil Johnson was able to travel, interviewing and consulting with elders and knowledge keepers. By 1980, however, editor George Sioui’s brief editorial apologized for the delay in publishing the special edition for the *Year of the Child*, explaining that funds had been frozen.⁴⁰ Sioui managed to produce “Prison Experience” the following year, but *Tawow* ceased publication in 1981.

The Emergence of Indigenous Aesthetic Discourse

My environment might influence my art but I could be in China and yet I would still do my art.

– Norval Morrisseau, 1970

What are the salient features of a Native American philosophy and how does it affect the aesthetics of today’s art?

– Wilma Simon, 1973

It is with seeming reluctance that the Western world has begun to accept as “art” some of the artistic outpourings, past and present, the tangible evidence of the Indian cultures which once flourished across the American continent.

– Tom Hill, 1973

While it is apparent that staff sometimes struggled to find content, occasionally reprinting articles from other sources, *Tawow*’s editors steadfastly maintained their commitment to nurture literary voices. They cast a wide net and welcomed writing from children, youth, university students, and elders. They kept a sharp eye out for emerging historians, poets, and journalists. Contributors and featured artists sometimes left the arts and changed careers; many disappeared from public view, while others became icons. Most writers and artists were young, often in their early twenties, and some might cringe to reread their words and see their early work. However, it is in the pages of *Tawow* that writers and artists first began to wrestle with the problems and ideas that vex and inspire us today. Robert Houle, Tom Hill, Gerald McMaster, Sarain Stump, Wilma Simon, and Basil Johnston were among these early voices.

Editorial policy stated that articles were welcome in the author’s language of choice. This was usually English, occasionally French, and several stories were published in Cree syllabics. Subject matter was wide ranging, but performing and visual arts were strongly represented. Johnny Yesno’s (1938–2010) special issue on performing arts included articles by Jim Buller (Cree, 1921–1982), Tom Jackson (Cree), and Lloyd Kiva New (Cherokee, 1916–2002) – all pioneers in the field. Of the nineteen issues published, thirteen covers featured the work of Indigenous artists. Short biographies and interviews with artists are included in most issues, resulting in more than forty artist profiles and interviews. As a result, *Tawow* contains some of the earliest examples of Indigenous art writing and provides glimpses of artists in the years prior to their emergence.

Much of the early history of the first artists to achieve public prominence in Canada has been filtered through their patrons and dealers, who often wove themselves prominently into the narrative. *Tawow*’s short articles, most emerging from conversations and interviews, sought context Aboriginal readers would be interested in: the artist’s lineage, their home community, linguistic heritage, family, and artistic motivation. Discussions of Allen Sapp’s (1928–2015) career don’t usually include his chiefly lineage or his difficulties gaining acceptance within his own Cree community, uncomfortable with having their poverty exposed in the impressionistic, but honest, realism that marks his work. Who knew the prolific Alex Janvier (Dene Suline/Saulteaux) stopped painting for five years? *Tawow* announced his return

with the headline, “Alex Janvier is Painting Again.”⁴¹ There is poignancy in Benjamin Chee Chee’s (Anishinaabe, 1944–1977) bravado, three years before his suicide in an Ottawa jail. We hear whispers of secrets revealed decades later in dancer René Highway’s (1954–1990) comments on residential school. A young Edward Poitras (Cree/Metis) dances in Sarain Stump’s *Ancient Mobiles*. Future filmmaker Christina Welsh documents it in a photographic essay. The young writers also discuss the *work*, often with a naïve enthusiasm, but they talk about colour, shape, brush strokes, and movement. We read and see the influences that would impact their artistic development – and our own.

Tawow not only provides bits of information to enhance artist biographies and interpretations of their work; it also contains the first articulations of the collective movement to merge indigeneity with contemporary practice. Robert Houle’s 1971 essay, “Search for Identity,” discusses how “native artists [do] not merely establish a realistic representation. Realization that he could not draw a flower as perfectly as it was made by the Creator, led him to seek out the spirit or essence . . . It is this surrealist quality, so common in Native art that is difficult for Western civilization to comprehend, and thus to appreciate.”⁴² He compares the earlier American search for artistic identity to that of Canadian Indigenous artists asking, “Do we need another Jackson Pollock for the native people?” Three articles written by Wilma Simon, particularly “Wilma Simon and her Realm of Art,” which was a letter to editor Mary Jamieson illustrated by delicate abstract etchings and sketchbook drawings, are as inspiring to me today as they were when I first read them forty years ago – “The tradition of narrative, legendary painting has grown from a historical picture to an abstract feeling of yesterday. That yesterday began as a path for tomorrow. For me, today is spent tracking, trying to follow the path and keep it flowing and consistent – into tomorrow.”⁴³

Tawow also documented key events including special reports on two National Indian Cultural Conferences, the first one in 1970 and the third in 1972. These short reports, illustrated with photographs, enhance information gleaned elsewhere. While many delegates at the 1970 conference were non-Indigenous “experts,” University of Manitoba representative Sam Corrigan’s summary address reveals that numbers did not dictate voice: “The most striking thing about this conference was the fact that you did not call upon the resource people; you are quite capable of operating on your own.”⁴⁴ This can be read as a message to the Department of Indian Affairs, rather than the delegates.

Among the resolutions delegates passed was a request for a “National Travelling Exhibition of Contemporary Indian Art” that would include Indigenous communities on its itinerary, and also that works typically categorized as craft be included as “art.”⁴⁵ We still await the former, and progress on the latter is ongoing. While *Indigena*, curated in 1992 by Gerald

McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now Canadian Museum of History), toured across Canada for two years, inclusion of Indigenous peoples and communities as audience remains an issue. Note, also, the twenty-two-year gap between request and action.

The second conference was held in Kamloops, British Columbia, and was not mentioned in *Tawow*. However, *Tawow* reporter Joan Lickers attended the third conference and her “Special Report” opened the first issue of 1972. Held on Beardy First Nation in Saskatchewan, the conference was jointly sponsored by the Citizenship Branch, Secretary of State, and the Cultural Development Division, now headed by Colin Wasacase, a Cree from Saskatchewan. Secretary of State representative Ken Goodwill and Wasacase were the conference chairs. For four days, delegates lived and met in tipis and were entertained by demonstrations of horsemanship, rodeo, and powwow; but underneath the celebratory surface, resistance was brewing.

Language and education dominated the agenda, but on the third day, former *Tawow* editor Jean Goodwill put forward a proposal to “take the magazine out of the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs and set up production in Saskatchewan” with a nationally representative editorial board.⁴⁶ The resolution to establish *Tawow* under an autonomous board operating with the current level of funding passed. The delegates passed two additional resolutions that reflect further frustration with the Department’s heavy managerial hand: that “Indian” organizations and provincial arts and crafts groups have the authority to select individuals to sit on the Indian Craft Advisory Board, and, further, that “people of Indian origins should be trained . . . for top management positions in the Indian Arts and Crafts Marketing Service.”⁴⁷

The detailed resolutions brought forward by the small task groups responding to presentations by knowledge keepers Marjorie Perley and Peter Paul (Woloastoqiyik), Gordon Tootoosis, and Rufus Goodstriker (Kainai) should be required reading for those seeking the emergence of the struggle for self-governance in education and arts, and the relationship between First Nations and museums. Specifically, delegates requested that “museums and the Department of Indian Affairs be required to examine their storerooms . . . for the purpose of restoring [Indian artifacts] to the rightful owners” and voted to support “the Blackfeet Nation requesting the restoration of those artifacts held at the Alberta Provincial Museum . . . to be used and safeguarded according to the traditions of the Blackfeet Nation.”⁴⁸ Several resolutions voiced support for revitalizing traditional ceremonial practice and affirmed the connectivity of spirit and art.

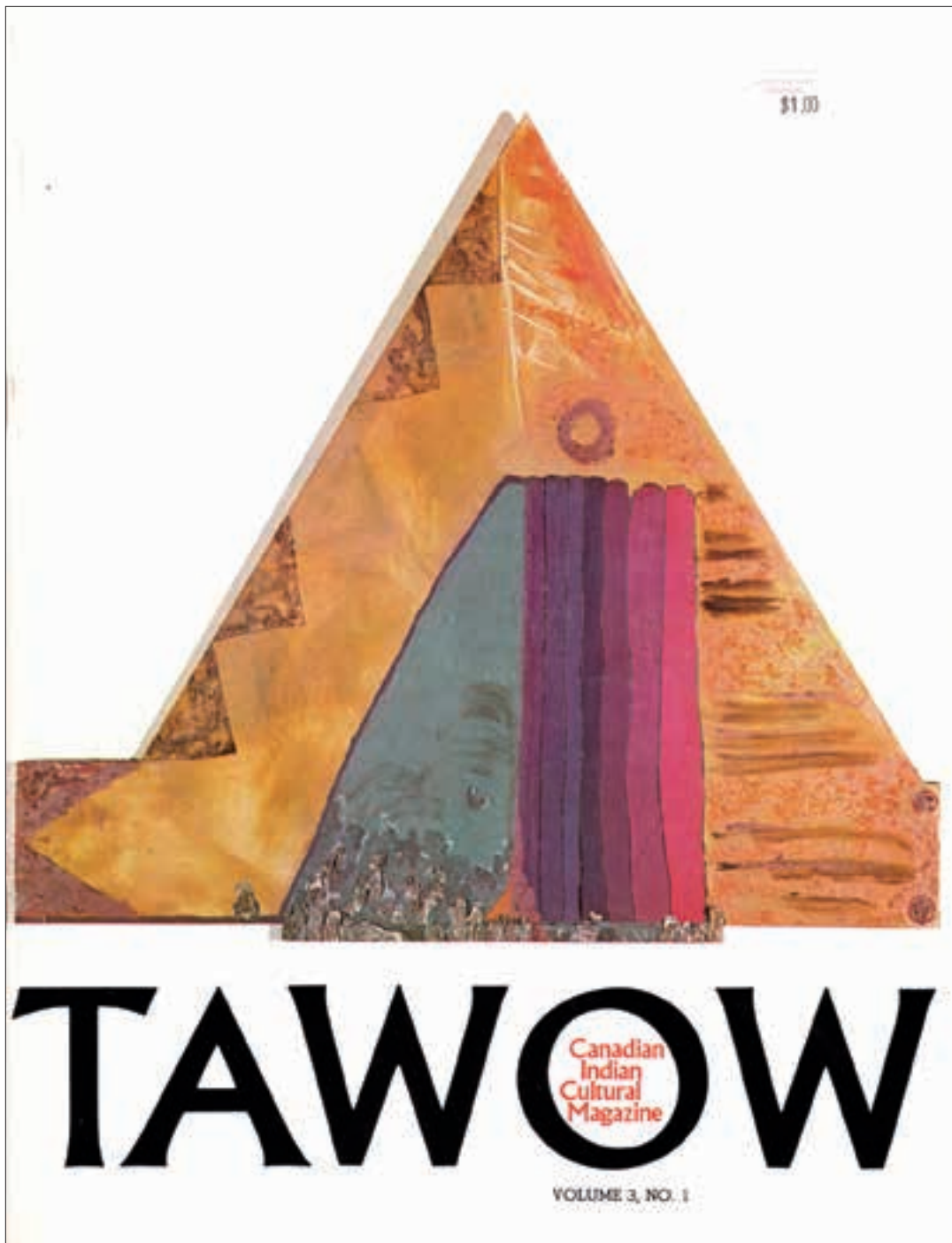
This was all reported in straightforward language, illustrated by photographs. The tone is neutral until the last paragraph when the young reporter reflects, “delegates . . . not only discussed the preservation of their

various cultures, but lived in a setting which was truly Indian. There were no minutes from discussions around the campfire in the evening, there were no explanations necessary for the feeling that came from living in a teepee.”⁴⁹ Rereading the report, I wonder how those campfire discussions motivated delegates to action when they returned home, and how they may have sparked a flame that informs the shape and direction of Indigenous arts and institutional change to the present time.⁵⁰

***Tawow* as Animateur and Archive**

As the Department of Indian Affairs provided editorial support and (one can assume) set editorial policy, *Tawow* maintained an overall celebratory tone and occasionally included uncritical articles on new federal programs and initiatives. However, *Tawow*’s importance should not be underestimated (Fig. 5). We would do well to remember the challenges facing aspiring writers. Marilyn Bowering, co-editor of *Many Voices: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Indian Poetry* (1977), the first anthology of Canadian Indigenous writing, described the difficulty persuading “a publisher to take the project on” as the “consensus seemed to be that no one would be interested in work by Native Canadians.”⁵¹ *Tawow* provided valuable space for authors. In its pages are poems, short stories, and articles by George Clutesi (Tseshaht), Basil Johnston, and Olive Dickason (Métis), whose works are now considered canonical. Literary scholars seeking early works by Wayne Keon, George Kenny, Mireille Sioui (Huron-Wendat), and Skyros Bruce (Sleil Waututh) comb its pages. Author and activist Jeannette Armstrong (Okanogan) described the impact of Indigenous-centred publications on community readers:

I read Native magazines voraciously, searching for poetry that spoke to me. A few Native poems surfaced in literary review magazines and little magazines like *The White Pelican*, but mostly what was available to Native readers were Native newspapers and magazines . . . I recall reading a very small poem by Skyros Bruce in one such flyer and being so utterly thrilled with the beauty of her poem that I searched for flyers from everywhere to read her work . . . I also searched Native magazines like *Tawow*, papers like *Akwesasne Notes*, and regional magazines such as *Indian World*. They were seminal in giving us the Native political information we craved while developing an audience for “Indian Writing” [and] were instrumental in engendering a literary movement parallel to, or perhaps occurring as one of the vehicles of the “Indian Movement.”⁵²



5 | Cover of *Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine* 3:1 (1972). Wilma Simon painting, courtesy of Wilma Simon. (Photo: author)

Perhaps *Tawow* met the needs of our generation. Skyros Bruce began publishing her work at fifteen; a few years later her poems appeared in *Tawow*. While Jeannette Armstrong scoured papers seeking Bruce's work, three provinces away I also treasured the sparse beauty of her poems, reading them over and over again. Three *Tawow* issues are entangled with my evolution as artist and writer: "Contemporary Indian Women," "Immortality of Indian Art," and the issue with Wilma Simon's painting on the cover. They articulated a place I wanted to go to, a movement I wanted to be part of.

In retrospect, I see *Tawow*'s limitations. Some issues are thin; others haven't aged well. Some issues seem thrown together, while others are carefully crafted. The editing is inconsistent. As an archive, the lack of information on magazine contributors can be absolutely maddening, particularly for individuals who did not continue or passed away or married and changed their names. The desire to be "artistic" occasionally sacrificed publishing conventions, such as dates and pagination. *Tawow* distanced itself from the vitality of the political movement Armstrong remembers, and is poorer for it. But I'm not throwing my copies away. Tentative, occasionally clumsy, the foundations of Indigenous curation and critical aesthetic thought have their origins here.

NOTES

The task of reconstructing the Cultural Section's history has largely fallen to scholars exploring the Indians of Canada pavilion at Expo '67, the career of Tom Hill, or Professional Indian Artists, Inc. (Odjig, Morrisseau, Beardy, Janvier, Sanchez, Cobiness, and Ray). I am particularly indebted to Barry Ace, Bonnie Devine, Michelle Lavallee, Cathy Mattes, and Ruth Phillips. Meegwetch for your work.

- 1 Jean GOODWILL, "Editorial," *Tawow* 1:1 (Spring 1970): 1.
- 2 I am the principal investigator of the Contemporary Aboriginal Art History Project, a SSHRC-funded Insight Development Project, now in the final stages, working in partnership with the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and Urban Shaman Gallery to develop archival resources for Aboriginal art history.
- 3 See Stephanie MCKENZIE, *Before the Country: Native Renaissance, Canadian Mythology* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2000), 18 and 42–43.
- 4 When the Canadian government began closing residential schools in 1965, they began negotiating Joint School Acts with provinces and Joint School Agreements with individual school boards without First Nations input. In Saskatchewan this began in 1969. See Blair STONECHILD, *The New Buffalo: The Struggle for Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006), 40.

- 5 Alan CAIRNS, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 20–21.
- 6 See *Indian Affairs Annual Report (IAAR)*, 1970, III–12. For an overview of the development of the Cultural Section see Barry ACE, “Reactive Intermediates: Aboriginal Art, Politics and Resonance of the 1960’s and 1970’s,” in *7: Professional Indian Artists Inc.*, ed. Michelle LaVallee (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery, 2014), 199–204.
- 7 ACE, “Reactive Intermediates,” 201; see also Tom “Jomin” PELTIER, “Critical Issues in Art Education,” in *Witness: A Symposium on the Woodland School*, ed. Bonnie Devine (Toronto: Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and the Witness Project, 2009) 54–64.
- 8 ACE, “Reactive Intermediates,” 201.
- 9 *IAAR* 1970, II2.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Jean Chrétien as quoted in “Indian Cultural Magazine Makes Its Debut,” *Saskatchewan Indian* 1:1 (July 1970): 8.
- 12 “The Canadian Prairie Indian Dance Group,” *Tawow* 1:1 (Spring 1970): 8–13.
- 13 Jean Cuthand Goodwill (1928–97), *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. Accessed 31 Aug. 2014, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/goodwill_jean_cuthand_1928-97.html.
- 14 They were the great-grandchildren of Yellow Mud Blanket, the brother of Chief Poundmaker, Cree leaders during the 1885 Resistance, a time of great change, hunger, and turmoil. Yellow Mud Blanket’s descendents are acknowledged for their knowledge of Cree culture and oral history of treaty negotiations. See Jean GOODWILL with Norma SLUMAN, *John Tootoosis* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1984), 10, and Mary Ellen TURPEL-LAFOND, “Maskêko-Sâkahikanihk: One Hundred Years for a Saskatchewan First Nation,” in *Perspectives on Saskatchewan*, ed. Jene M. Porter (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 76–77.
- 15 John Tootoosis was a tireless advocate for treaty rights, political organizer for the League of Indians of Western Canada, and founder and first Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, “John Tootoosis (1899–1989),” *Saskatchewan Indian* (January/February 1989): 1.
- 16 Tyrone TOOTOOSIS, “Cree Sacred Sites,” Cree Literacy Networks, posted 28 April 2014. Accessed 31 Aug. 2014, <http://creeliteracy.org/2014/04/28/cree-sacred-sites-tyrone-tootoosis/>.
- 17 Harris M. LENTZ III, “Tootoosis, Gordon,” *Obituaries in the Performing Arts 2011* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 352.
- 18 Mary Ann LAVALLEE, “Yesterday’s Indian Woman,” *Tawow* 1:1 (Spring 1970): 7.
- 19 “Tahahsheena Rugs,” in *ibid.*, 24.
- 20 Editorial, *Tawow* 1:2 (Summer 1970): 1.
- 21 “First All Canada Indian Cultural Conference,” in *ibid.*, 15.
- 22 Manitoba Legislative News Service, “Historic Elk, Beaver Tribute for the Queen: Ceremony Highlights of July 14 Afternoon,” 10 July 1970, Manitoba Government Information Services Branch. Accessed 15 Sept. 2014, http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/archives/1970/07/1970-07-10-historic_elk_beaver_tribute_for_the_queen.pdf
- 23 Brian ORVIS, “Amy Greets The Queen,” *Tawow* 1:3 (n.d.): 28–29.
- 24 Delia OPEKOKEW, “Indian Princess Canada Pageant,” *Tawow* 1:3 (n.d.): 33.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 34.

- 26 IAAR 1971, 24 and 32.
- 27 “Indian Cultural Magazine Makes Its Debut,” *Saskatchewan Indian* 1:1 (July 1970): 8.
- 28 IAAR 1973, 14.
- 29 Through a series of phone calls and email exchanges between 12–19 January 2015, Linda Grussani and I compiled a list based on the Aboriginal Art Centre’s archive and the University of Manitoba Library and Archive holdings.
- 30 For example, vol. 3:2 and vol. 4:1 have no dates, vol. 3:3 and 4:2 are both dated 1974.
- 31 This poem later appeared in Kent GOODERHAM, ed., *Notice: This Is An Indian Reserve* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1972), 40.
- 32 Sheila ERICKSON, “Indian History Must Be Taught in Indian Schools,” *Tawow* 2:3 (1971): 1.
- 33 Mary E. JAMIESON, “Editorial,” *Tawow* 3:2 (1972): 1.
- 34 Ruth PHILLIPS, “Tom Hill: The Governor General’s Awards in Visual and Media Arts – 2004,” Canada Council for the Arts. Accessed 28 Oct. 2014, <http://ggavma.canadacouncil.ca/htmlfixed/Archives/2004/hill-e.html>; ACE, “Reactive Intermediates,” 203.
- 35 Lee WILLIAMS, *Tawow* 3:3 (1974): 1.
- 36 “Immortality of Indian Art” focused on the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College’s Indart ’74 camp in Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan. Mary E. JAMIESON, “Sarain Stump,” *Tawow* 4:3, cover insert. Sarain Stump was a charismatic poet and artist who remains an enigma in Indigenous art history. Questions regarding his identity have emerged that have not been resolved. He published the critically acclaimed *There is My People Sleeping: The Ethnic Poem-Drawings of Sarain Stump* (Sydney, BC: Gray’s Publishing, 1970) and by 1973 was coordinating the Department of Indian Art at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College in Saskatoon where he influenced many artists including Edward Poitras, Gerald McMaster, and Ruth Cuthand. See Donna PINAY, “College’s Indian Art Department Expanding,” *Saskatchewan Indian* 3:12 (December 1973): 13; Gerald MCMMASTER, *Edward Poitras: Canada XLVI Biennale di Venezia* (Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1995), 79 and 96.
- 37 Theresa NAHANE, “Media Massacre,” *Tawow* 4:2 (n.d.): 3.
- 38 Sheila ERICKSON, “Yellowknife Interview,” *Tawow* 4:2 (n.d.): 8.
- 39 Editor note, *Tawow* 3:2 (1972): 1.
- 40 UNESCO declared 1979 the International Year of the Child in conjunction with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 41 His work is also featured on the cover. “Alex Janvier is Painting Again,” *Tawow* 2:3 (1971): 21.
- 42 Robert HOULE, “Search for Identity,” *Tawow* 2:2 (Summer 1971): 3.
- 43 Wilma SIMON, “Wilma Simon and Her Realm of Art,” *Tawow* 3:1 (1972): 31.
- 44 “First All Canada Indian Cultural Conference,” *Tawow* 1:2 (Summer 1970): 15.
- 45 “First Cultural Conference”: 13.
- 46 Joan LICKERS, “Special Report: The Third National Indian Cultural Conference,” *Tawow* 3:1 (1972): 2.
- 47 Ibid, 3.

48 Ibid, 4.

49 Ibid, 5.

50 One obvious link would be delegate Ida Wasacase, the first president of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (est. 1976), who asked Bob Boyer to create an Indian Fine Arts Department that would foster the development of artistic voice directly connected to culture and environment. Now the Indigenous Art and Indigenous Art History programs, Department of Indigenous Languages, Arts and Culture, First Nations University of Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan.

51 Marilyn BOWERING, “Marilyn Bowering, Novelist, Poet & Playwright: *Many Voices*.” Accessed 15 Nov. 2014, <http://marilynbowering.com/many-voices/>. See also Paul DEPASQUALE, Renate EIGENBROD, and Emma LAROCQUE, *Across Cultures/Across Borders: Canadian Aboriginal and Native American Literatures* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2009), 180, for a brief discussion of how the book was largely ignored by the literary establishment.

52 Jeannette ARMSTRONG, “Four Decades: An Anthology of Native Poetry from 1960 to 2000,” in *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, ed. Jeannette C. Armstrong and Lally Grauer (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001), xviii.

Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine (1970–1981)

SHERRY FARRELL RACETTE

« Tawow » signifie « bienvenue » en cri, ou, littéralement, « il y a de la place pour vous ici ». C'est le titre qu'a choisi le ministère des Affaires indiennes pour une nouvelle revue créée en 1970. *Tawow: Canadian Indian Cultural Magazine* (1970–1981) a marqué un tournant décisif dans la politique canadienne. Les rapports annuels du ministère des Affaires indiennes ont placé la création de *Tawow* dans le contexte de son programme de soutien aux arts visuels. D'après le rapport annuel de 1970, « le porte-parole autochtone pourra désormais rejoindre le public canadien dans son ensemble ». Un communiqué de presse par Jean Chrétien, alors ministre des Affaires indiennes, déclarait : « Les peuples autochtones doivent avoir la possibilité de s'exprimer eux-mêmes ». Le rapport annuel de 1971 vantait le succès de *Tawow* : « la revue culturelle entièrement autochtone [...] a été largement reconnue par la population autochtone [...] le tirage a atteint 15 000 », et déclarait qu'elle était « l'une des publications ministérielles les plus demandées ». La première année de *Tawow* a mis en évidence les difficultés liées à la publication d'une revue trimestrielle. Bien que l'information sur les droits d'auteur déclarait invariablement que la revue était « publiée trimestriellement par le ministère des Affaires indiennes et du Nord canadien », cet objectif n'a jamais été atteint. La publication était plutôt irrégulière, suivant les fluctuations de l'intérêt et du financement.

Les éditeurs de *Tawow* étaient Jean Goodwill (crie), Mary Jamieson (mohawk), Tom Hill (séneca) et George Sioui (wendat). Ils ratissaient large et accueillaient favorablement les souscriptions d'enfants, de jeunes, d'étudiants d'université et d'anciens. Ils suivaient de près les jeunes historiens, poètes et journalistes. La plupart des auteurs étaient jeunes, souvent au début de la vingtaine. Selon la politique éditoriale, les auteurs pouvaient soumettre des articles dans la langue de leur choix. Il y avait une grande diversité de sujets, mais les arts de la scène et visuels étaient fortement représentés. Chaque éditeur maintenait fermement l'engagement de *Tawow* à soutenir l'expression littéraire et artistique.

Quand le ministère des Affaires indiennes accordait son appui rédactionnel et définissait la politique éditoriale, le ton d'ensemble était

louangeur et comprenait des articles dépourvus de sens critique concernant les nouveaux programmes et initiatives du gouvernement fédéral. *Tawow* a pris ses distances vis-à-vis le dynamisme des mouvements politiques de l'époque et s'en est trouvée appauvrie. Il ne faudrait toutefois pas sous-estimer l'importance de la revue. Nous ferions bien de nous rappeler les défis que rencontrent les aspirants écrivains. Marilyn Bowering, corédactrice de *Many Voices* (1977), la première anthologie d'écrits autochtones canadiens, décrit la résistance profondément ancrée à l'idée de donner de l'espace à la tradition orale sur la page imprimée. *Tawow* a fourni cet espace. Sur les dix-neuf numéros publiés, treize couvertures montrent des œuvres d'artistes autochtones. La plupart des numéros comprennent de courtes biographies et des entrevues avec des artistes, ce qui a donné plus de quarante profils et entrevues d'artistes. Par conséquent, *Tawow* contient quelques-uns des premiers exemples d'écrits autochtones sur l'art et donnent un aperçu de l'œuvre d'artistes dans les années qui ont précédé leur émergence. C'est aussi dans les pages de *Tawow* qu'écrivains et artistes ont commencé à affronter les problèmes et idées qui nous vexent et nous inspirent aujourd'hui. Robert Houle, Tom Hill, Gerald McMaster, Sarain Stump, Wilma Simon et Basil Johnston ont été parmi ces premières voix. Hésitantes et parfois maladroites, les fondations de la pensée esthétique littéraire et critique autochtone trouvent ici leurs origines.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette