

Title: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun on his painting:  
'Fuck you colonial Fucks you murdered our children  
at the residential schools. Everyday is orange day With  
no justice (2022)'

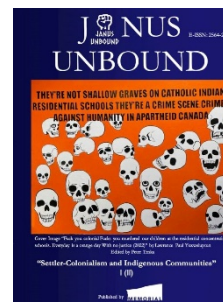
Author(s): Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun

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## Artist's Statement

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun



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This painting is about what happened to Native children in this country, that was a sanctioned government culling, murder, cultural genocide, just pedophiles, torture, abuse, beatings. A lot of things that happened at residential schools, reports of girls getting pregnant and priests throwing babies into furnaces—so these are real things that happened in this country. Canada claims that it's a very beautiful country, in the top 10 in the world, one of the best countries to live in in the world, but us Native people, we don't think so because throughout its history, under the Indian Act—or in creating the Indian Act, which is a white supremacy act of Canada, and so it's never acknowledged, this apartheid. Why did the South African government come to the Department of Indian Affairs to see how they were dealing with Indians, because the Department of Indian Affairs had already resolved the issue of how to deal with people you don't consider. Why I say this is that we were never given citizenship in this province [British Columbia]. There were treaties in other provinces, and then they created the Indian Act and started to take our children and send them to these schools.

I went to the Kamloops Indian School. Out at the very front there was a swimming pool, but right beside it was a graveyard. That was the official graveyard that they would admit to how they killed or why they died. The Department of Indian Affairs at the time would not give any health benefits to children. The school should have been closed down but they kept them open and more kids got sicker and sicker and died. So as far as the Canadian government, Department of Indian Affairs, this white supremacy had little children dying, [these were] the consequences of their actions. This is why I say that Canada is responsible for killing these children, that Apartheid Canada murdered these children, that this government murdered these children in this country. And we are still living under the Indian Act, which is a very oppressive legislation that Natives never agreed to, that never wanted it. [Native people] were denied citizenship up until 1960, they were not allowed to leave the reservation, they had to have passes. This is very much a history of a segregated country.

Let's not kid ourselves what colonialism is. Colonialism is to come to a country, kill as many people as you can, destroy their culture, give them Christianity, brain-wash them, kill the ones who don't want to listen to you, and leave the rest. And so they purposely gave smallpox to this province, intentionally, to kill as many Native people as possible. This is a part of Canada. When you are the victors you never

write the truth, [it is] in the eyes of the beholders as though it was some gigantic romantic process of taking this country. But how do you kill 50 million indigenous people on a continent in a blink of an eye, in a short period of time? So, these are events that have happened, they are real. And you can't believe the books that are written on paper in a library, as much as you cannot believe the things that are on the internet because they are both untrue. They only see it from their own position, their glorification of their success.

Why kill that many children? They killed our future because they know that the population of Native people would increase. They didn't want that. They wanted to take it all. They wanted to exterminate us. They thought that we'd all die off. If you kill all the children, or as many as you can, there'd be very few children left that would survive, which was true. So it was a very successful undertaking by the Canadian government, by the Catholic Church, [with] all other aspects of the church to completely genocide aboriginal people. So this is the burden that Native people have to carry. Canadians really hate Native people. I'm telling the truth about this because this is Canada. You don't have to go down south to the United States this way. You don't have to go down south to look at being burnt. You have the Department of Indian Affairs, which is the KKK of Canada, and ruling over us. It is like being under martial law in this country for aboriginal people, to be put on reservations and in the province that we've never signed any treaties with—so this is very much apartheid. How do you emancipate Native people from this colonial agenda? And that is a real problem that people have about emancipating Native people. You have reservations, and you define reservations in this country, and it means that you put Native people on reservations and they live there, permanently. Like the Gaza Strip, or anywhere else that is a segregated concept. Reservations are a permanent POW concept. We are prisoners of this colonial concept. We are not free. We are allowed to live on them but we cannot go off of our reservations and live on our own land, wherever we want. These are some of the things that are being enforced by the police, by the Canadian army, by CSIS Canada, by local police enforcements. They're here to destroy everything. They're not here to fix.

Justin Trudeau has decided he wanted a pipeline, and Native people are going to jail, and being arrested now, and their rights are being taken away, because he wants a pipeline when we're trying to stop warming. His government, his philosophy for the rich and wealthy to become more wealthy—this is a throwaway country. They came from foreign lands, they have no interest whatsoever, there is no salvation in a concept of that history in terms of Environment Canada ... they have their histories, they have their own flags. So they come here as destroyers of all, and kill. 400 million down to 40 million, since contact. They're exterminators. They're destroyers.

You have no interest whatsoever in saving this planet earth. You're here as colonialists, and all you want to do is get rich and richer, and fill your pockets, and contaminate the land, kill everything, cut down as many trees as you can, place all the dioxins and pulp mills, all the mine tailings that are contaminating the lands over places and they're overflowing and contaminating rivers. This is Canada ... it's all greed. So that's what is happening and so we have to sit on these reservations, or abide by these rules and be nice, or they will arrest you if you try to protest and

say anything about this government, that what it's doing is wrong. And all the colonialists that are here benefit, and they really don't give a flying fuck either about what Indian rights are, because they're not here for our rights, they're here for their own benefit. And that means I will kill it all before I would even think of freeing a Native person. Canadians have no interest whatsoever. They hate Indians. All we've ever got from this country is hate.

And this country only wants to represent propaganda, colonial propaganda in saying we're really getting along. While they turn around in their culture and hunt down and murder Native women. One of their leaders said when he was asked the question, "what do you think of the missing and murdered Native women in Canada?", that prime minister said, "it is not on my radar." This type of ideology and thinking, of what they think of Native women, is what this country really is about, that you have a right, as colonialists, to hunt down and murder Native women. So we have continuously over the years been trying to stop this murdering [of] Native women. So this is a Canadian culture. Canadians feel that it is their right as colonialists ... it is ok to murder Native women because their prime minister didn't give a shit! It was like a green light to say ok. Look, he even said it, he doesn't care. So this is what these leaders are like, this is what Canada is. And they come across like "it's a great country." But when you start to say these things to them, they don't want to hear it because it's not their women that are being murdered. They don't hunt down their women and murder them, they're mostly hunting down Native women. So these are some of the problems that we have in our lives, the fear that we have every day that I have to wake up to with my five daughters, and fearful that their lives are at risk every day in this country. And every Native woman in this country ... fearful for their lives. That this is how we are being treated, this is how we are being looked at: that our women are expendable, that they can exterminate, that they can kill and murder at their leisure. This is what Canada is about. Because they are Native women. Yes, [they] say that this is wrong, but they're still teaching their people to do this—because people hate Indians. Canadians hate Indians.

This is a segregated country sometimes.

I went to Winnipeg just recently. I went to a Keg restaurant. I said "dinner for three." Big place. We went in there. They took us to the very corner of the room, a cubbyhole, and sat us down and said, "Here. Have dinner," because they didn't want us to sit in the open with white people. I mean, what the fuck? I'm a paying customer. I don't care if they have a problem with the colour of my skin. It's their problem. But why do I have to pay the consequences of their fucking racist fucking ideology of Canada? That just happened last week. So let's not talk about how great this country is, this is a fucking redneck country, and they're a bunch of fucking assholes. And that's just the way they are. We don't need Trump, we already have the Department of Indian Affairs. Truth and Reconciliation is a joke in this country. When we asked the world to come for help—where are they? We asked for the United Nations to come and intervene and look at how many kids have been murdered. But this is the G20. Can't do that. They're powerful, they wouldn't allow it,

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that's why they're not here. Not one person has ever been charged with murder for all the kids that have been killed. They never will be charged, this country does not want to separate church and state, they're protecting. 25% of the Native people are Christian, why did that 25% go over to see the pope? I sure as hell don't need him, he should be banned from coming to this country ever again because of what they did.

I don't know what [is] wrong with those Indians. When you brainwash them to a certain point. And thinking that saying sorry and apologizing for what they've done is the satisfaction that [they would] accept. Every day that I breathe I have suffered the consequences from that residential school. And you know exactly what I mean because I am talking to you in your language, because mine was taken away, and so was my father's and so was my grandmother's, so was my grandfather's. This is very hard for me to accept, the Christian ideology. It's a war. And I don't like them, I don't like what they did, I don't like how many children they killed, I don't like what they stand for. They're not good people. They're ugly. They're murderers. They're exterminators. They're serial killers. So is the Canadian government. The Department of Indian Affairs. They are serial killers. This is what this country really is, at this time in history.

When I went to that school I know kids died because I was there and went to a funeral. We were marched down to the graveyard and I watched them bury our schoolmate and then they marched us back to the class and all the girls were crying. Our friends, crying for the loss of their classmate. We had to listen to that as kids and understand that she wasn't coming back, that they have graveyards at residential schools. They don't have graveyards at public schools, I know they don't, because I went to public school when they changed the law, I was the first person to go to a public school. And I went around that school that day and I came home and Dad asked me, "how was school today?" and I said I went and looked around at all the kids and around the school grounds and everything and I said, "how come there's no graveyard?" He looked at me and he said, "son, they don't do that to their people," and I understood then what it meant when I was standing at the graveyard when they were burying my friend what those people are really like. I understood how dangerous colonialists are and how evil they can be. You can't trust them. I'll never trust anyone, because I know what they're capable of, and I know what they did, and I've seen all those graves, because I was there and I seen it.

So that's why I made this painting, just to remind this country of how fucking evil you are, how racist you are, how creepy you are, how ugly you are, how unkind, how evil, just barbarians, barbaric. They have no remorse. And that's just how they feel, and they just feel this way, they felt that they had a right to kill us, because they're colonialists. But I don't think that they should call themselves a democracy. They could call themselves fascists. Fascist Canada? Apartheid Canada comes more close. But I think when you start to have that many shallow graves, and exterminate that many children, you are no longer a democracy. Canadians don't like to hear this, they don't want to hear it, they don't want to think of themselves as fascists. But they are. My rights were taken away, my lands were taken away, my ancestral lands are under occupation. I'm not free, I'm a national security risk. My phones are tapped, they know everything that I do, I'm under surveillance all the time, I

know what this country's like. There's no such thing as privacy in this world anymore, once the internet happened. Everything is under surveillance. There's no such thing as privacy—all your messages, all your photos, everything. It's all under government control. That's just the way it is. How am I to try to stop this world from polluting these lands? How can I stop two more degrees? Two more degrees and there's going to be no more salmon, the creeks will be too hot and they'll all die. That is going to happen. They say that all the mammals will die in 70-something years. It's true. The 1% own this world, and all they want to do is get richer. And they don't care about anything other than their own rich. And they'll kill everything, at any price, and the price of this is this planet. I'm watching it die, right now. It is one of the most sorrowful things to wake up to. Global warming, the greenhouse effect, the ozone, the contamination of rivers, the contamination of oil spills. That's what I have to bear as a person.

And that's why I make art—because I want people to feel these words that I have spoken today. And they're going to hate me for it. But I don't care because they already hate me. They already hate Indians. What's the difference? So even these words in this country, they still believe in their romantic colonial dream, and all it is is just killing the planet. There is no utopia, this colonial utopia is killing the planet. The 1% rule, they'll kill it all before anything, they'll never give up. Globalization is permanently on its path to destruction. You can't stop it. I can't stop it. You keep talking about it, but I've not seen one of any salvation whatsoever that has done anything to stop global warming. I've seen it, and it's just getting hotter and hotter and hotter. That's my experience as a person at this time in history.

We used to carve poles, dance rituals. The Nishga, they burnt all their masks, the priests came in and Christianized them. [They] listened to those priests, burning all their masks and throwing everything away to become Christians so they're no longer heathens. What good did it do them? Nothing. They're still there, cutting down their trees and destroying their land. Like everybody else. So that's the time that I watch, the same as Haida Gwaii, they burnt their masks and threw everything down and thought that that was the good thing that was going to happen and that things would get better. Well, they didn't. They got worse, and worse, and worse. There's so little salmon now that the killer whales are dying. We keep going this way and we're going to have zero killer whales. Our spirit animals that swam on this earth for us. I am not seeing the end of them but I know the end is coming.

It's sad that their greed has to take precedence, that it's their right, that they have the RCMP, the Canadian police, CSIS Canada, the Canadian army—and they're going to kill all the fish. They're not going to do anything. And they're going to starve, just like the buffalo—kill the buffalo, starve the Indian. Here it's just “kill all the fish, oppress the Native people, and not give them any rights, take away their rights, let them sit there on their reservations and watch us.” Just watch me. It's their right, they're colonialists, it's their right to exterminate things, it's their power, it's their justification of having their hands around my neck. It's white supremacy. It's their guns pointed in my face. And if I say anything against it, that I don't want you to exterminate the whale. What has he ever done to you? That spirit was with us since time immemorial—and all you want to do is just kill them. What does that

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feel like, watching that for 50 years of my life, watching them slowly, slowly dwindle? These are things that happened. Watching this country exterminate the grizzly bear, and he's only left in this province, and they want it all. So this is what it's really like, as a person gazing upon my homeland.

This is my motherland, this is not your homeland, your motherland. It's your Canadian flag, it's your Canada, but it's not your motherland. Your motherland is somewhere else. England, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Scotland, Japan, China, India—those are your motherlands. You were always guests, it was never yours. We were the caretakers of this land—and all they wanted to do was destroy it, kill it. That's all they're doing because they don't care. They don't love this land. I love my homeland. I love my motherland. Canadians don't, because some of them were never born here, and the ones who were born here were taught by people that don't care about this and that don't see it as their motherland. They don't understand, their ideology is only as colonialists. So it's quite difficult to ask this world to be kind. I know that it's going to happen and it's going to be very sorrowful for us when you've done that.

We will never forgive you. I'll never forgive you for all the kids you killed, because all their parents, their mothers and fathers, they went to their graves not knowing where their child is. You murdered them, and I have to grieve for them, because we're just finding them now. Sorrow. Because they did that to our people, and I hope they're happy, I hope you colonialists are really fucking happy now. I don't know what will make you happy, I don't know how many more people you have to kill to quench your thirst for death—to kill us in this country. Stop murdering our women, stop missing and murdered boys. We've had enough. We don't need it anymore. I don't need your hate. I don't want your hate. That's all I have to say.

## Biography

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun graduated from the Emily Carr School of Art and Design in 1983 with an honours degree in painting. Yuxweluptun's strategy is to document and promote change in contemporary Indigenous history in large-scale paintings (from 54.2 x 34.7cm to 233.7 x 200.7cm), using Coast Salish cosmology, Northwest Coast formal design elements, and the Western landscape tradition. His painted works explore political, environmental, and cultural issues. His personal and socio-political experiences enhance this practice of documentation. Yuxweluptun's work has been included in numerous international group and solo exhibitions, such as INDIGENA: Contemporary Native Perspectives in 1992. He was the recipient of the Vancouver Institute for the Visual Arts (VIVA) award in 1998.

## Notes

This transcript has been lightly edited by Deborah Root for length.