

THE HERD
ENRICHMENT GUIDE



By Kenneth T. Williams
Directed by Tara Beagan

Produced in association with Tarragon Theatre and National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre

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THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Going to the theatre is an engaging and interactive experience. We want you to be an active participant when you see our shows; laugh when it's funny, cry when it's sad, gasp when it's shocking, and enjoy the experience as much as possible. But we want you to do this in the most respectful way possible, for both the performers and your fellow audience members. To ensure the most positive experience, please review the following information prior to arriving.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE THEATRE:

- No outside food or beverages. Only beverages purchased in the lobby and placed in a Citadel Sippy and bottled water will be allowed in the theatre. Unwrapped ice cream bars may be taken into the theatre. Please enjoy all other snacks in the lobby.
- Cameras and other recording devices (please note that taking photographs or other recordings in the theatre is strictly prohibited by law).

BASIC COURTESY:

- Please turn OFF and put away all electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, video game systems, etc. prior to entering the theatre.
- Do not place your feet on the seat in front of you.
- The actors onstage can see and hear the audience during the performance – it is important that audience members not talk, move around, or fidget during the performance, as this can be distracting for the actors, as well as fellow audience members.
- There is no dress code at the Citadel Theatre, but we respectfully request that patrons refrain from wearing hats in the theatre.
- For the safety of those with allergies, please refrain from using perfumes or scented products before coming to the theatre.
- Please do not place backpacks or other bags in the aisle in front of your feet, as this may impair the ability of persons to exit the row in an emergency.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR:

Citadel Theatre representatives watch carefully during performances for inappropriate behaviour, especially behaviour that could endanger an actor or audience member. Inappropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Talking in the audience
- The use of laser pointers or other light or sound-emitting devices
- Interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.)

Audience members identified as engaging in this type of behaviour will be removed from the theatre during the performance or at intermission.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

CAST

TAI AMY GRAUMAN

Vanessa Brokenhorn

TODD HOUSEMAN

Coyote Jackson

CHEYENNE SCOTT

Aislinn Kennedy

SHYANNE DUQUETTE

Sheila Kennedy/Apprentice Director

DYLAN THOMAS-BOUCHIER

Michael "Baby Pete" Brokenhorn

CREATIVE TEAM

TARA BEAGAN

Director

KENNETH T. WILLIAMS

Playwright

ANDY MORO

Set & Video Designer

SAMANTHA MCCUE

Costume Designer

SPIKE LYNE

Lighting Designer

MICHELLE CUTTLER

Sound Designer

ALISON MATTHEWS

Dialect Coach

HAILEY VERBONAC

Assistant Light & Video Designer

SANG SANG LEE

Stage Manager

YVETTE MARTENS

Assistant Stage Manager

CAITLAN ARGUETA

Production Assistant

SARON BERAKE

Production Assistant

MEG WALKER

Production Assistant

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Tai Amy Grauman - Vanessa Brokenhorn

Tai Amy Grauman is Metis, Cree and Haudenosaunee from Ardrossan, Alberta. Tai is an artistic associate at Savage Society and an associate artist at the Citadel Theatre and currently pursuing her MFA in theatre practice at the U of A. Tai is currently writing commissions for Nightswimming, Axis theatre and the Arts Club. Selected Acting Credits include: *Honour Beat* (Grand Theatre); *Thanks For Giving* (Arts Club); *You used to call me Marie...* (Savage Productions Society).

Todd Houseman - Coyote Jackson

Todd Houseman is a Nehiyo (Cree) mixed-blood actor, improviser, and writer from Edmonton (Amiskwaci) and a recent graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada. Since 2009 Todd has been a senior performer and instructor with Rapid Fire Theatre. He is the co-creator of the critically acclaimed play *Whiteface* (with Lady Vanessa Cardona) and the creator of the play *The Children of the Bear*, which was commissioned by Toronto's Outside the March. At the 2020 Rosie Awards, Todd received the award for Best Albertan Actor. Last season at the Citadel, Todd was honored to play the role of Charlie in *Mary's Wedding* and is excited to return for *The Herd*.

Cheyenne Scott - Aislinn Kennedy

Cheyenne Scott is Straits Salish of the Saanich Nation/Norwegian settler descent and an actor, playwright, and emerging creative producer with a focus on new works. She is working to Indigenize her process through personal expression, land-based methodology, and storytelling. She is a Dora Mavor Moore nominated artist for co-creating *Now You See Her* (Quote Unquote Collective/Nightwood/Why Not Theatre) which was published by Coach House. Select Acting Credits: *Children of God* (Urban Ink/NAC, Citadel/WCT, Segal Centre); *Home Project* (Soulpepper/Howland/Native Earth); *Joyride* (Caravan Farm Theatre); *The Drowning Girls* (WCT); *Squawk, Sidewalk Chalk* (Geordie Productions).

Shyanne Duquette – Sheila Kennedy/ Apprentice Director

Shyanne (she/they) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton). They are a recent graduate of the University of Alberta with a background in arts administration, marketing, and producing. Recently they've begun the development of their first play *Omisimawiw* under the guidance of both Tarragon Theatre's YPU and Nextfest 2022.

Dylan Thomas-Bouchier - Michael "Baby Pete" Brokenhorn

Dylan Thomas-Bouchier is a Cree and Dene dis-arts storyteller. Born and raised in Fort McMurray and the Fort McKay First Nation (Treaty 8), He graduated from The National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) acting program. He is so happy to be sharing the story of *The Herd* alongside all the other amazing artists with all of you. Previous credits include *Indecent* (NTS); *Comedy of Errors* (Theatre Calgary) *A Christmas Carol* (Keyano Theatre); *Everybody* (NTS)

Kenneth T. Williams – Playwright

Kenneth T. Williams is a Cree playwright from the George Gordon First Nation in the Treaty 4 territory. He's the first Indigenous person to earn an MFA in Playwriting and become an assistant professor at the University of Alberta's Department of Drama. Previous productions include *In Care* (Gordon Tootoosis Nīkānīwin Theatre); *Café Daughter* (Gwaandak Theatre); *Gordon Winter* (Persephone); *Thunderstick* (Persephone/Theatre Network); *Bannock Republic* (GTNT/Persephone); and *Three Little Birds* (Workshop West Playwrights Theatre). He lives in Edmonton with his partner, Dr. Melissa Stoops, and their cats, Augustus and Drusilla.

Tara Beagan – Director

Tara Beagan is a proud Ntlaka'pamux and Irish "Canadian" halfbreed. She is cofounder/director of *ARTICLE 11* with Andy Moro, based in Mohkinstsis. Beagan served as Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts from February 2011 to December 2013. She's been writer-in-rez at Cahoots Theatre, NEPA, the National Arts Centre, Berton House and during pandemic times at Prairie Theatre Exchange. Seven of her 32 plays are published. Beagan was awarded the 2020 Siminovitch Prize for theatre, playwriting, becoming the first Indigenous laureate.

Andy Moro - Set and Video Designer

Andy Moro is a mixed-blood multi-disciplinary artist. His practice began in studio visual arts, foundry-based sculpture, blown glass, large-scale public installation and pyrotechnics. He has worked in automobile assembly, production film graphics and animation, typography and print design, darkroom and digital photography, 3D display technology, construction and installation, set construction, projection, set, lighting, sound and property design. Presently Moro co-directs the Indigenous Activism Arts organization ARTICLE 11 with partner Tara Beagan. ARTICLE 11 recently premiered Beagan's *Deer Woman* designed and directed by Andy Moro at the Kia Mau Festival in Wellington, Aotearoa (NZ.) the Sydney Festival followed by a month-long run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival's Indigenous Contemporary Scene/Selfconscious Productions' Canada Hub followed by a run at the prestigious Arts Centre Melbourne.

Samantha McCue - Costume Designer

Samantha McCue (she/her) is Anishinaabekwe from the Chippewas of Georgina Island and Ned'u'ten from Lake Babine First Nation. She grew up on the Musqueam Reserve in Vancouver, BC, and currently lives in Ottawa. Samantha graduated from York University's Theatre Production program in 2017. Selected design credits include: *I Am William* (Stratford Festival); *Honour Beat* (The Grand); *Aqsarniit* (Confederation Centre of the Arts); *Kamloopa* (Western Canada Theatre); *The Monument* (Factory Theatre); *Thanks For Giving* (Arts Club Theatre Company).

Spike Lyne - Lighting Designer

Spike is Metis and a member of the Metis Nation of Ontario and is currently Technical Director for the Indigenous Theatre Department at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Previous selected design credits include *Triplex Nervosa*, *Motherhouse*, *God of Carnage* and *With Bated Breath* (Centaur Theatre); *Secret Annex*, *Forever Plaid*, *Educating Rita* and *My Old Lady* (Segal Centre

Theatre); *Behaviour* and *Daisy* (GCTC in Ottawa). He was also Production Manager and Lighting designer for Comedian Russell Peters. This is his first design at the Citadel. Miigwetch.

Mishelle Cuttler - Sound Designer

Mishelle is a composer, sound designer, and musician based in Vancouver. Past projects at the Citadel: *The Candidate*, *The Party*, and *Sweat*. Other favourites include: *Made in Canada* (rice & beans), *The Quarantettes* (Newworld/The Chop), *Shakespeare in Love*, *Lysistrata*, *Done/Undone* (Bard on the Beach); *The Matchmaker* (Arts Club); *Break Horizons: a concert documentary* (The Cultch); and *Titus Bouffonius* (Rumble). Next up: *Clean* (Newworld); and *The Seventh Fire* (Delinquent). Mishelle is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and of UBC Theatre. She is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.

Alison Matthews – Dialect Coach

Alison Matthews is a voice & text coach, actor, voice artist. She is also Head of Coaching for Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, and the voice instructor for the newly launched Realwheels Theatre Acting Academy in Vancouver. She teaches voice in the drama department at the University of Alberta. Previous coaching credits include *Noises Off* (Arts Club); *Coriolanus*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Shakespeare in Love* (Bard on the Beach); *Arcadia*, *West Side Story*, *Sense & Sensibility*, *Garneau Block* (Citadel).

Hailey Verbonac - Assistant Light and Video Designer

Hailey is a Métis lighting and video designer from Inuvik, NT. He is a recent graduate from the National Theatre School of Canada, and has also worked as a videographer, editor, and illustrative artist. Previous Credits Include: *Lovesong for the Thunderbirds* (The Grand); *Thesis Project* (York University); *Hush* (Workshop at the NTS); *Indecent* (NTS).

Sang Sang Lee - Stage Manager

Sang-Sang is excited to be back! Select Citadel credits include *The Fiancée*, *A Brimful of Asha*, *Tempest*, *Hadestown*, *Redpatch*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *West Side Story*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Spamalot*, and *Private Lives*. Elsewhere, she has worked on Banff Centre's *Opera in the 21st Century program*; *Buddy* (Mayfield); *Fever Land* (Teatro La Quindicina) *Makings of a Voice*, *The Blue Hour* (SkirtsAfire); *Disgraced* (ATP); *Honour Beat* (Theatre Calgary); *Salt Baby* (Globe Theatre); *Songs My Mother Never Sung Me* (Concrete Theatre).

Yvette Martens – Assistant Stage Manager

I'm very grateful to be back in theatre! Previous credits include *Woman Caught Unaware* (Edmonton Fringe), 87 productions over the past 23 years at (Mayfield Dinner Theatre) too many favorites to mention, *Return of the Tenors* (Edmonton Fringe). I'm also honoured to have been nominated twice for a Sterling Award for Individual Achievement in Production. It's a great pleasure to work with such talented cast and production teams!

Caitlan Argueta – Production Assistant

Caitlan is an Edmonton-based Latinx theatre technician, currently working as a Production Assistant with Citadel Theatre. She is a graduate of the Theatre Production Diploma from MacEwan University and has studied at the Banff Centre of Arts and Creativity. Previous credits include: *Guys and Dolls* (MacEwan); *Hamlet*, *Comedy of Errors* (Freewill Shakespeare Festival); *A Charlie Brown Christmas ft. The Jerry Granello Trio*, *Ruben and the Dark* (Banff Centre); *Scenes from a Sidewalk* (Plain Jane Theatre).

Saron Beraki – Production Assistant

Saron Beraki (She/They) is an Eritrean-Canadian theatre technician based in Amiskwacîwâskahikan. Recent work includes: *La Bohème* (Edmonton Opera); *The Fiancée* (Citadel Theatre); *Le Nozze de Figaro* (Edmonton Opera); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Teatro La Quindicina); *Everything's Coming Up Chickens: A Revue* (Plain Jane Theatre). They are super excited to be a part of the team that makes the magic happen.

Meg Walker – Production Assistant

Meg Walker is a graduate of Victoria School of the Arts, where she developed her passion for theatre and directed the one act play *I Am Not Batman* for the Playworks Festival. She recently worked on the set of the feature film *Before I Changed My Mind* as a trainee AD before returning to the theatre as a Production Assistant in the independent, debut production of *Michael Mysterious*. In 2021 she joined the Citadel team for *A Christmas Carol* and continues her role as a Production Assistant into the 2022 season.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

By Kenneth T. Williams

First, I wish to say a massive thank you to all the stage managers I've worked with in the past and will work with in the future. Stage managers never get enough love. This play happened because Richard Rose, then artistic director of Tarragon Theatre, shared a coffee with me in the Kensington Market in Toronto. He said, "Ken, I want you to do an Indigenous version of *An Enemy of the People*." That's how it all started, and many thanks to him and the continuing support from Tarragon for giving me this amazing challenge. Thanks to my long-suffering agent, Charles Northcote, who has stuck with me all these years.

To Daryl Cloran (AD – Citadel Theatre) and Del Surjik (former AD – Persephone Theatre), who said yes, and then had to shuffle and reshuffle their schedules as COVID wracked their seasons. To the audiences, who are energetically (and safely) returning to our spaces to see artists on stage. To Tara Beagan, who bravely picked up the directing mantle at the last minute. A huge thanks to the many actors who read draft after draft and were always generous and insightful. A special thank you to Tantoo Cardinal, who always challenges and encourages me. A great big hug to the late Lee Maracle who told me that I had to write this story. To Melissa, for your love, patience, and humour. Finally, I want to dedicate this play to Kevin Loring (AD – NAC Indigenous Theatre), for his persistence, support, and wisdom. I would not have made it without you, brother. Much love.

CHARACTERS

MICHAEL "BABY PETE" BROKENHORN: Cree/Dakota, 30ish, Chief of Pitokahan Sakahikan (Buffalo Pound Lake First Nation). Vanessa's older brother.

SHEILA KENNEDY: Cree, 50s, is considered an elder. A sculptor who works in clay. Vanessa and Baby Pete's aunt.

AISLINN KENNEDY: 30ish, Irish, a representative of the European Union. Dublin born and raised. Not a country person.

COYOTE JACKSON: looks Indigenous, late/mid 30s. Editor and main writer of Red Warrior Media, a web-based news site.

VANESSA BROKENHORN: Cree/Dakota, 30ish but looks younger. Veterinarian for the Pitokahan Sakahikan's bison herd.

SYNOPSIS

Culture, science and politics collide when twin white bison are born to a First Nation ranch. But is this a miracle in the spiritual life of a Saskatchewan First Nation, or a one in a billion scientific event?

TERMS AT A GLANCE

This section defines and offers context for some of the key terms used throughout this Enrichment Guide. The first time these terms appear in the guide, they have been bolded.

Albinism: A group of genetic conditions marked by little or none of the pigment melanin in the skin, hair, and/or eyes. People or animals with albinism may have vision problems and white or yellow hair; reddish, violet, blue or brown eyes; and pale skin, fur, or coat.

Buffalo Jumps: A buffalo jump is a cliff formation which the Indigenous People of North America historically used to hunt and kill plains bison in mass quantities.

Capitalism: Capitalism was invented by the 18th century philosopher, Adam Smith, who is credited as being the “father of modern economics.” It is an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit rather than by the state.

Commercialization: Commercialization refers to the introduction of a new product or production method into the market for consumption.

Geneticist: A geneticist is a biologist who studies genetics, the science of genes, heredity, and variation of organisms.

Genome: In biology, it is the complete set of genes or genetic material present in a cell or organism.

Globalization: Globalization is the connection of different parts of the world. Globalization results in the expansion of international cultural, economic, and political activities.

Indigenous: Indigenous (Aboriginal) Peoples are the original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada. Inuit and First Nations history extends well before the arrival of Europeans in Canada, while Métis emerged as a distinct culture after intermarriage between European settlers and First Nations people. The first inhabitants in North America are thought to have arrived in Canada anytime between 13,500 and 30,000 years ago.

Industrial Revolution: In modern history, the Industrial Revolution refers to the process of change from an agrarian and handicraft economy to one that is dominated by industry and machine manufacturing. These technological changes introduced novel ways of working and living and fundamentally transformed society.

Patented: A patent is a legal right to an invention or research discovery given to a person or entity without interference from others who wish to replicate, use, or sell it.

Selective Breeding: Selective breeding involves choosing parents with particular characteristics to breed together and produce offspring with more desirable characteristics. Humans have selectively bred plants and animals for thousands of years including: crop plants with better yields.

THEMES

SCIENCE VS. SPIRITUALITY

“Every single white buffalo cannot be the sign of the prophecy.” –Aislinn, *The Herd*

Is the birth of the white twin bison calves the fulfillment of a prophecy, or is it a feat of modern science? This is the primary conflict in the play, *The Herd*, and the question that all of the characters are trying to answer. But to better understand the tension between science and spirituality, it is a good idea to first look at each theme separately.

Themes and characters associated with science began to appear in art as early as the Renaissance and Baroque periods. It became increasingly popular to include characters that were doctors, chemists, and surgeons in literary and theatrical work –and these characters were often used to add realism or credibility to concepts explored in fiction. As science and technological innovation progressed rapidly in the early 19th century and the notion of Enlightenment became more widespread, discussions of mathematics and science became more prevalent too. As a theme, science can represent modernity, innovation, and logic. In fiction, science is also often used to ask questions about morality. Think about *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley, in which Dr. Frankenstein’s monster turns against its creator. This is a classic example of the concept of science being used in art to show us that technological innovation may come at a moral cost – and it asks the reader to consider the ethical implication of humans having too much power over nature. In *The Herd*, Dr. Vanessa Brokenhorn, the veterinarian and animal geneticist, is the character that represents the scientific perspective. She is objective, analytical, and deeply considerate of the moral implications of her scientific work.

Spirituality can be related to religion, but it is something entirely separate. Spirituality has more to do with the belief that there is something greater than “the self,” and that there is something beyond the human sensory experience that is cosmic or divine in nature. As a theme, spirituality has pretty much always been a preoccupation for humans, and appears in many of our earliest records or art and the written word. It also involves the exploration of universal themes like love, compassion, altruism, life after death, wisdom, and truth.

Example of a Medicine Wheel, which is used Indigenous teachings to promote health and to teach interconnectedness.



In *The Herd*, many characters are hoping to find more spirituality in their lives, but few actually do. Vanessa's little brother, "Baby Pete," is the Chief of the Buffalo Pound Lake First Nations, and he is one of the strongest believers in the prophecy of the White Buffalo Calf Woman. He – like many other characters in the story – believe that the birth of twin white bison are a sign that there will be unity and peace between all people, and that prosperity is coming. Though Baby Pete believes in the prophecy, he is often shown looking to others throughout the narrative, suggesting that he is still not secure in his own personal and spiritual beliefs.

Similarly, the character Coyote Jackson is fascinated by spirituality, but he seems to only be interested in it on a surface level. As an internet influencer, he interacts more with the prophecy as a way to further his own career, even if deep down his motivation may be to solidify his own identity.

Sheila Kennedy, Vanessa and Baby Pete's aunt, is probably the most spiritual character in the story, but even she feels a "disconnect" or a "block" that she often refers to. While her community has labeled her as an Elder, she is resistant to fully take on this role. She often communicates with her sister, Siobhan, who has passed away. Though she is hesitant to take on her new role as a leader, Sheila does seem to have access to and knowledge of the spiritual realm in a way that no other character in the play does. After witnessing the miracle of the white bison, she says to her community "Something remarkable has happened here. But now is the time for praying and reflection. I know people are excited but we have to move carefully and with great consideration from now on." This emphasizes that Sheila has the ability to consider the moral and spiritual implications of what is happening in their community, and that she truly believes in a power that is greater than herself, and looks to it for guidance.

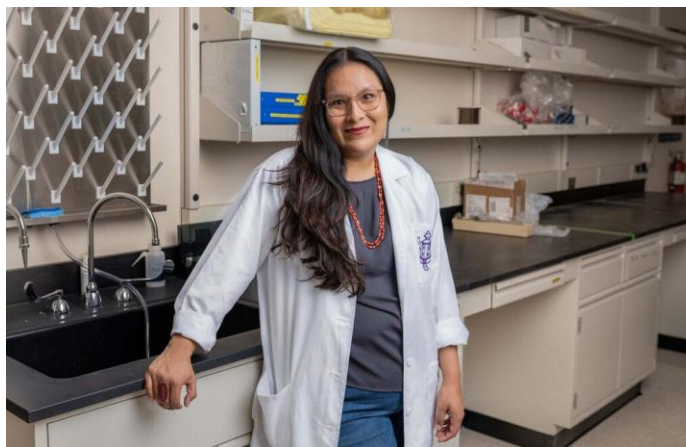
The tensions between science, modernity, social media, and spirituality are what drives the characters in *The Herd*. The narrative shows that just because a character believes in spirituality, it doesn't mean that they live a spiritual life. In fact, Vanessa, the very embodiment of science, may be the character in the end who is most concerned with the spiritual implications of her scientific discovery.

Reflection Question: *Do you think that The Herd separates science and spirituality, or do you think it shows how they can co-exist?*

IDENTITY

“They’re NOT my people.” –Coyote Jackson, The Herd

Identity is one of the most common themes in literature and art, and this is likely because the question “Who am I?” is an existential dilemma that all people have to face as they transition from childhood to adulthood. In *The Herd*, Coyote Jackson is the character who has the least stable sense of self. Many times throughout the play, other characters (but mainly Vanessa), refer to the hoards of followers that Coyote has from his internet platform as “his people,” to which he always replies “they’re NOT my people.” To a viewer this is interesting because we witness Coyote pouring all of his energy into communicating with his followers. So if he doesn’t see this community as his, how does he actually view them, and why are they so important to him?



Meet Krystal Tsosie, a Navajo geneticist and bioethicist at Vanderbilt University. She is the co-founder of the [Native BioData Consortium](#).

Quite early on, we hear voices of internet trolls saying that Coyote is just a white boy from Etobicoke, Ontario, named Colin Jackson, who only has a distant connection to his Indigenous heritage. This conflicts with the radical image of the “Indigenizer of the Internet” that he markets himself as, and creates a lot of tension between him and other characters like Vanessa and Aislinn. This disconnect between how Coyote sees himself and who he actually is starts to weigh on him more and more throughout the narrative, and in the end he asks Vanessa if she can do a DNA test to prove his Indigeneity. To this, Vanessa replies, “Indigenous people aren’t a different species. There’s a point one per cent difference between you and any other person on this planet. The difference between you and a random chimpanzee is less than two per cent. There’s no gene that says ‘Cree’ or ‘Dakota.’” This answer is not what Coyote wants to hear, as he is looking for concrete proof of who he is and where he belongs. Vanessa tells him that science can’t give him a clean-cut answer, and that if he wants to learn anything he should go speak with an Elder, and *really* listen to what they have to say.

Reflection Question: Which themes stood out most to you after watching *The Herd*?

OWNERSHIP

"AISLINN: [Coyote is] trying to take control of the calves.

SHEILA: Everyone is. And yes, before you say it, it worries me. It worries me plenty. You worry me." –The Herd

As a theme, ownership is related to control, autonomy, and power. A main conflict in *The Herd* is who owns the twin white bison who were born on the Buffalo Pound Lake Reservation? Is it the local Indigenous Community who have a spiritual investment in their birth? Is it Dr. Brokenhorn, who made them in a laboratory, and who has sworn to protect the herd? Is it Aislinn and the European Union, who have funded Dr. Brokenhorn's research? Or is it Coyote and the media who want to publicize and commodify this miracle? And can, and *should*, anyone



Cree men sell bison horns as coat racks to train passengers. Medicine Hat, Alberta. Circa 1890. Library and Archives Canada.

have ownership over something natural, like an animal?

These questions are complicated, and the play doesn't give us any straight answers. However, *The Herd* does suggest that the history of colonization is actually where this dilemma of ownership started. The notion of "private property" did not exist in this region prior to the arrival of European colonists, who stole the land that was inhabited by the Indigenous Populations and gave it monetary value. To achieve this, the colonizers tried to eradicate the First Nations People and their cultures, and entered into unjust treaties with them that forced them onto reservations.

At one point in the narrative,

Coyote asks why there is another town on Google Maps called Buffalo Pound Lake, to which Baby Pete replies, "We were supposed to be there when our chief was told to pick a reserve. But the land was 'too good' for Indians so the government shifted us here to be "near our own kind." We kept the name as a reminder of where we're supposed to be."

At the play's climax, we see the destruction that has been caused by outside influences when Vanessa's laboratory burns down. At this point, she is forced to decide whether or not it is ethical for someone to own the white bison genome, and if so, who should it belong to?

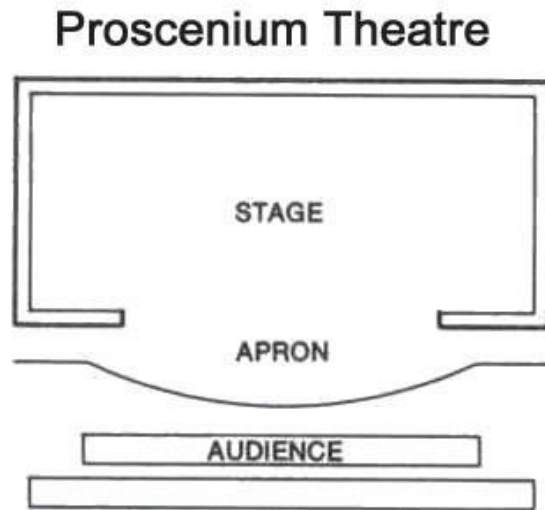
Reflection Questions: *Do you think that the play, The Herd, answers who should have ownership over the white bison? How do you think the playwright, Kenneth T. Williams, complicates the idea of ownership with this story?*

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

PROSCENIUM STAGE

A proscenium theatre is a specific style of theatre. Several features define a proscenium theatre, and this particular theatre layout is extremely common; if you have ever been to see a live performance, especially in a high school auditorium, chances are high that you have seen a proscenium theatre. In addition to proscenium style theatres, it is also possible to find black box theatres, theatres with thrust stages, theatres in the round, and numerous other configurations of stage and audience.

The classically defining feature of a proscenium theatre is the proscenium arch, which frames the stage for the audience. In addition, the audience faces the stage directly, with no audience on the sides of the stage, and the stage in a proscenium theatre is typically raised, allowing the audience to see more clearly. Modern proscenium theatres sometimes lack the proscenium arch, but they are still called “proscenium theatres” because they retain the other characteristics of this style of theatre.



Proscenium theatres originated in the 1600s, and became immensely popular by the 1700s. There are certain advantages of a proscenium theatre, such as the fact that the stage doesn't have to be as open, allowing people to conceal props, sets, and orchestras in the wings or near the stage without having these things visible to the audience. A proscenium theatre also creates a sense of staged grandeur, with the proscenium arch acting almost like a picture frame, giving the audience the sense that they are looking into a scene.

SET DESIGN & VIDEO DESIGN

A deeper look into the work of Set & Video Designer, Andy Moro.

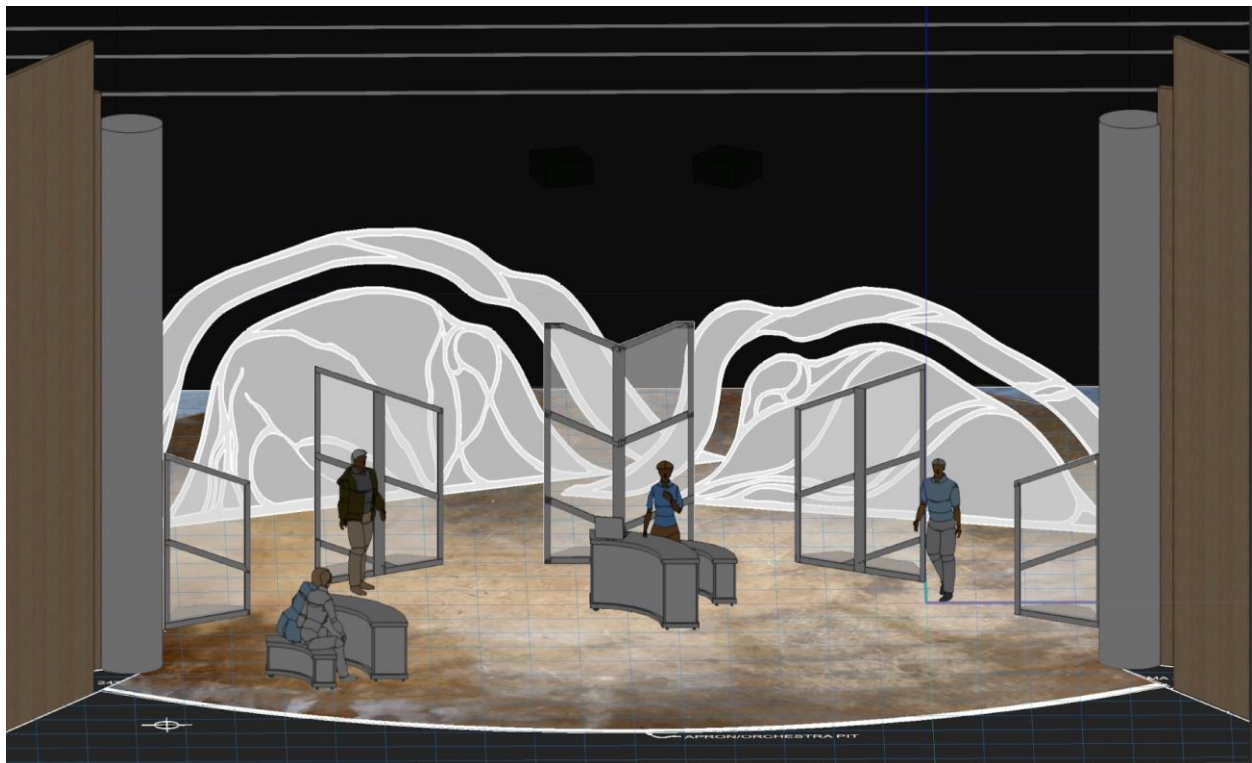
[Andy Moro](#) is a multi-disciplinary designer. His practice began in studio visual arts, foundry-based sculpture, blown glass, large-scale public installation and pyrotechnics. He has worked in automobile assembly, production film graphics and animation, typography and print design, darkroom and digital photography, 3D display technology, construction and installation, set construction, projection, set, lighting, sound, and property design.

As a Set & Video Designer, it is Andy's job to create a design for the show that will best bring the playwright and director's visions to life. While there are often hints in the script about what a set might need, it is usually up to the designer to interpret those clues and create one coherent

vision. Today, most designers use digital software to create 3D renderings of the concepts that they have in mind. Many of them will also often build miniatures of their designs so that the team has a more dynamic reference of their vision.

Since the script of *The Herd* incorporates projection and video clips of Coyote Jackson's social media, video design is also crucial for this production. Video designers (or projection designers) integrate film, motion graphics, and live camera feeds into live performances. While this art-form really started to develop and become popular in the 1990s, many designers experimented with integrating video-production into theatre since the early 20th century. Erwin Piscator, a German stage director at the Berlin Volksbühne in the 1920s, was known for projecting film onto his sets.

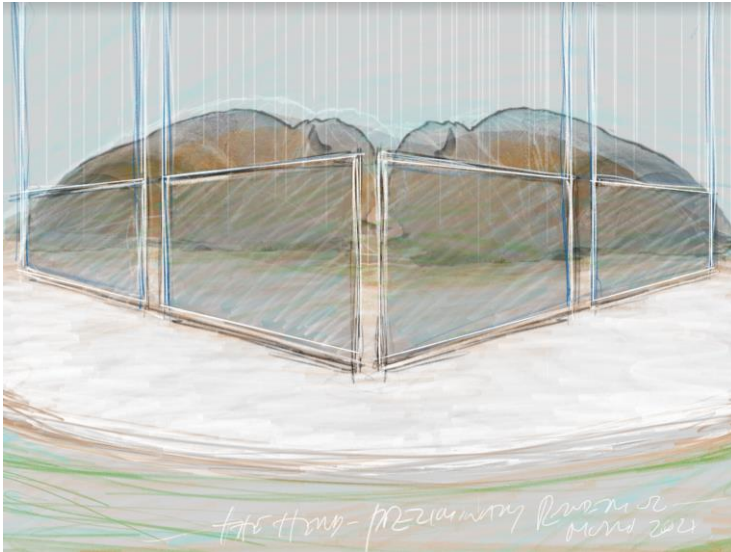
Here is a behind the scenes look at some of Andy Moro's designs for The Herd, by Kenneth T. Williams. All images are used with the artist's permission. All set designs were originally done for the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, Canada.



Storyboard for *The Herd*.

The designer uses the multi-purpose panels between the actors and bison to create new spaces. They function as an abstraction of walls, windows, fences, buildings, etc, and will be rearranged depending on the scene.

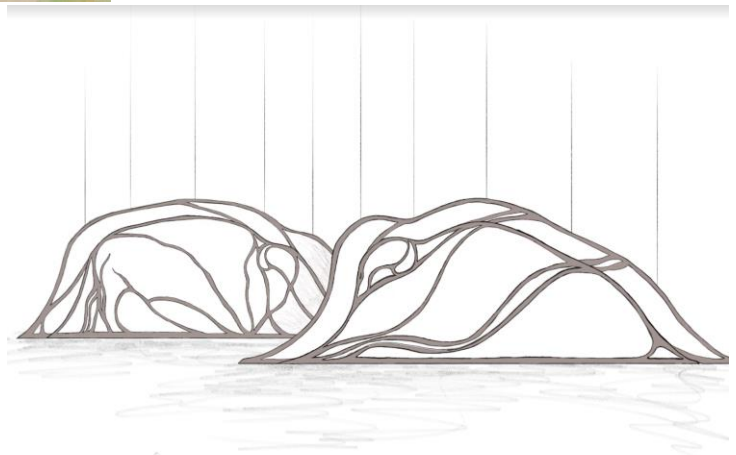
Design by Andy Moro.



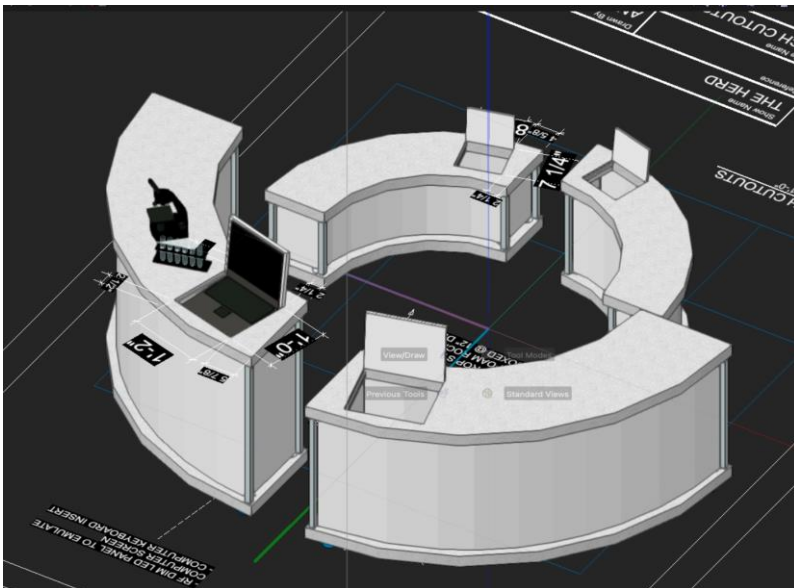
Concept art for the "Twin Bison."
Design by Andy Moro.

These bison are made of frame panels and work like screens that feature video projection. There are also some smaller bison that appear on-stage that are carved by hand and made of wood.

Design by Andy Moro.



Hettling by Ken Williams CIPRA/SPRINGER/ALICE PREVIEW BISON SCREENS MEMO 2/21



"Vanessa's Laboratory," that features computer screens.
Design by Andy Moro.

HISTORY & CONTEXT

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WHITE BISON

The legend of the White Buffalo Calf Woman has been told many times across North American Indigenous Cultures for the past two thousand years. Although there are different versions of this legend, they all tell a similar story. The People of the Plains in the Lakota Nation (in the South Dakota Region) suffered from starvation and disease, so they sent two scouts to search for food. The scouts saw a figure in the distance, and as it approached they realized that it was a beautiful woman dressed in all white. They brought her to their camp, and she gifted their people with a sacred pipe that showed how all things were connected. She spoke of the Seven Sacred Rites, and then said that one day she would return. The maiden turned into a black bison, then a red-brown bison, then a yellow bison, and finally into a white bison. The white bison disappeared into the clouds, and soon after, boundless herds of bison appeared outside their camp—ending the famine and leading the Lakota Nation into a new age of prosperity.

This legend teaches that the food and materials that bison provide are essential and sacred. Indigenous Peoples have always had a deep respect for the natural world around



*The White Buffalo Calf Woman.
From the Zoological Society of
Manitoba.*



*Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in southern Alberta.
UNESCO World Heritage Site.
Photo Credit: Tyler Dixon.*

them, and an understanding of the wildlife in the regions that they inhabit. When hunting bison they would often stampede them over a cliff, which were called **Buffalo Jumps**. Every part of the bison was used, which provided their communities with a primary food source as well as materials for clothing, shelter, and tools. Many Elders also interpret the legend of the White Buffalo Calf Woman as a call to respect the women in their communities, and as a reminder to look to them for wisdom and guidance.

Today, the rare birth of a white bison is still considered to be culturally and spiritually significant for Indigenous Peoples. Shannon Kraichy, an education co-ordinator at the Assiniboine Park Zoo who is Métis-

Anishinaabe, explains how her elders have taught her the sacred significance of the white bison. “It connects our prayers and our thoughts to the creator and it brings us together as a

community,” she said. The Assiniboine Park Zoo has been a home to the white bison, Blizzard, since he arrived on March 6, 2006 in a snowstorm. Blizzard was born in June of 2005 in a large herd of Plains Bison from Custer State Park, South Dakota. Upon Blizzard’s arrival to the zoo, First Nations Elders from the area came forward to explain the spiritual significance of this event, and to ensure that proper protocol would be followed to show respect to this sacred animal. A few Elders held a welcoming ceremony for Blizzard where they smudged him with sweet grass and sang prayers to the beat of a drum. Dr. Robert E. Wrigley, who was the zoo’s curator at the time, described how the calf “stood reverently for the entire performance, as if he knew that he was being honored.”

Hundreds of visitors come every year to pay Blizzard their respects. The zoo now has an offering bowl near the bison enclosure, where visitors can leave spiritual offerings like tobacco, sweet grass, sage and cedar. The sign by the bowl reads, “An offering is a respectful way of asking for assistance and is open to anyone. An offering must be made with good energy and good intentions.” When asked why so many people come to visit Blizzard, Shannon Kraichy explained that, “They just have such a connection to him and because he is sacred and he is ceremonial. I know that it is a very personal, spiritual thing between [the people and the bison.]”

While Blizzard isn’t the only white bison that has been born in North America over the past 200 years, he is one of very few. In the play, *The Herd*, the characters often refer to the birth of the white bison as a prophecy. This is because many Indigenous Communities believe that one day the White Buffalo Calf Woman will return to them in the form of a white bison, and that she will bring unity to all people.

“The arrival of the white buffalo is like the second coming of Christ. It will bring about purity of mind, body, and spirit and unify all nations – black, red, yellow, and white.” -Floyd Hand Looks For Buffalo, an Oglala Medicine Man from Pine Ridge, South Dakota.



Blizzard, the White Bison.
Photo Credit: Assiniboine Park Zoo.

THE SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE OF WHITE BISON

Albinism is the cause of a white animal being born in many species, and sometimes this is the case for bison. The chance of an animal being born with albinism is anywhere from 1 in 20,000 to 1 in 1 million. These bison will remain white throughout their entire lives, and may have hearing or vision problems. However, in bison there is another recessive gene from a distant ancestor that causes their fur to turn snow-white, but in this case as they continue to mature they will likely turn brown within a couple of years. This gene is so rare that the chances of it being passed down are 1 in every 10 million births. The final way that a bison could be born with white fur is if it is a beefalo (or a bison and cattle crossbreed), as Dr. Brokenhorn mentions in the play. In this case the animal would have inherited their white color from their cattle ancestry.



Summer Internship for Indigenous Peoples in Genomics Program. Seattle, July 2018. [CBC News](#).

When a white bison is born, an animal **geneticist** (like Dr. Vanessa Brokenhorn in *The Herd*) might test the animal's **genome** to see if the cause is albinism, cattle ancestry, or the rare recessive gene. Vanessa's discovery is so scientifically significant because she may have found the genome for this recessive gene, and if the twin bison's fur stays white throughout their entire lives, this would be an extremely rare occurrence.

The decimation of the bison population across North

America in the 19th century was initially thought to have eradicated this rare occurrence, but luckily there are still white bison that have been born over the last century who have this recessive gene.

Take a look at this passage from the Assiniboine Park Zoo's website to understand the drastic decline in the bison population over the past 200 years:

"As many as 40 million bison once ranged throughout much of North America. By the late 19th century, following the arrival of colonial Europeans, bison populations were driven nearly to extinction. Overhunting of bison went beyond the economic considerations of the fur trade with federal officials actually advocating for the widespread eradication of the species as a way to force Indigenous communities into the government's reservation system and open up additional land for colonial settlement.

While reintroduction and breeding efforts have avoided complete extinction of the species, only a fraction of these once huge herds remain. Population fragmentation and loss of prairie habitat present ongoing challenges for the conservation of the species in the wild." —[Assiniboine Park Zoo](#), Winnipeg Manitoba

In *The Herd*, Vanessa claims to have accidentally bred twin white bison while she is trying to “purify” their genetic makeup so that they will be closer to their ancestors. Since she does this in a laboratory setting, it creates a huge media frenzy, and garners significant interest from her investors at the European Union. Aislinn (from the EU) tells Vanessa that if she has the genome for the white bison, she could get it **patented** in Europe and start a **selective breeding** process.



*Dolly the Sheep, the first clone of an adult mammal. Circa 2000.
Roslin Institute, Edinburgh, Scotland.*

She even goes on to envision a world where they could mass produce white bison and create a brand, festivals, and could sell their meat for a high price.

In Canada, genes can still be patented –in other words, those who claim to have first identified a gene can apply to have exclusive rights to that specific sequence of DNA. Once someone is granted a gene patent, they can dictate how the gene is used in both commercial settings (such as clinical genetic testing) and non-commercial settings (such as laboratory research), for twenty years. This means that companies often have sole ownership over genetic testing of any genes that they have patented. While the supreme courts in many countries like the United States and Australia have made it illegal to patent human genes in recent years, it is still legal to do this in Canada. Additionally, in most countries individuals and organizations are still able to patent genes for animals and other living organisms.

The question is, should people be allowed to own a specific sequence of DNA? The more that genetic research advances, the more we need to consider the ethics behind it. What should scientists, like Dr. Brokenhorn, use their discoveries for?

Reflection Questions: *Does the play The Herd remind you of any other stories that you have heard of in the news? Why do you think the playwright, Kenneth T. Williams, incorporated science into a story about spirituality?*

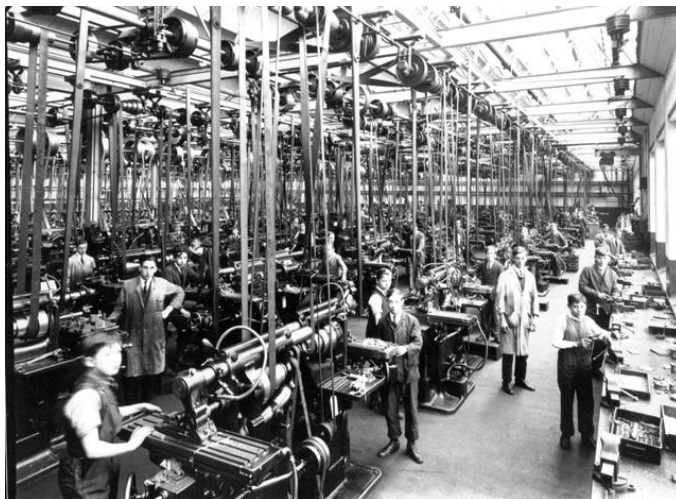
COMMERCIALIZATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

*“They all want to witness the miracle. Video feeds aren’t doing it for them anymore.” –Coyote Jackson, *The Herd**

Today, most parts of the world subscribe to a political ideology called **capitalism**. This economic and political system, in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit rather than by the state, was first invented by Adam Smith (an 18th century philosopher.) One of the central features of capitalism is the motivation to make profit.

Commercialization refers to the introduction of a new product or production method into the market for consumption. When a product is finished being developed and tested in a laboratory setting, it is commercialized. This process has become increasingly common since the **Industrial Revolution** that started in

the mid-18th century. As modern society moved into the realm of industry and machine manufacturing, they were able to produce and distribute products on mass with newfound efficiency to the global market (a process called **globalization**.) It is this system of capitalism and consumption that motivates the character Aislinn in *The Herd*, to push for the commercialization of white bison. She sees the potential for profit because there is such a demand for white bison in the market –especially in Europe where she says its meat is considered “exotic.”



*Machine Shop Workers.
Early 20th century.*

In the play, Aislinn clashes with the character Coyote Jackson, who refers to himself as an “Indigenizer of the Internet.” This social media star uses his influence to get hundreds of people to come to the Buffalo Pound Lake Reservation to witness the prophecy of the white bison come true. While Coyote criticizes Aislinn for her commodification of Indigenous Culture for profit, she accuses him of doing the same thing with his social media following.

Over the past few decades, social media has exploded, and using it is now engrained in our culture. According to researchers at Maryville University, “the evolution of social media has been fueled by the human impulse to communicate and by advances in digital technology.” They define social media as any form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information. In 2005, a year after Facebook was launched to the public, the PEW Research Center reported that 5% of American adults used social media. By 2019, that number jumped to 72%. But while social media might have developed from a desire to communicate, it has also become an essential tool for marketing. With the rise of social

media came the rise of the “influencer.” According to the Digital Marketing Institute, that is “someone who has established credibility in a specific industry, has access to a huge audience and can persuade others to act based on their recommendations.” While many influencers are seen as trustworthy sources, the reality is that they still being paid by companies to market products to their followers. Influencers are also their own brand, and can use ideologies and political activism to advance their own careers.



Photo from *Digital Agency Network*.

The playwright, Kenneth T. Williams, invites the audience to question Coyote’s motives. We see how his followers’ presence is destructive to the community and nature around them, even when they are trying to help. Coyote tries to educate others about Indigenous Culture, and even tries to raise funds for the Buffalo Pound Lake Reservation so that they can get clean drinking water, but he is still operating under a system that has

done so much damage to Indigenous Communities and their land. In a way, Williams is holding up a mirror to modern society and asking if online political activism is effective, or if it is just another form of commercialization for profit.

Reflection Questions: *What are the parallels in The Herd between Coyote Jackson and his followers, and Aislinn and the European Union? Do you think that either group are actually interested in protecting the white bison and the Indigenous Community at Buffalo Pound Lake?*

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Participation as an audience member at the Citadel Theatre aligns with the Alberta Education Curriculum.

Drama (Junior High)

GOAL I- To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Strengthen their powers of concentration.
- Extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively.
- Extend the ability to explore, control and express emotions.
- Extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts.
- Develop the ability to offer and accept constructive criticism.

GOAL III- To develop an appreciation for drama and theatre as a process and art form.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Develop awareness of various conventions of theatre.
- Develop awareness of drama and theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Develop the ability to analyze and assess the process and the art.
- Develop recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.

Drama (10-20-30)

GOAL I- To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Extend their ability to concentrate.
- Extend understanding of, acceptance of, and empathy for others.
- Demonstrate respect for others — their rights, ideas, abilities and differences.
- Demonstrate the ability to offer, accept, and reflect upon constructive criticism.

GOAL II- To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic disciplines.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Demonstrate understanding of integration of disciplines to enrich a theatrical presentation.

GOAL III- To develop an appreciation of drama and theatre as a process and art form.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Explore various conventions and traditions of theatre.
- Broaden knowledge of theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the process of art.
- Demonstrate recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.
- Develop an awareness of aesthetics in visual and performing arts.

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FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

[Legend of the White Buffalo Calf Woman –Zoological Society of Manitoba -PDF](#)

[Seeing the White Buffalo book by Robert B. Pickering \(thriftbooks.com\)](#)

[Chief Arvol Looking Horse Speaks of White Buffalo Prophecy - YouTube](#)

[Native Americans Celebrate Rare 'White Bison' - YouTube](#)

[Walking Together -First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum \(learnalberta.ca\)](#)