

April 30, 2020

# Never Settle

## Suzy Halajian



New Red Order, *Never Settle*, 2019, digital video still.

*It's difficult to decipher if the New Red Order (NRO) is an experimental artist collective, agency, or an actual cult. The distinction seems to blur as theory, fantasy, and direct action coalesce into collaborative films, presentations, performances, and recruitment campaigns. The NRO's mission is to expand Indigenous sovereignty by enlisting and educating non-Indigenous accomplices to become "informants" who pledge allegiance to decolonial struggle. Acknowledging the atrocious levels of domination and dystopian living conditions that Indigenous communities have faced for centuries, the NRO promises its recruits that they will lead more fulfilled lives through an embodied politics that reimagines what artistic production, collaborative modes of action, and allyship can look like. For the NRO, the future is indistinguishable from the present: as we move forward, our present aligns with a past that is never complete and a future that is always here. By upholding Indigenous futurity, the NRO calls for the repatriation of land and life, and invites its members to reckon with the brutality that is foundational to the settler colonial nation-state and its cultural institutions—museums, national archives, and monuments—all of which continue to enact violence against Native peoples.*

**Suzy Halajian:** How did the New Red Order form as a public secret society?

**Jackson Polys:** The NRO emerged out of contradistinction from the Improved Order of the Red Men [IORM], a historical society that claims lineage from the Sons of Liberty, responsible for the Boston Tea Party. The IORM acted to differentiate themselves from the Masons and others with ongoing acts of "playing Indian," performing acts of "savagery" to distinguish and identify themselves as first Americans.<sup>1</sup> Although membership waxed and waned, they continued, including members such as Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Richard Nixon. Nonwhite people weren't allowed in until 1974. Today, they're headquartered in Waco, Texas, and have a local chapter in the town where I grew up, Ketchikan, Alaska, where their sign outside depicts a Tlingit person wearing what some might still call a Sioux war bonnet.

The New Red Order's early actions centered around close interrogations of the desires for indigeneity, where they come from, and how they manifest. They attempted to learn Native dances, reflecting on their questionable activities. This commingled with interest in advocating for

Indigenous sovereignty. People with performance backgrounds were among the first to be involved, perhaps because of a thirst and willingness to take on "new" movements, combined with an openness toward self-reflexivity. They also recognized settler colonial violence as an inherited readymade, with resultant forms of appropriation as readymades that continue to affect us all. This was prior to the #NoDAPL protection struggles at Standing Rock, when mainstream interest in indigeneity intensified and pushback against the risks of these desires grew.

These activities were a way to attempt to understand the pressure of "complicity" on the Indigenous informant, "authorizing" such activities even if to highlight interest. Natives are called on to inform on their own cultures, and an asymmetrical pressure on the Native is exacerbated if that authorizing can be done by one or two Indigenous people. As Adam, Zack, and I joined in conversation, we found that we'd not only been dealing with similar issues, we'd even employed some of the same materials already. With an urge to merge there are always risks of erasure, but with our combined experiences as informants, we found it compelling to participate in attempts to flip that dynamic, to continue a push through obstructions to Indigenous growth, as problematic as that might be.

**Adam Khalil:** The reason why it's a public secret society is because we were hoping it could be something that couldn't be contained by just being in the realm of a collective art practice. We were thinking of it as a rotating and expanding mass of

people coming in and out. And we wanted to make that really legible, that it's collectively authored over time. Also that it could be a religious group, a cult, a political party, a think tank, a nonprofit, and it could spiral out in these different ways, not just in theory but in practice.

**JP:** If we view our inheritance of the conditions of settler colonialism—a public secret<sup>2</sup>—from different vantage points, how can we articulate difference and not remain embroiled in division, and how do we join without erasure? This seems a basic conundrum, but for Indigenous people—and already to say this is to speak broadly, with a danger of erasures of particularity—we face snares where we have been invisible for so long, yet promoting an attraction toward indigeneity can increase the risk of our ingestion, incorporation, and further disappearance. We can call out inappropriate desire toward us. But calls in to become an ally, or accomplice—with examination of reflexivity and empathy—can enhance the arrival of fears of overstepping, leading to disengagement and further invisibility. So, how can a welcome hold a warning *and* continue to call in?

**SH:** You three work closely with a rotating, and often repeating, cast of actors, musicians, performers, and artists who enter your presentations, performances, and video works. Plus the NRO also makes it a point to collaborate with non-Native people in its work, which brings to mind professor Nick Estes's writing that considers how settler society can foster ethical relationships by relying on kinship relations

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as the land.<sup>3</sup> How do you imagine decision-making functions in the group, specifically when it comes to the language that forms and brands the NRO?

**AK:** We've talked a lot about how the NRO is perceived in the world. We're not trying to create some kind of unified idea, but allowing it to be totally mutable and shift over the course of time. We've aped certain styles, such as the infomercial or corporate headhunting, and the new age stuff. But we're also not committed to those fully. The project is aesthetically all over the place and that's intentional. We can work with certain designers as collaborators or informants themselves. I think a lot of the collaboration stuff comes more from offering up a space or a platform, rather than co-authoring every decision together necessarily.

For instance, at this event at Artists Space in New York, there were two essays—one written by Ed Halter and one by Lou Cornum—and the approach was to see how they wanted to participate, to give them space and time to present things that were thematically, curatorially, or sequentially related to one another.<sup>4</sup> And when placed in proximity, it was almost as if one plus one equals three. It's somewhat controlling in a sense, because we decide who's included in certain things, but it's also loose after a point.



New Red Order, "New Red Order: Informants Get Paid!" a public assembly at Artists Space, January 23, 2020. Courtesy of Artists Space, New York. Photo by Paula Court.

**SH:** The kind of organizing that grants collaborators the agency to experiment.

**AK:** Collaborators can be fatigued from having to figure everything out together all the time. Whereas allowing people to have space to present their own interests can be really beneficial in terms of making things compelling, without having to push their own voice into something else necessarily.

**JP:** If our model for collaboration aims to flip traditional informant power dynamics, asking non-Indigenous people or any other Indigenous people to become co-informants with us, it can allow for expressions and new juxtapositions that might otherwise be shut down.

Alongside that, speaking for Native people is also always problematic. We/they may hold claims that are fundamentally opposed to each other, with different collective experiences. And we can't ignore histories and overt and covert realities of erasure and genocide via assimilation, along with more subliminal forms of removal. Perhaps what binds us is the persistent

pushing of us into the past. Sometimes intentional, sometimes helpless and inherited. Speaking up is both necessary and can participate in our erasure.

The idea that one would want to protect one's own land and blood may come from pushing against the mechanisms of disappearance, but could still be seen as passé, anti-hybridity, or opposed to the currency of deterritorialism.

**AK:** Politically, that's something we're trying to play with in the New Red Order. This idea that Indigenous and progressive means falling back on tradition, or looking towards the past, which actually has this weird conservative bent to it. It's a frustrating position to always have to look back to move forward. That's why this new *Never Settle* video we worked on doesn't have any Native people in it. We don't want to allow ourselves to internalize that kind of informant role, and then reproduce it.

**JP:** The performance of one's own culture has been necessary for visibility and continuance, but it's then difficult to avoid the authenticity trap. That's where the activation of proxies have been helpful. In that it can make visible the dynamics of speaking for us, yet also allow for participation and engagement outside of ourselves.



New Red Order, *Never Settle*, 2019, digital video still.

**SH:** Right now, you're pushing a public recruitment campaign for new members. The aforementioned "Informants Get Paid!" project at Artists Space was a public assembly aimed at recruiting accomplices and undoing obstructions to Indigenous growth. The assembly explored how to move towards Indigenous futures, and showed how the public might be converted and transformed by engaging different thoughts and practices with regards to terms.<sup>5</sup> Your campaign and recruitment video also attempt to bring together accomplices, urging new recruits to "never settle and join now!" Can you say more?

**Zack Khalil:** We're using humor and a superficial aesthetic language that people are familiar with—self-help, crisis capitalism language—to communicate concepts that are incredibly complicated and deeply disturbing, such as the ongoing reality of settler colonial occupation. Humor cuts through the bullshit and reorients the conversation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. *Never Settle* defines decolonization in a non-metaphorical sense, taking the definition from an essay written by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang.<sup>6</sup> And indeed we're not thinking about using

decolonization as a metaphor for ways of changing schools, or our ways of thinking, or colonial institutions—but literal, actual decolonization. Abolishing colonial institutions and repatriating indigenous land. All of it. "Never settle" is the slogan for that.

As much as it's a command, it's a question. What does it actually mean, to unsettle settler colonialism in the most direct sense? If we're going to have all these conversations around decolonization, then we should be ready to extend that thinking to its most extreme logical conclusion. We should be ready to have a more informed conversation that can't be usurped into a metaphor that alleviates guilt and ultimately ensures settler futurity.

**AK:** To Jackson's point about hybridity, if there is a move forward that's not "de-" or "re-" something, but has some other potential—and I think that's part of the emphasis on recruitment—it's about building enough of a multiplicity of voices where those conversations could be had. We're planning to include some street interviews that aren't in the video yet. We're asking people what decolonization is, or what repatriation is. And *no one* knows. Nine out of ten people said, "I don't know." Most guesses were based on etymology and such. I think it's kind of bizarre that among this sort of artistic or political milieu, we're really obsessed with this language, but when we take this conversation outside of that circle it's not even registered what these terms are, let alone the importance of what they could offer.

**ZK:** And in that sense too, "Never Settle" has many different meanings of a possible *unsettling*. Not settling with those "de-" or "re-" words.

**JP:** To even posit pushing decolonization to its logical conclusion is a conundrum. As the demand at the moment seems to require magical thinking, it spirals back into speculative and metaphorical territory. We're looking for ways to allow that metaphor to bleed into something connected to our actual situations, which include Native people having to work with different Native people (and others) to deal with slippages when individuals and institutions want to take things from Indigenous epistemologies and use them in instrumental ways that doesn't require Indigenous people. How do we maintain dialogue with urges to replace, intertwined with urges to merge, and how can those threats be legible moving forward yet not "get in the way"?

**SH:** For me, this goes back to the question of legibility. The NRO uses a variety of discursive tools, such as that self-help language, in combination with more activist strategies like calling in—not to mention questions around theory and speculation. One of the testimonials for "Join the Informants!" is by NRO member and actor Jim Fletcher,<sup>7</sup> who tells potential recruits that the NRO is giving them the opportunity to change their life by learning to recognize—and report on—the efforts of non-Indigenous people everywhere to claim indigeneity. Potential recruits are playfully asked: "Do you want to realize your fullest potential? Be your truest self? Act with



confidence? Alleviate anxiety? Experience clarity? Be a part of the solution?" Those interested are told what they'll actually do: "Learn to identify the desire for indigeneity in the myths, dreams, and political foundations of the so-called Americas. Learn to accept and re-channel your desire without letting your reflexivity get in the way. Start a lifelong process of Informing that allows for greater reciprocity."<sup>8</sup> Can you speak more about which discourses you're borrowing from?



New Red Order, "New Red Order: Informants Get Paid!" a public assembly at Artists Space, January 23, 2020. Courtesy of Artists Space, New York. Photo by Paula Court.

**AK:** Part of it is in the hopes of developing really discursive conversations. At an event we did in November, we put philosophers on the same program as what you might see at a DIY music show. We're thinking a lot about how the work we're doing creates different speeds and modes of ideas. This engages with the ethos of "never settle."

**JP:** That event was part of the Toronto Biennial of Art.<sup>9</sup> Ange Loft, an amazing Mohawk artist, led a symbology workshop while Alaska B from Yamantaka // Sonic Titan D.J.'ed in juxtaposition with Christopher Bracken, who led a horror film analysis on subliminal racialization. Bracken

wrote this incredible book, *Magical Criticism*, tracing the tendency of Western poetics and philosophy to confusedly distinguish between ideas and things, just as they repress and displace that same characteristic onto ideas of the free and unruly savage as committing "crimes against reality."<sup>10</sup> To be able to collaborate with him recently and to think about his analysis allowed us to extend our consideration of the presentation of decolonization as also a form of magical thinking, or a crime against reality. An anticipatory speculative gesture forcing us to move into unruly forms of relation with each other.

**SH:** Adam shared a zine with me a few years ago titled "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing The Ally Industrial Complex," which raises provocative questions that directly confront community activists, calling for "accomplices" who confront colonial structures by building and working through mutual consent in a struggle towards liberation, rather than allies who provide support only on a temporary basis.<sup>11</sup> It calls for direct action as the most genuine way to learn to be an accomplice and prepare for confrontation and difficult repercussions.<sup>12</sup> How do you consider direct action working within your practice, and do you find it's necessary to extend outside of art contexts as you reckon with confronting systemic violence?

**AK:** There are some artistic practices that revolve around direct action, and that's their primary form. It bleeds out in many different ways. One example is the Guerilla Art Action Group doing that in the 1970s.

**JP:** Now, many arts funders take applications for social practice or community engagement art. This support is necessary, but can also become extractive. It requires a performance or front of social practice, susceptible to moving the energy around something that can establish actual change for a community to something demonstrating temporary engagement beneficial to the participating artists. The relationship can remain asymmetrical. The NRO is interested in foregrounding the complicated nature of those modes of engagement, but not to shut them down.

**AK:** It's also about looking at the contemporary landscape of organizations and groups who are involved with direct action. We don't want to reproduce what they're doing, but rather be in solidarity while exploring different avenues.

**SH:** I also think this circles back to the question of presentation, and whether it's important for you to present in venues outside of art institutions, particularly when questions around indigeneity or radical futurisms are heavily engaged with right now and perhaps capitalized upon. Or maybe it's not about inside/outside?

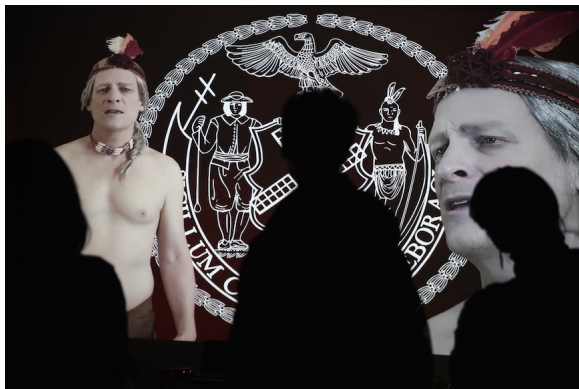
**JP:** We all have our own different forms of engagement at different moments, from frontline activism to finding backchannel ways to support—this appears to ebb and flow. Artists have been the forerunners of many different forms of social change, including gentrification and incursion. If education remains a commodity, and to participate in it becomes necessary for ourselves and others but also extractive of

our own energy, that education of course risks reinforcing divisions between high and low, or woke and tired culture. We recognize complicity for our own role as continuing informants. By focusing on the desire for indigeneity, allowing for inappropriate manifestations of it, and making that explicit, it can hopefully unfold, reveal, and exhaust itself while not losing the chance to "grow" and improve conditions along the way, moving to reconfigure dividing lines.

**ZK:** We're trying to fundamentally change the dynamic that our activism is based around and intended to address. Part of that is turning informants into accomplices, instead of allies, but doing that through a process of deep research and learning what's attracting them to indigeneity in the first place. Then seeing how to actually harness and channel that desire in a way that's actually useful. But we're still in the early stages of that process.

**SH:** You regularly bring together play and education, especially in your recent publication, *Special Future Recruits Issue* (2019), a graphic activity book that serves as an educational tool for students to think about settler colonial relations in a digestible and comical way. In the past, *THE INFORMANTS* (2017–18), a rotating cast of characters explored stereotypes such as "playing Indian," as you'd mentioned, and examined those desires for indigeneity through video and performance-based events. You've also discussed how you incorporate a tradition of sly Indigenous critique in your work to build relations with

your audience while making explicit the histories of erasure.



New Red Order, "New Red Order: Informants Get Paid!" a public assembly at Artists Space, January 23, 2020. Courtesy of Artists Space, New York. Photos by Paula Court.

**ZK:** As much as there is play involved, it can also be incredibly grave. Jim Fletcher's most sincere, heartfelt, intense apology caused some nervous laughter, but was deadly serious.<sup>13</sup>

If we're calling people in, as well as out, then we can't just stick to a somber tone. The humor keeps people engaged, but also on their toes, not really sure what to expect or on what register to engage. From the Anishinaabe perspective, if you can't tease somebody, it must mean you don't think very highly of them.

**SH:** The apology you're mentioning was part of a performance at the Whitney in 2018,

*The Savage Philosophy of Endless Acknowledgement*,<sup>14</sup> for which you worked closely with Fletcher and Kate Valk, both actors. Fletcher undresses, and then dresses in Native costume, and the work concludes with his haunting performance and a projection behind him showing a close-up of his face with a background of an open landscape, repeatedly whispering to the audience (and hinting at a larger audience not present in the room) to "give it back." He spoke over certain parts and created an even more ghostly effect. There's a critical position but at the same time his performance feels quite farcical and cheeky. Can you expand on this tension?

**JP:** This contained many jokes, specifically around the performance of apology and the resistance to apology within any performed apology. It's a tricky balance because often the presentation of humor can give people an out, in the way that it dissolves back into making excuses for one's own lack of interest or acceptance of the way things are. We acknowledge the audience's discomfort, but it can potentially allow them to retain that kind of level of separation. By oscillating back and forth we're aiming to maintain the potential for their own commitment.

**SH:** The Whitney piece also used video and other disparate yet complex presentations, such as a Lakota language lesson by collaborator Suzanne Kite, and a talk by the artist Tali Keren that dissected Benjamin Franklin's 1776 design for the Great Seal of the United States.



**AK:** I was talking to an informant about why they viewed the humor as so cutting and bizarre in this whole project, and they said it was because of just how absurd settler colonialism is. And the idea of the public secret is something everyone knows but no one talks about. They said that after being involved in the New Red Order for a period of time, they were reminded of that John Carpenter movie, *They Live*, where the guy has those sunglasses. When they're on, he sees that all the advertisements are actually subliminal, capitalist messages. When they're off, the messages are invisible and they just look like normal ads. Our hope is that our work can function like those glasses for settler colonialism.

So, if you're walking around New York and you see the city seal everywhere, you'll see the Lenape guy and the Dutch guy and it will start triggering a different kind of recognition of what the presence of that Indian in the seal actually references. It's a public secret, because it's visible all the time but never really considered. We're hoping to point towards the slippage between representation and reality and consider these symbols not just as representations of things, but actual entities in and of themselves. It's like "savage philosophy"—symbols don't just represent things, they enact themselves in the real world, kind of like magic.

**SH:** Your presentations and videos continually label the "savage" as a poet that also stands for us, but an earlier us, an image that reflects back our origins. "Savage philosophy" operates through discourse and the deployment of forces in

which signs have a real connection with things. Essentially, it makes representation into reality. Can you expand on how this forms the basis of your work?

**JP:** These articulations are appropriated, abridged and cribbed from [Christopher] Bracken. He analyzes the continual assumptions that only Natives, earlier humans, or poets—and sometimes unintentionally, certain schools of philosophy—believe in a magical way that the word can influence and alter material reality, that the word can become a thing that can effect change. This magical thinking can be found everywhere and he writes that to repress it only encourages its reappearance in stunted and racialized forms. In *The Savage Philosophy of Endless Acknowledgement*, we found particular power in the deployment of land acknowledgements and their analysis within the framework of performance. The power of pronouncements that, if taken seriously, might provoke fear of influencing real material change.

**SH:** I'm curious how your work enacts "culture capture," which allows settlers to move through institutions and see familiar objects and symbols in new ways.<sup>15</sup> We see this in your video *Culture Capture: Terminal Addition*—masked individuals (essentially your recruits!) surreptitiously capture the Columbus Monument in Syracuse by using accessible technologies such as smartphone apps that produce 3D scans of objects. And then you later use these scans to compose a double of the statue.



New Red Order, *CULTURE CAPTURE: TERMINAL ADDITION*, 2019, digital video still.

Many of your works stress the NRO's position that it's essential to take back from the museum and confront desires for an irretrievable past. That "culture capture" is a small, speculative step toward rectifying the violence committed by museum archives and the settler colonial icons that guard them. This idea also comes up in your 2017 film collaboration, *The Violence of a Civilization Without Secrets*, where once again we see these objects and remains displayed and essentially frozen in institutions, while masked characters move through and usurp these spaces. Does the NRO consider these informants to be functioning as bandits or hackers who digitally free these Indigenous objects from their museum confines?

**AK:** We're trying to figure these things out ourselves. Initially, we started learning more about "digital repatriation." Many museums were (and are) adopting this policy to make 3D scans of certain Indigenous cultural and ceremonial objects and then give a copy of the scan to the tribe or nation that the object comes from. Effectively saying, "we're going to keep the material thing here, because we can't trust these tribes to actually maintain it in the

future. But we don't want to deprive the tribe access to this replica."

**ZK:** Also, there's this kind of "savage philosophy" or just ghostly quality, thinking about the then captured Native objects being somehow their own virtual spiritual presences. And that becomes this, almost, speculative liberation.

**JP:** The objects were taken, in a second or third sense, from places such as the American Museum of Natural History, where *The Violence of Civilization Without Secrets* was filmed. There you have many forms of capture where those objects are frozen in time and not able to circulate among the communities from which they originate. There's maybe 10,000 or more objects from the Northwest Coast that are still in the basements.

Various institutions, including the Smithsonian, engage in these forms of repatriation where 3D scans or physical replicas are returned, while the institution keeps the actual object locked away. We're thinking about different forms of access that are then not very real.

Part of "culture capture" is to deploy, in visual forms, the absurdity of that kind of endeavor, that those objects can retain value for Native people in this virtual space. At the same time, it's holding the possibility that they may retain value if they can be manipulated and accessed by both Native—and even potentially more problematic—non-Native people. In *The Violence of Civilization without Secrets*, we were engaging in our own "salvage ethnography"

of that particular institution. It was a hundred-year-old hall, about to be dismantled and reimaged. We captured it at the time when it still existed, which is similar to what those anthropologists were trying to do.



New Red Order, *The Violence of a Civilization Without Secrets*, 2018, digital video still.

**ZK:** The other half of "culture capture" revolves around monuments that are usually found outside of or around a lot of these institutions containing Indigenous objects. It goes back to this idea of "savage philosophy"—that symbols don't represent things, they enact things. Discourse deploys forces, like the Columbus monument or a Teddy Roosevelt monument outside the Museum of Natural History. Those objects and those representations in and of themselves are capable of a violence, of sorts. In that sense, we're asking non-Indigenous people to seize those objects, to take photogrammetric scans of them to create digital models that are then mutable. These archaic representations, these symbols that deploy so much violence, then become malleable and open to change. This is one of the central goals of the NRO, to change the way Indigenous people have been represented while acknowledging the violence that is done through

representation. The process of taking the photographs to make the 3D models encourages people to move through familiar spaces and see familiar symbols from a new perspective.

**JP:** Through acts of capturing, people can "freeze" these monuments in time in a way that externalizes them, making it possible to imagine the altering of their reality. This introduces a recurrence or extension of salvage modes of ethnography or anthropology. Those who externalize the capture, whether by doing it or viewing the results, participate in the thought or fear that the captured object might disappear, and then they might be drawn in or implicated in their material disappearance.



New Red Order, *CULTURE CAPTURE: TERMINAL ADDITION*, 2019, digital video still.

**AK:** We're also thinking about monuments because there was this committee in New York put together by Mayor de Blasio, looking at certain monuments and statues in public spaces and considering what to do with them—one of them being the Teddy Roosevelt statue. There were groups of activists, academics, artists, and politicians on this panel and the conclusion was that there should not be any subtractive approach, just additive, which basically

means putting up plaques. Everybody was really frustrated. An additive approach comes out of the fear of iconoclastic gestures of removal, especially for Native people because most of the time these monuments of settler colonialism are the only Indigenous representations that people come across. So, what does it mean to remove them? To get rid of them is to forget that situation, too. It could slip into some kind of reconciliatory phase.

We think about our 3D models as actual proposals for monuments using an additive approach. We're defacing them, but through additive means, such as morphing, bloating, or expanding certain parts of things to make them illegible, but it's still *that* thing.

**SH:** I was recently reading about a monument in Beirut's Martyrs' Square. It was built to honor those executed in 1916 because they were protesting Ottoman rule over Lebanon in favor of Arab Nationalist movements. During the Civil War, the square was used as a point that divided the city into East and West to indicate opposing sects and the area was completely destroyed as buildings and statues fell under a barrage of bullets and bombings. Then it was renovated by a local university, as part of what's now downtown Beirut, but the bullet scarring was kept as a purposeful show of the monument's history, and the renovation process intentionally preserved the marks of war. After the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Al Hariri in 2005, who was one of the main contributors to the downtown's renovation, the square once again became a site for protest. The most

recent example of this is when protestors camped out there calling for change during the "October Revolution" of 2019. It feels necessary to think about why repair or rehabilitation was not productive here, like the example you bring up—in fact, it would obfuscate or eradicate the very real histories of spaces and nations.

Nick Estes also writes about the various solidarity networks that supported the #NoDAPL struggle, including Black Lives Matter, Palestinian justice organizations, religious groups, military veterans, and others.<sup>16</sup> The NRO's work also enfold this notion of kinship between groups. It seems imperative to convey the actual relations that allow us to conceive of a liberatory, intergenerational future that allows room to pursue the "give it back" logic that the NRO repeatedly calls for. At the same time, as Estes proposes, it needs to be asked which individual and collective histories are erased when these networks are considered together for the sake of an alliance.

How does the NRO see the realities of solidarity groups?

**AK:** I think that's going to become more so a part of the conversation, such as the work we're developing at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. We're thinking about parallels between Palestinian and Native struggles for liberation, also pointing to those public secrets again. It's a little self-serving, but it's also coalition building.

We're trying to expand the political resonance of the projects, so we're not stuck performing Indigenous art or politics.

We're asking ourselves how these parallels are falling into place, then we're highlighting them. It's not a situation where you join the NRO and know what you're expecting before it starts. That happens with a lot of political Indigenous movements, where you know what the keywords, phrases, and ideas are at a glance.

**ZK:** The long-term arc of the NRO continues to expand and includes collaborations with activist groups of all kinds.

**AK:** We're actually getting close to the third rail of the NRO right now, which includes figuring out when the phrase "settler colonialism" is appropriate and when it's wildly inappropriate. We don't want to be the arbiters of that, of course, but it's definitely something to think through when we talk about forms of intersectional solidarity in organizing.



New Red Order, "New Red Order: Informants Get Paid!" a public assembly at Artists Space, January 23, 2020. Courtesy of Artists Space, New York. Photo by Paula Court.

**JP:** Even within those circles, we're obligated to educate, to try to articulate distinctions between groups affected by settler nations—to think historically and currently about why mechanisms of

containment continue to operate differently against groups that aim to intersect now.

We might be charged with naming distinct modes of thinking among Indigenous people. "The Indigenous"—and whatever that means in terms of political realities or the way that's deployed—is still being worked out. And we're bound by the continual return to etymology. The Indigenous is prior to those who later come to replace them. So, there are drawbacks with the term's reification of denials of contemporaneity for Native people.

However, for now, it may retain potential for a kind of futurity, beyond one that wants to accelerate and replace us. Instead, holding hope that we might employ its expansion to help us move toward forms of relation not yet given.

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*The New Red Order (NRO) is a public secret society and mutable collective. Core contributors are Adam Khalil (Ojibway), Zack Khalil (Ojibway), and Jackson Polys (Tlingit). Their work has appeared at the Alaska State Museum, Anchorage Museum, Artists Space, e-flux, ICA Philadelphia, Images Festival, Microscope Gallery, MOMA, Sundance Film Festival, Toronto Biennial of Art, Union Docs, the Walker Art Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art. The NRO was featured in the 2019 Whitney Biennial.*

1. Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).



2. The NRO looks to anthropologist Michael Taussig's observations regarding the "public secret" in *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 2–8; 59–77.

3. Nick Estes, "Liberation," in *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (London: Verso, 2019), 256.

4. See "New Red Order: Informants Get Paid!" at Artists Space, New York, January 23, 2020, <https://artistspace.org/programs/new-red-order>; and Christopher Green, "New Red Order: Promote Indigenous Futures," *Frieze*, February 6, 2020, <https://frieze.com/article/new-red-order-promote-indigenous-futures>.

5. "New Red Order: Informants Get Paid!"

6. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.

7. Jim Fletcher is also a member of the Wooster Group and a "reformed" Native American impersonator.

8. See New Red Order, "Join the Informants!" *Triple Canopy*, December 2, 2019, <https://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/join-the-informants>.

9. For more information on the New Red Order's installation, *Never Settle*, as well as related programs for *The Shoreline Dilemma* at the Toronto Biennial of Art, September 21–December 1, 2019, see: <https://torontobiennial.org/artist-contributor/the-new-red-order/>.

10. Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1–53.

11. Indigenous Action Media, "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing The Ally Industrial Complex," second edition, May 2, 2014, 2. Also published online <http://www.indigenousaction.org/>.

12. *Ibid.*, 9.

13. This was first performed as part of *THE INFORMANTS* at Artists Space, New York, December 13, 2017, <https://artistspace.org/programs/the-informants>.

14. For more information on the New Red Order's *The Savage Philosophy of Endless Acknowledgement* at the Whitney Museum, New

York, June 13, 2018, see: <https://whitney.org/events/endless-acknowledgement>.

15. "Culture capture" is one of the introductory steps for recruitment into the NRO, as outlined in *Never Settle*. It consists of the three Cs: contract (treaty), concealment, and capture. This includes building strategy from the ground up, building trust and dialogue, transforming oneself in order to form new identities and relationships, and reconfiguring colonial structures and oneself. For more information, see "Never Settle: Conscripted," *e-flux* journal 106 (February 2020), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/106/313421/never-settle-conscripted/>.

16. Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future*, 254.

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