



Current realities  
of Indigenous art

## Description

# The 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the First People's Festival plays its score in tune with the harmony between peoples

At a press conference on July 24th, at the Grande Bibliothèque, Artistic Director **André Dudemaine** unveiled the programming for the 28th festival edition. “**The First People's Festival** is the quiet and unstoppable force behind emerging voices that will never be confined to silence again – let it be said! After being put away into ancient archives too soon, Indigenous cultures are now being reformulated in hybrid forms with contributions from various spheres, and are making dazzling artistic advances’.

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Like every year, The First People's Festival starts its activities at The Guild with the opening of the exhibition devoted to **Sonny Assu** (Li?wilda'xw from the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations) hailing from British Columbia. On their end, the *Ashukan Cultural Space*, in partnership with the Festival, also presents an exhibition starting on August 8<sup>th</sup> about **Nico Williams**, an Anishinaabe artist who creates contemporary geometric sculptures with beadwork

The Festival's inaugural evening will be held on Tuesday, August 7th at 7p.m., in the auditorium at the Grande Bibliothèque, with the screening of short films as a scoop, through which the audience will discover the best of emerging Aboriginal filmmaking, in a 5 -minute anthology: *Rae* by **Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs** – Canada 2017; *Shaman* by **Echo Henoche**; *Kirano (Ourselves)* by the **Comité Empreintes** – Canada 2017; *Never Stop Riding* by **Peter Mungkuri, Alec Baker, Jimmy Pompey** – Australia 2017; *Survivre au temps* by **Eden Mallina Awashish** – Canada 2017; *Mud* by **Shaandiin Tome** – United States 2018; *Thunderbird Strike* by **Elizabeth LaPensee** – United States 2017; and *Troubles* by **Erik Papatie**– Canada 2017.

The film programming presented at Concordia University will offer feature-length documentary films, and fiction that are milestones in the life and issues of First Nations. Some characters are colorful and show unique life itineraries:



Mohawk Dirt McComber in the eponym film by **Ryan White** and **Joanne Storkan** (*Dirt McComber, Last of Mohicans* USA 2018) or the young Lakota of *On a Knife Edge* by **Jeremy Williams** (USA 2017). Also note: *When They Awake* by **P.J Marcellino** and **Hermon Farahi** (Canada 2017), *Sweet Country* by **Warwick Thornton** (Australia 2017), *Nada queda sino nuestra ternura* by **Sébastien Jallade** (Peru 2017), *Wiñaypacha* by **Oscar Catacora** (Peru 2017), *Ukamau y ké* **Andrés Ramírez** (Ecuador 2017), *Joey and the Leitis* by **Hina Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer** and **Joe Wilson** (Tonga 2018), *Ara Pyau – The Guarani Spring* by **Carlos Eduardo Magalhães** (Brazil 2018), *The Selva Negra* of **Saul Kak** and **Charles Fairbanks** (Mexico – United States 2016) or *Ex-Pajé* (Ex-Shaman) of **Luiz Bolognesi** (Brazil 2018).

Major events await the public on the Place des Festivals, where The First People's Festival begins its outdoor activities on August 8th with the **Don Amero** concert at 8:30 p.m., on the Quebecor stage. This will be followed by the screening of the film *When They Awake* at 9:15 pm. This documentary presents a generation of Aboriginal musicians engaged in cultural and political resurgence.

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On Thursday, August 9th, at 8:30 pm, a concert by **The Jerry Cans** with music inspired by their hometown, Iqaluit (Nunavut), located in the Canadian Arctic. With a unique blend of Inuit traditional songs and Inuktitut rock, The Jerry Cans brings a distinct Nordic sound. The opening act will be by Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards winner, singer-songwriter **Beatrice Deer**, from Nunavik.

On the *Place du Makusham* (aka *Place des Festivals*), a theatrical performance: *Ioskeha and Tawiscara: The Great Game of Creation* will unfold Friday, August 10th and Sunday, August 12th at 8:30 pm. This is an interactive theatre act, a dive into the cosmovision of Indigenous people from here, with the **Northern Voice's** drums from Wemotaci. It is an act of ritual and processional theater in which two great heroes, the Enemy Twins from the stories in the Indigenous tradition, twin enemies who preside in their titanic clash at the creation of the world, reappear in the heart of Montreal. The choreographer and stage director **Pierre-Paul Savoie** and the puppeteer **Jocelyn Sioui** direct this production whose scenography and staging are renewed in 2018.

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On Saturday, August 11th at 9 p.m., still on the Quebecor stage, *Nikamotan Mtl* concert, second edition of the **Nomadic Music** show, in collaboration with the First People's Festival. This year, the show takes on Hip-Hop, Electro sounds and styles, with the cream of the crop of Indigenous and Indie music. On stage there will be: **Iskwe, Chances** group, **Anachnid, Annie Sama, Wolf Castle, Violent Ground** and **Sacred Wolf Singers**.

Dedicated to hospitality and friendship, a true celebration of contemporary Montreal with more than 1,200 artists from diverse cultural communities is back for the seventh year: the *NuestroAmericana Parade of Friendship with Montreal and the First Nations*, is held under the emblematic figure of Atahensic, the woman who has fallen from the sky; the grandmother of humanity.



From August 8th to 12th, the Place des Festivals is transfigured by a **Studio 703** scenography, imbued with the First People's cosmivision, inspired by contemporary Aboriginal artists who translate in their own way the territory's rich spiritual and artistic heritage. A visual and luminous decor has been specially designed for The First People's Festival, including a multimedia creation by **Caroline Monnet** and **Sébastien Aubin** of the *AM Collective*.

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The large central tipi evokes the vertical axis that unites the sky, the earth and the underwater world. At the top, a flock of geese is reminiscent of the birds that brought Atahensic, the sky woman, to the first day of the world. At ground level the turtle represents the marine world and its shell, the earth crust it carries on its back.

The Longhouse is a traditional Iroquois architecture, so it is very typical of Montreal. Tipis are a form of textile architecture that evokes the meadows and taiga. The deer in the fountains refer to the animal world and the nourishing forest; the streams of water represent the soul that gives life to creation.

A food kiosk will allow festival-goers to enjoy first-class cuisine inspired by First Nations traditions at a competitive price. Craftsmen will be on site to offer their handmade products.

These types of interactive activities in the public space, elaborate a liturgy for the present times, through the parade, the scenography of the Makusham Square and the ritual theatre, thus connecting the city with its deepest identity. This identity is now reappearing in new forms, thanks to the collaboration of artists of all origins who share in the sources and renewal of Aboriginal culture. The festivities thus touch on our strong collective wish to live.

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The 28th First People's Festival will close on August 15th at 7 p.m. at the Grande Bibliothèque, with the screening of *The Circle of Nations 2: Women*. This collective feature film by RICAA focuses on the theme of women from here and elsewhere and proposes contemporary perspectives on the issues of identity, territory and femininity brought by Aboriginal filmmakers from Canada, Bolivia and Chile, Panama and Peru. It is a Wapikoni Mobile and RICAA production, in collaboration with OXFAM-Quebec, McGill University, Escuela de Cine and Comunicación Mapuce del Ayja Rewe Budi, CIASE.

Also note that well-known Aboriginal film personalities will be in town to give the APTN Master Classes at the *Ashukan Cultural Space*. **Daniel Brière**: producing an Aboriginal film with special effects (Tuesday, August 14 at 10 am), **Kim O'bomsawin**: on the production and scripting of documentary films (Tuesday, August 14 at 2:30 pm), **Brittany LeBorgne**: on acting in television and cinema (Wednesday, August 15 at 10 am) and **Wahiakeron Gilbert**: on Indigenous actors and languages ??in cinema (Wednesday, August 15 at 2:30 pm). An academic conference, *Indigenous perspectives on the Americas*, and a roundtable, *Indigenous women: which cinema?* will also be in the programming.

The First People's Festival faithfully mirrors the current realities of Indigenous art. It is a space where we can plunge into this multidisciplinary and polymorphous effervescence where everyone is welcome.



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*The First People's Festival highlights American aboriginal art, history and traditions. The richness and vitality of traditional and contemporary aboriginal cultures take centre stage, encouraging a spirit of awakening. Come discover the vivid culture of our continent's first inhabitants.*



## Category

1. Art | Culture
2. Cinema
3. Event | Activity

## Tags

1. André Dudemaine
2. First People's Festival
3. Quartier des spectacles

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