



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(February 22, 2014) The Art Gallery of Algoma is pleased to present the Exhibition of Cheryl L'Hirondelle, *Why the Caged Bird Sings: Here I Am*. This exhibition marks the beginning of an exciting partnership between the Art Gallery of Algoma and the Shingwauk Residential School Centre. Given the Art Gallery of Algoma's location and its responsibility to its community to offer inclusive exhibition programming, the AGA is very honoured to have made this connection with the Centre. The Gallery looks forward to offering future exhibitions that are respectful of the Healing and Reconciliation through Education programming objectives.

For more information, please visit www.artgalleryofalgoma.com or contact Jasmina Jovanovic, Director, at 705-949-9067 x 101

This exhibition is made possible through the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre's Healing and Reconciliation through Education programming, generously funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. This is the first formal partnership between the Centre and the Art Gallery of Algoma.

The Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre is a cross-cultural research and educational development project of Algoma University, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, and the National Residential School Survivor Society. Shortly after the closure in 1970 of the Shingwauk Indian Residential School, and in the early years of Algoma University College's relocation to the present site, Residential School Survivors connected to the Shingwauk School, their families and communities, and their allies were catalysts in the growing Healing Movement, culminating in the introduction of the original Shingwauk Project in 1979 and the 1981 Shingwauk Reunion. From these watershed events began the decades-long work of collecting, organizing and displaying photographs and other Residential School materials, conducting research, and educating the public that led to the establishment of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association and the Shingwauk Project, now known as the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, respectively.

For more information, please visit www.shingwauk.org or contact Jonathan Dewar, Director, or Krista McCracken, Research & Curator at 705-949-2301 x 4623

Cheryl L'Hirondelle

According to many dictionaries the swallow (aka l'hirondelle) is a "migratory swift-flying songbird." This describes Cheryl L'Hirondelle accurately – though for this award-

winning singer/songwriter and multidisciplinary artist the definition should end with “and so much more.” An Alberta born mixed-blood, multi and interdisciplinary artist, singer/songwriter and curator, her creative practice is an investigation of the junction of a Cree worldview (nêhiyawin) in contemporary time-space.

Since the early 80’s, L’Hirondelle has created, performed and presented work in a variety of artistic disciplines, including: music, performance art, theatre, performance poetry, storytelling, installation and new media. In the early 90’s, she began a parallel career as an arts consultant/advisor and programmer, cultural strategist/activist, and director/producer of both independent works and projects within national artist-run networks. L’Hirondelle’s various activities have also found her working in the Canadian independent music industry, as well as various educational institutions, the prison system, First Nations bands, tribal councils and governmental funding agencies, at both the provincial and federal levels.

L’Hirondelle’s performance work is featured in *Caught in the Act: An Anthology of Performance Art by Canadian Women* (2001), written by the late Âhâsiw Maskêgon Iskwêw, and edited by Tanya Mars and Johanna Householder. L’Hirondelle’s 2001 performative activity and corresponding website *cistêmaw îyîniw ohci* (for the tobacco being) are also discussed in Candice Hopkins’ book, *Making a Noise: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community* (2006). In 2004, L’Hirondelle and Hopkins were the first Aboriginal artists from Canada to be invited to present work at DAK’ART Lab, as part of the 6th Edition of the Dakar Biennale for Contemporary African Art, Dakar, Senegal.

In both 2005 and 2006, L’Hirondelle was the recipient of the imagineNATIVE New Media Award for her online net.art projects: *treatycard*, *17:TELL* and *wêpinâsowina*. L’Hirondelle’s previous musical efforts have also garnered her critical acclaim with two Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards in 2006 and 2007 for her contributions to Vancouver based Aboriginal Women’s Ensemble M’Girl. Her own first attempt in producing (and as one half of) the singing/songwriting duo *Nikamok* was recognized with a nomination from the Prairie Music Awards (now the Western Canadian Music Awards) and many of her songs have been licensed for television, documentary and feature films. In 2011, Cheryl was also nominated for a KM Hunter Award in Music.

Ever the visionary, she continues to come up with new ways music and her other artistic ideas can converge and in 2009 was recognized as an Honoree in the Net.Art category from the Webby Awards for *nikamon ohci askiy* (songs because of the land). Her last EP *Giveaway* featured 5 songs from her *nikamon ohci askiy* -vancouver songlines project and several of the songs from that EP have made their way into several Canadian independent shorts and a full feature *Every Emotion Costs* (Darlene Naponse, director). She is currently working on two major projects: *Why The Caged Bird Sings*, a co-songwriting and recording project with incarcerated women in correctional facilities all across Canada, and *SingLand/SongMark*, an international interdisciplinary sonic mapping project.

From 2009 to 2011, imagineNATIVE Film + Media Festival invited L’Hirondelle to curate their first three new media exhibitions: *Codetalkers of the Digital Divide* (or why we didn’t become “roadkill on the information superhighway”), *RE:counting coup* and

S-O-S3 (signals of survival). She has also been involved in a variety of media arts initiatives including: Smartlab Associate Researcher, 2005-07; Banff New Media Institute Advisory Committee, 2006; Canada Council Media Arts Advisory Committee, 1997-2001; KIDS FROM KANATA On-line Aboriginal Liaison (with Buffy Sainte Marie), 1995-96; and Drum Beats to Drum Bytes Thinktank, 1994.

Cheryl is currently a member of the OCAD University Indigenous Education Council (Toronto) where she has also taught in the University's Integrated Media Department.

www.cheryllhirondelle.com