



## THEY DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE SEEDS

### Carol Wylie

April 16 — May 29, 2021

#### About *They Didn't Know We Were Seeds*

The title of this exhibition derives from a couplet written by Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos in 1963: *what didn't you do to bury me - but you forgot that I was a seed.* The power of the phrase is born out through its adoption by activists protesting injustices across the United States, Mexico and Latin America.

These eighteen portraits depict Jewish Holocaust and Indigenous residential school survivors. In Jewish tradition, eighteen represents the word “chai,” which means “life.” Themes including trauma, ongoing recovery, shared pain, and the indomitable human spirit, are central to this work. With numbers of Holocaust survivors dwindling, and the same eventual loss of residential school survivors, these portraits remain and continue to reflect the strength and courage of these individuals.

In 2002, a scandal over racist and anti-Semitic statements made by the former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, prompted

Indigenous leaders to reach out to the Canadian Jewish Congress in an attempt to repair the damage. This led to a flourishing relationship that saw survivors of the Holocaust and the residential school system giving talks in remote communities and across Canada. Robbie Waisman and Eugene Arcand became important figures in a deepening cultural association that continues to this day.

Carol Wylie has had an active art practice for thirty years, working exclusively with portraiture and figuration. She holds an MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, a BFA in studio art and BA in psychology from the University of Saskatchewan. Carol resides in Saskatoon where she teaches drawing and painting and works as an art educator at the Remai Modern.

A remote conversation moderated by Marcus Miller and Carol Wylie with survivors: Robbie Waisman and Eugene Arcand is available on the gallery website and Facebook page.

**Image:** Installation view of *They Didn't Know We Were Seeds* in the Main Gallery