



Bloodline Triptych (#3, #4, #6) (2020) 17.8 x 38.1 cm, digital output, capacitors, resistors, light-emitting diodes, beads and acrylic on paper. Collection of the Artist.

PROVENANCE

Collection of the Artist

Each work measures 7 x 5 inches.

In the *Bloodline Triptych* Barry Ace employs multiples as a strategy to alter assumed associations when viewing an historical image of an Indigenous man. Influenced by Andy Warhol's merging of the aesthetics and tactics of advertising with modern art, Ace states, "I repeat the image to make it familiar, in effect, less threatening." Composed of ceramic capacitors and a stem of resistors, the simulated beadwork of a flower motif remains the consistent embellishment on each part of the triptych. The other constant is a stroke of red paint on the right side of the image, an abstracted exclamation point that calls out for the viewer's attention. In each repetition, the man in the portrait looks straight at the camera lens, challenging the colonial gaze.

The visual citation of the Pop Art aesthetic has been an ongoing strategy in Ace's work. He developed the "Super Phat Nish" (SPN) persona as a trickster figure at once "humorous and ironic" yet with a "subversive subtext that levels cultural critique against dominant narratives." Works from the 2005 solo exhibition *Super Phat Nish* (curator: Cathy Mattes) toured as part of *Playing Tricks: Barry Ace and Maria Hupfield* (curator: Ryan Rice) at the American Indian Community House, New York City. As well, works were acquired for national and international institutional collections including North American Native Museum (NONAM) in Zurich, Switzerland, Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and the Canada Council Art Bank. In the Art Bank's 2022 exhibition, *Looking the World in the Face*

(curator: Amin Alsaden), the SPN persona makes an appearance in the work *Cashing In*. With this work as well as with *Bloodlines*, Ace strategically appropriates Pop Art conventions to “indigenize normative settler imagery.” In doing this Ace aims to “reclaim stereo-typical representations” while pointing to the absence of Indigenous voice and positive representation in dominant popular culture and iconography.

Essay courtesy of Leah Snyder, digital designer and writer, The L.Project. Snyder writes about culture, technology and contemporary art, and is a contributor to the National Gallery of Canada’s *Gallery* magazine and other Canadian art and architecture publications.