



Enactment

direct digital print, acrylic, capacitors, porcupine quill on handmade paper signed and dated 2020
7 1/2 x 9 1/2 in, 19.1 x 24.1 cm



Coadjute

direct digital print, acrylic, capacitors, resistors, light- emitting diode, glass beads on handmade paper signed and dated 2020
7 x 9 1/2 in, 17.8 x 24.1 cm



Black Gold

direct digital print, acrylic, capacitors, resistors, light-emitting diode, glass beads on handmade paper
signed and dated 2020
9 1/2 x 7 in, 24.1 x 17.8 cm

Barry Ace often uses images from digital repositories as a source material upon which to build his compositions for his smaller paper works. Archives, such as the Smithsonian Museum's, provide scans of daguerreotypes, plates and photographic prints from the era of documenting what was termed "The Vanishing Race" as colonial interests advanced Westward suppressing culture and overtaking Indigenous territory.

In *Enactment* under the image of a dance troupe the caption reads "McDonald & his performing Warm Spring Indians." At that time, acts like Buffalo Bill's Wild West show and George Catlin's Indian Gallery would tour North America as well as Europe. At the same time as these performances were popular with white audiences, in both the United States and Canada, ceremonial and other performances for and with the community were outlawed. These types of shows were one of the few legal ways Indigenous people could enact their culture and retain, as well as transmit, knowledge.

Coadjute is a verb meaning to work together cooperatively. The image in the work titled *Coadjute* documents a community gathering, most of the group positioned with their back to the camera. Ace perceives the configuration as "Indigenous people coming together to protect themselves against colonization that has pushed them to the cusp of cultural change."

The archival image in *Black Gold* is marred by a dark aberration that migrates from the top to the bottom of the portrait of an Indigenous man. Possibly caused by a scrape in the emulsion on the glass plate negative, for Ace the mark resembles a smear of oil, signifying the expropriation of Indigenous land for fossil fuel, a "premonitory image of things to come."

The works are embellished with electronic components in Ace's signature style. In *Coadjute* and *Black Gold* they form flowers that reference the traditional beadwork seen in Great Lakes material culture. In *Enactment*, the sharp end of a quill points to a small Indigenous child in the centre of the tableaux and to the future that lies ahead; the capacitors fixed to the bottom edge underscore the technology shift that child, in its lifetime, will witness. On all the works the dripping quality of the paint alludes to "a history that is becoming shrouded like a curtain falling on the scene."

Excerpt - Encoding Culture 2 Catalogue.