



SOCIAL FORMS: ART AS GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

MARIE WATT: CHORDS TO OTHER CHORDS (RELATIVE)

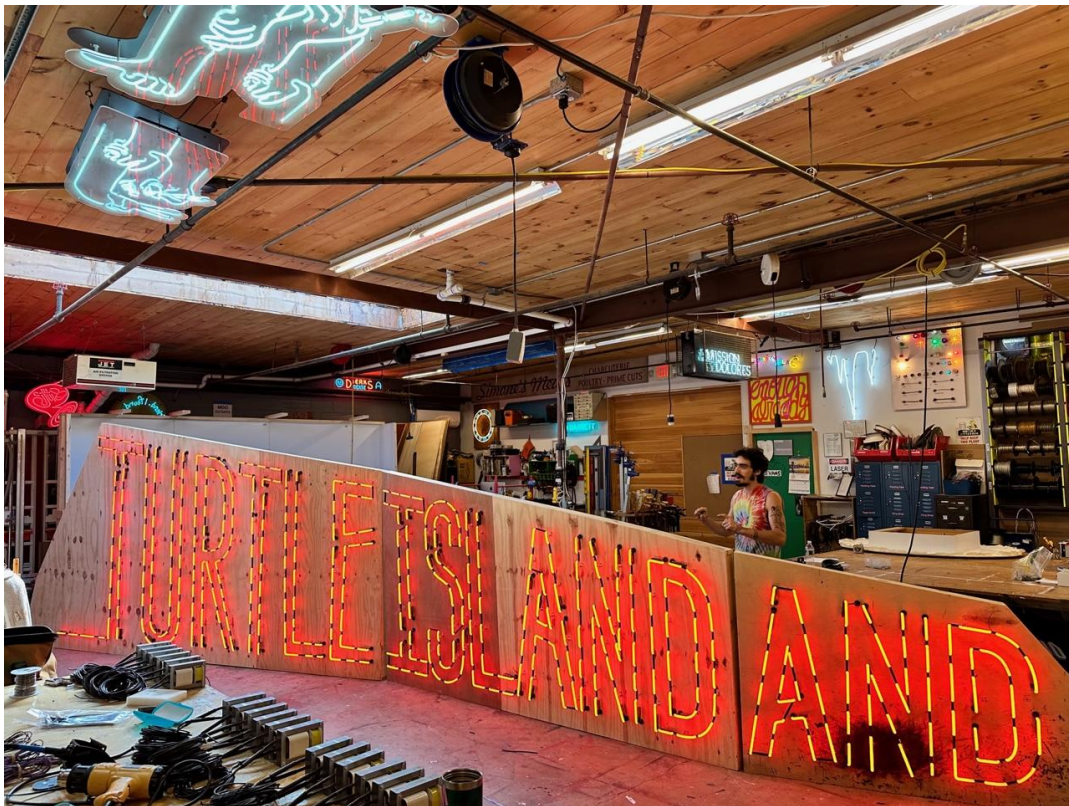


Image courtesy of the artist.

(PORTLAND, OR – August 21, 2023) Native Arts & Cultures Foundation (NACF) is excited to partner with [Converge 45](#) to present *Chords to Other Chords (Relative)*, a monumental neon sculpture by Portland-based, Seneca Nation artist [Marie Watt](#).

Chords to Other Chords (Relative) (2023) is first and foremost an affirmation of the land and the Indigenous people who are ephemeral monuments to this territory. It is a way of seeing ourselves in public places that have ties to our ancestors and to future generations.

As Joy Harjo writes, “We are chords/to other chords to other chords, if we’re lucky, to melody.” For Watt her monumental neon embodies “our relatedness, reverberating and expanding beyond the individual to empower and embrace the many. This work builds upon Seneca oral history traditions and the history of call and response. Conversations are intended to call back in time to our ancestors and also forward to future generations, based on the belief that our present moment is inextricably tethered to the communities of past and future.”

The Haudenosaunee call the land now known as North America “Turtle Island.” It is a name derived from the Haudenosaunee creation story that speaks of Skywoman’s descent from Skyworld and the aid of the animals in her safe landing. In recognition of the multitude of Indigenous origin stories and place names, this sign proclaims not just “Turtle Island” but “Turtle Island And.”

According to Watt, “Turtle Island is the land that we’re on, it’s the water that runs underneath our feet, it’s the air we breathe, the molecules that make up our bodies... so the phrase “chords to other chords” makes me think of this deep connectedness that travels through time.” As a billboard-sized work, *Chords to Other Chords (Relative)* breaks many barriers to experiencing art. It is not siloed in an inaccessible space, but exists in a space for all to see and experience, regardless of factors such as demographics, field of work and relationship to art and the environment. The audience is broad and the interactions are broader.

The exhibit will open for visitors Fridays from 4pm to 7pm through October 13th.

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For more information on *Converge 45* and *Social Forms*, please visit converge45.org

About Marie Watt

Marie Watt is an American artist and citizen of the Seneca Nation with German-Scot ancestry. Her interdisciplinary work draws from history, biography, Iroquois protofeminism, and Indigenous teachings. Through collaborative actions she instigates multigenerational and cross-disciplinary conversations that might create a lens and conversation for understanding connectedness to place, one another, and the universe. Watt holds an MFA in painting and printmaking from Yale University; she also has degrees from Willamette University and the Institute of American Indian Arts; and in 2016 she was awarded an honorary doctorate from Willamette University. She has received fellowships from Anonymous Was a Woman, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the Harpo Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation and the Native Arts and Culture Foundation. Selected collections include the Seattle Art Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Yale University Art Gallery, Crystal Bridges Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian and Renwick Gallery, the Tacoma Art Museum, the Denver Art Museum, and the Portland Art Museum. Marie Watt is represented by PDX Contemporary Art in Portland, Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco and Marc Straus Gallery in New York.

About the Center for Native Arts and Cultures

On February 26th, 2021 NACF received the gift of the Yale Union Laundry building in Portland, Oregon. The historic building became the new headquarters for the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation and has been renamed the Center for Native Arts and Cultures. The vision for the Center includes spaces for exhibitions, events, places to practice culture and make art, and areas for cultural ceremonies and celebrations to create a vibrant gathering place for Indigenous artists. We look forward to more opportunities for broad community learning, including workshops and seminars covering pertinent issues relative to decolonizing space, anti-racism, and environmental justice at the Center.

About Christian Viveros-Fauné

Christian Viveros-Fauné (b. 1965, Santiago, Chile) has worked as a gallerist, art fair director, art critic, and curator since 1994. He was awarded Bucknell University's Ekard Visiting Fellowship in 2023, the University of South Florida's Kennedy Family Visiting Fellowship in 2018, a Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Grant in 2009 and named Critic in Residence at the Bronx Museum in 2011. He co-founded *The Brooklyn Rail* in 1999, wrote art criticism for *The Village Voice* from 2008 to 2016, was the Art and Culture Critic for *artnet news* from 2016 to 2018. He has lectured widely at institutions such as Yale University, Pratt University and Holland's Gerrit Rietveld Academie, and curated exhibitions at leading museums in the U.S., Europe and Latin America. He currently serves as Curator-at-Large at the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum. He is also the author of several books. His most recent, *Social Forms: A Short History of Political Art*, was published by David Zwirner Books in 2018.

About Converge 45

Converge 45 is a non-profit arts organization that produces a Contemporary Arts Biennial in Portland, Oregon. In collaboration with a dynamic community of artists, organizations, galleries, corporate partners, alternative venues and a guest curator, Converge 45 develops a citywide exhibition across the metropolitan area every two years. The biennial intersects regional, national and international perspectives around art and the futures it seeks. Outside of the biennial program, the organization works in continued collaboration with community partners to support Portland's creative ecosystem by promoting the work of artists & organizations in the Pacific Northwest and improving access to broader art discourses within our communities.

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