

## Project Evaluation:

**1.** *Ghost Rider: Performing Fugitive Indigeneity* consisted of twenty-seven paintings by Klamath-Modoc artist Ka'ila Farrell-Smith, created at her studio in Chiloquin and made from wild harvested pigments from Klamath lands and aerosol stencils of metal detritus found on the ranch land at Modoc Point Studio. As she describes: "Living and working on ranch and forest lands has become a ritual in reconnection. Walking the land, watching for snakes in summer, watching the prints of who walked before me in the snow in winter, selecting trees to trim for fire prevention. I collect detritus from the land: shot up cans, old ranch equipment, parts of machinery, barbed wire, grids, bullets. I take these objects and use them as stencils in my paintings. Combined, these marks with harvested wild pigments constitute layers that bridge contemplation of colonizers violence and trauma, offering a matrix for resiliency and transformation of perception and memory. Formally, the twenty seven works examine improvisational composition and abstract exploration, additional layers of thicker paint utilize text and imagery cited from my research."

*Umbo Room*, curated by Ka'ila Farrell-Smith, displayed protest art from the frontlines of the NO LNG campaign to Indigenous water protectors of the Klamath basin to the Pacific Ocean. The artworks in this show translated the creativity from the frontlines of the water wars and reflected the cross-tribal collaborations to protect sacred waters and save the endangered C'waam, Koptu, and Salmon from dams, diversions, corporate cattle, and industrial agriculture.

With the support of both the Heritage Arts Grant and the Artists Build Community Grant from Oregon Arts Commission, we were able to expand the original intentions for these projects, adding the in-house printing of a limited edition risograph exhibition booklet. We were also able to generously financially support the primary artists from the exhibits and Ditch Projects members who played primary roles in the above-mentioned projects.

We measured the success of this project first and foremost by the impact it held on the artists involved and their broader communities. Our goal of highlighting and supporting Indigenous artists was paramount, and through the HAG and OAC funding we were able to support 13 artists whose work engaged critical conversations about our cities' settler heritage and the contemporary threats to Indigenous communities region-wide. We were able to financially support the artists, provide framing, printing, and publication services. Ditch Projects artist members and interns provided the necessary in-kind services and space to make the exhibitions a success. Through suggested donations for the risograph-printed exhibition booklet, we were also able to provide a direct connection between our gallery visitors and The Ambo Fund, successfully raising money to support the Klamath Tribes as they work to restore the health of Klamath Lake.

Over the month these exhibits were on view we saw an increasingly diverse demographic attending the opening and closing receptions and weekend open gallery hours. Many people who attended professed it was their first time visiting Ditch Projects and that the themes of the exhibits had drawn them in. This proved a welcome expansion to our typical viewership.

**2.** Our exhibition reach was evaluated by attendance during the opening and closing receptions and during our weekend open gallery hours. While we were pleased to have a good showing of attendees at the opening, we also had to contend with Covid-19 at the onset of the Delta outbreak. Our website and instagram platforms and the exhibition review written in the Eugene Weekly allowed for viewers to engage with the exhibition in another modality.

Covid also caused the original delay in exhibition dates. We had originally planned to host Ka'ila's exhibits in November 2020, but ultimately decided together to push them back to August 2021 with the hopes of being able to bring in more people and have greater circulation with the garage doors open and parking lot open for hanging out. This proved successful and the extra time allowed us to expand the scope of the original projects.

The original plan for the group exhibition also had to shift because the Ascend Indigenous Womxn printmaking collective was unable to work together in the studio through the pandemic. So there were some challenges with organizing a new project for the backspace show, which ultimately became *Umbo Room*. But again, these challenges led to a very strong and thematically powerful show.

Internally, the organizing of the exhibitions fell primarily on the exhibition point person's shoulders (Sonja Dahl) for various reasons, including pandemic-related challenges faced by other Ditch Members - and it proved very challenging for one person to take on that much work. The shows were ultimately a huge success, but there was a toll on the Ditch members who played primary roles in the exhibition organizing and risograph printing project. This was an important learning process for our organization, and Ditch members have had useful dialogues since then about how to prepare better for these complex and multifaceted projects in the future.

3. "*Ghost Rider: Performing Fugitive Indigeneity*" and *Umbo Room* brought together the work of many Indigenous artists and collectives. By supporting, promoting, and hosting these critical exhibitions we sought to address the historically low representation of Indigenous contemporary artists in Oregon's contemporary arts networks and exhibition spaces. This multi-part project provided exposure and opportunities for collection action from our community to support the work of Indigenous artists and activists who are dedicated to projects exposing the threats to Oregonian Indigenous artists' ancestral lands by large-scale infrastructure projects like the LNG pipeline and the pollution of Klamath Lake. We believe that these projects activated the Eugene and Springfield community while increasing visibility for the work of many of the region's Indigenous artists and organizers.

4. It was important that these issues facing Oregon's indigenous communities were presented through the medium of art, with all its transformative capacities. We heard from so many people involved in the shows and visitors to the exhibitions how inspired they felt by the artworks on display.

The opening reception was a beautiful event. We welcomed members of Ka'ila's local family and friends, indigenous members of the broader Springfield-Eugene communities, and many others who had never been to Ditch Projects before. The themes of the exhibitions and the powerful nature of the artworks themselves drew in a diverse viewership from our local communities. At the opening reception Rowena Jackson performed her poem "You Too, Can Be a Water Protector", followed by a generous conversation with Ka'ila, Rowena and the audience. It was a deeply affecting moment for many in attendance.

Many people came to see the exhibitions over the course of the month they were up, especially after the publication of Ester Barkkai's review in the Eugene Weekly. The exhibits, book project, and events all gave attendees a chance to consider the relationship between art and community activism.