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Review of *Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art* Edited by Gerald McMaster

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Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art. Edited by Gerald McMaster. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press; Hull, QB: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1999. Illustrations, selected references, index to illustrations. 164 pp. \$34.95 paper.

The reservation (or “reserve” in Canada) is a place with multi-layered meanings to contemporary Native People. As editor Gerald McMaster states, “the reserve has been both sanctuary and prison.” While symbolizing community, home, family and tradition, by its very nature (government imposed confinement) it simultaneously represents repression, poverty, and the social ills that follow. For a reader interested in the Great Plains, or any other region, *Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art* deftly illuminates these complex relationships through the work of seven artists and four authors.

The volume’s first half is devoted to thought-provoking essays by McMaster, also curator of the exhibition, Paul Chaat Smith, Charlotte Townsend-Gault, and Nancy Marie Mithlo addressing the themes of art and place. These include a consideration of the cultural implications of Native space from the Indian Rights heyday of the 1970s to the ill-fated efforts to bring Native issues to public attention in 1992 (Smith), and the conflicted discourse found throughout multiple forms of contemporary Aboriginal art, such as performance and literature (Townsend-Gault).

Following the essays, the authors provide brief background sketches of the artists with critical analyses, including detailed colored photographs, of each work contributed to *Reservation X*. The artists—Nora Naranjo-Morse (Santa Clara Pueblo), Marianne Nicolson (Kingcome Inlet), Shelley Niro (Six Nations Reserve), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora Nation), Mateo Romero (Cochiti Pueblo), Mary Longman (Gordon Indian Reserve), and C. Maxx Stevens (Seminole Nation)—explore their relationships with their reservation communities and the influence of these relationships on their identities as Native People. The appraisals are capped with excerpts from interviews with the artists addressing the themes of family, community, and identity.

Six of the seven works rest primarily on installations. The exception, a film by Niro, *Honey Moccasin*, was represented by an installation of fancy-dance dress composed of break-

fast cereal and tire treads. In the film story these creative regalia were used to replace stolen traditional bead and featherwork in an unnamed “reservation x,” proving that the community’s Indian identity could continue to exist.

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