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Circling the Impossible with In the Round

By Heidi L. Nees and jenn stucker

A prevalent and significant refrain in response to Land Acknowledgment statements is that they can fall all-too-easily into performative, check-the-box gestures rather than meaningful steps toward what Cheryl Crazy Bull, President and CEO of the American Indian College Fund terms, “transformative change.”¹ Summer Wilke, while a graduate student at the University of Arkansas, pointed out that “land acknowledgement doesn't begin to address the lack of representation of Native people in Fayetteville,” where she lived. Wilke affirmed that “Until action is taken to identify and empower Indigenous people, accurate history is taught, and land-based justice is carried out, a land acknowledgement statement feels mostly empty and alienating.”² Crazy Bull and Wilke are among a litany of voices who provide crucial reminders that going *beyond* is a key—if not *the* key—element of Land Acknowledgment statements. While such statements can raise awareness—particularly for non-Natives—of Indigenous

¹ Cheryl Crazy Bull, “[Why Give an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment \(and How to Make it Matter\),” American Indian College Fund website \(4 December 2020\).](#)

² Summer Wilkie, “[OPINION: Land acknowledgments fall short in honoring Indigenous people,” Cherokee Phoenix \(6 February 2021\).](#)

caretakers of the land and the role of colonization in a place's history and current moment, actively going beyond statements renders visible the continued impact of colonization, persistent issues faced by tribal nations and individuals, and cultural, social, and ecological contributions of Native peoples to the region, country, and world today.³ Possibilizing ways to go beyond, especially in positions that seemingly hold little power and in institutions that don't seem concerned with the beyond, can seem daunting if not impossible.⁴ Specifically, discourse around Land Acknowledgement in higher education involves discussion of granting land back to tribal nations and/or providing tuition waivers for Native students, proposals that Wilke, Megan Red Shirt-Shaw, and others have made. And while faculty and staff can support and advocate for such actions, many do not have the power to enact those calls. So, how might educators and artists go beyond statement to more active inclusion within our campus and local communities in meaningful ways which can lead to Crazy Bull's vision of "transformative change"?

This question became a constant in our quest to first develop a Land Acknowledgment statement at our university, then to move beyond words into action. In this article, we discuss the (im)possibilities we have faced in this work in the hope that such sharing might help others experiencing similar (im)possibilities in their institutions. And while we recognize the significance of theoretical considerations involved in conversations surrounding Land Acknowledgment and decolonization⁵ particularly with regard to determining an individual's or

³ We choose to capitalize Indigenous when referencing the collective political and cultural identifiers comprising Native peoples, following the recommendation of the [Native Governance Center Style Guide](#). Other guides recommend variations, including the [U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs Editorial Guide](#), which suggests capitalizing only when using it within a proper noun. For another explanation of this stylistic choice, see ["Why Capitalize Indigenous'?" by Christine Weeber on *Sapiens Anthropology Magazine* \(19 May 2020\)](#).

⁴ Throughout this essay, we play with the notion of "(im)possibilities" in response to the 2023 Mid-America Theatre Conference theme, "Impossible Theatre."

⁵ With regard to the term "decolonizing," many artists and scholars are using "Indigenizing" instead of "decolonizing" to help in de-centering the colonial within projects and incorporating Indigenous methods and

institution's next steps, we intentionally focus this article on praxis.⁶ Finally, we (re)consider what is meant by "praxis" within higher ed, our disciplines, and academic organizations, hoping to expand the focus on production to other types of practice and programming that feed the educational and artistic work of students, colleagues, and communities.

We both teach at Bowling Green State University (BGSU), a mid-size (18,000 undergraduate and graduate students), R2-ranked state school located in the town of Bowling Green, Ohio, a community of approximately 30,000. The university's tagline promotes BGSU as "A Public University for the Public Good," and the institution seeks to "embrac[e] its role as a national model in addressing the educational, economic and social vitality of our region, the state of Ohio, the nation and the world."⁷ Heidi teaches in the Department of Theatre & Film, and jenn teaches Graphic Design in the School of Art. We met in 2020 while working on a committee comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students from the main and satellite campuses. This group sought to develop a Land Acknowledgment statement that could be used for the university.⁸ Our purpose in doing so was to raise awareness of the region's role as past and present homeland to multiple tribal nations and the continued impact of settler-colonialism on Native individuals and communities. The committee's guiding principle was that the statement would be but a first step. Throughout the development of the statement, the committee sought input from Native groups, in addition to support from the university's governing bodies including Faculty Senate, Administrative Staff Council, Classified Staff Council, Graduate

epistemologies into practice. See, for instance, the work of Madeline Sayet and Sara Pillatzki-Warzeha for more about Indigenizing theatre.

⁶ For more discussions regarding Land Acknowledgments, please see the "Further Reading" list we have provided. While by no means an exhaustive list, the sources therein have informed our own thinking and design of the *In the Round* series. We have also hyperlinked many sources and references within the body of the article to provide quick access to additional information.

⁷ "[University Vision and Mission.](#)" *Bowling Green State University Fall 2022 Undergraduate Catalog*.

⁸ Visit the [BGSU Land Acknowledgment webpage](#) for more information and links to resources.

Student Senate, Undergraduate Student Government, Firelands Student Government, and upper administration.

While we view Land Acknowledgment as an *ongoing* process of development, the committee neared statement approval during the spring semester of 2021, after seeking feedback and backing from external and internal groups. At this point, Jenn proposed that we apply for the Glanz Family Research Award for Interdisciplinary Faculty Innovation and Collaboration, viewing this internal grant as an opportunity to start pursuing the beyond. We wanted to develop a project that would address the perceived absence, and corresponding relegation to the past, of Native peoples that prevails within the state of Ohio, erroneous assumptions that contribute to the perpetuation of harmful stereotyped tropes and images of Native peoples. Two key factors contribute to these perceptions: 1) There are no federally- or state-recognized tribes in Ohio; and, 2) Ohio has the highest rate of high school Indian mascots in the country. Though the Cleveland baseball team changed to the Guardians in 2021 after decades of contention and activism, there are still 195 high schools in Ohio that use Indian imagery as representation of their communities.⁹ An additional factor particular to BGSU is the degree to which Native peoples are underrepresented within the university. Taken together, less than 1% of BGSU students, faculty, and staff identify as Native American. Compounding all of this is the fact that 87% of state-level history standards “fail to cover Native people’s history” post-1900.¹⁰ To re-cap, BGSU is situated within a state in which no federal or state-recognized tribal nations reside and in which settler-produced images and tropes about “Indians” dominate high school mascots and thus Ohio

⁹ As one example, Heidi grew up in Piqua, Ohio, a town whose namesake is an abbreviation of a Shawnee word, and which is situated on Shawnee homeland. Piqua still boasts an “Indian” mascot, the image for which is fashioned off a Plains-based construction of “Indianness,” replete with a long, feathered headdress and lined “war paint.”

¹⁰ “[Native Now Teaching Resources](#),” *IllumiNative*.

communities. With an 88% rate of the undergraduate student body being in-state, the majority of students that BGSU serves has not been introduced to curriculum that teaches content about Native peoples and tribal nations from 20th or 21st century contexts, while growing up in or near towns that claim stereotyped “Indianness” as lauded community history. Given this landscape, addressing these gaps and misperceptions became a prime aim of going beyond.

Furthermore, we grew concerned that the [Land Acknowledgment statement](#), if not teamed with action, would fall into the trap that Megan Red Shirt-Shaw describes when she argues that statements “often perpetuate an erasure of Indigenous communities because they acknowledge the historic dispossession but do not accept them as modern-day participants.”¹¹ In thinking through how we, as white, settler educators and artists, might change perceptions of absence in the communities around us, we sought to develop a project that would render visible the presence of Native individuals and nations in our collective present—temporally, spatially, socially, culturally, and artistically.

From these guiding inquiries and principles, we came up with the idea for [In the Round: a guest speaker series featuring Native American creatives](#).¹² After receiving the \$6,000 Glanz grant, we designed the series to feature creatives from the arts-based areas of study offered at BGSU, also known as the Arts Roundtable which includes Creative Writing, Art, Design, Music, Theatre, and Film. The goals we established were as follows:

¹¹ [Megan Red Shirt-Shaw, ‘Beyond the land Acknowledgment: College ‘LAND BACK’ or Free Tuition for Native Students.’ Policy and Practice Brief, August 2020.](#)

¹² For more information, please see the [In the Round homepage](#). For photos from the events, please see the Appendix that follows this essay.

- 1) Render visible—to the BGSU and local communities—the artistry, activism, and presence of contemporary Native American artists.
- 2) Educate students and the wider campus and local communities about artistic expressions and processes with which they might not be familiar.
- 3) Create space that is inclusive of Indigenous voices and Indigenous works that are currently underrepresented at our university.
- 4) Contribute to curriculums by offering opportunities for faculty to incorporate the guest artists' engagements into their course syllabi.
- 5) Connect members of our university community to Indigenous artists and help to build relationships with the artists that may foster further collaboration.
- 6) Support BGSU's strategic goals toward diversity and belonging outlined in the [Forward Strategic Plan and University Mission and Values](#).

Three considerations that significantly informed the design of this series included the following:

- 1) We decided to schedule the series over the calendar year instead of the academic year to capture graduating students as well as incoming students.¹³
- 2) We wanted to create a series that featured Native creatives throughout the year and not just during Native American Heritage Month. While we recognize and appreciate the importance of this designation for November, we also believe that the sustained programming communicates the vitality of learning about and from Native American cultures throughout the year.

¹³ An unanticipated advantage of this calendar is that when asking units for financial support, we were able to remind them that they could split support over two separate fiscal years. As we have continued the series though, this has become a bit confusing for some of the units we've returned to for funding, thus we are now re-framing to align with the academic year.

- 3) As we built connections and worked in consultation with BGSU's Division of Diversity and Belonging, we sought to not saddle the division with this work. We wanted to exhibit the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work being undertaken by *all* members of a community, not just a dedicated office that is too-often overworked and under-resourced.

The series which spanned 2022 included six events and featured creatives. These artists engage in critical examination and exploration of issues facing Native and Indigenous Americans, including but not limited to, sovereignty, representation, ecology, historical narratives, and present perceptions through a variety of artistic and expressive means. We feel profoundly fortunate, honored and grateful that *In the Round's* inaugural year featured the following artists:¹⁴

- [SETH THOMAS SUTTON](#), Artist. Activist. Filmmaker. Professor.
- [CAROLE LINDSTROM](#) & [MICHAELA GOADE](#), Children's Book Author & Illustrator.
- [SADIE RED WING](#), Designer. Educator.
- [FRANK WALN](#), Hip Hop Artist. Music Producer.
- [MARY KATHRYN NAGLE](#), Playwright. Lawyer.
- [PAT PRUITT](#), Metalsmith Artist.

Each visit included a campus talk that was free and open to the public and which garnered audiences on average of 200 people. In addition, visits included a smaller group engagement with university students, and recorded interviews to provide accessibility to those who were not able to attend any of the in-person events. For example, six of the speakers were interviewed for

¹⁴ Each artist's own webpage or Instagram is hyperlinked to their names; we highly recommend checking out their work!

the [BG Ideas Podcast](#), a series produced by BGSU's Institute for the Study of Culture and Society and the School of Media and Communication, which aims to showcase work that strives to “help address social problems for the public good.”¹⁵ Each episode is researched and produced by BGSU students and is available for free through podcasting platforms. One of the speakers was interviewed by the local radio program, *The Morning Show*, which serves Bowling Green and surrounding communities. As an additional resource, a [LibGuide](#) was produced in conjunction with Colleen Boff, the head Librarian of the Curriculum Resource Center at BGSU's Jerome Library. The LibGuide serves as a source with dedicated sections to each artist and features collected research and resources for faculty, staff, and students so that they can more easily integrate the artists' work into their own curriculum and research.¹⁶

Through Carole and Michaela's visit, which focused on their award-winning book, *We Are Water Protectors*, we established community partnerships with the [Mazza Museum](#), a leading children's picture book museum (and the world's largest collection of original art by children's book illustrators) housed at the nearby University of Findlay, and the [Wood County District Public Library](#) (WCDPL).¹⁷ In addition to the campus talk, Carole and Michaela spoke at the public library for area children and families and the Mazza Museum handled book sales at both events. The WCDPL talk filled to the 100-person capacity. Overall, the 2022 events were well-received. Through a “pin award program” survey that we conducted during the Fall 2022 semester, we were able to understand more specifically the impact the events were having. At

¹⁵ “[BG Ideas](#)” webpage, Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (ICS). All the BG Ideas podcast episodes can be accessed on [YouTube](#). The episodes that feature *In the Round* speakers include: S6 Ep4: Challenging Indigenous Representation [...]; S6 Ep5: Diversifying Children's Literature [...]; S6 Ep6: Illustrating Deeper Meanings in Children's Literature; S7 Ep5: Graphic Design's role in underserved and marginalized communities; S7 Ep6: Frank Waln and Dr. Katherine Meizel – music, identity and activism; S7 Ep7: Telling indigenous peoples' stories through theater.

¹⁶ The “Native American Creatives” LibGuide can be found [HERE](#).

¹⁷ For more about the Mazza Museum, please see their [website](#). For more about the programming offered by The Children's Place at the Wood County District Public Library, click [HERE](#).

each campus talk, we provided a QR code that led audience members to a one-question survey which asked, “What’s your biggest takeaway from the talk?” By answering the question, the respondent earned a limited-edition *In the Round* enamel pin. Some of the responses were as follows:

Of Sadie Red Wing’s talk –

“Sadie added a layer of history that made me rethink how I will navigate in the digital design industry. Staying quiet s these inaccurate symbols prevail have done little in helping the sovereign tribes. Representation is only helpful when it actually depicts reality. If these stereotypes persist, their humanity will always be called into question.”

Tynea, student

Of Frank Waln’s talk –

“The concepts that resonated with me the most were when Frank Waln discussed the implications and opportunities available to him through repurposing music, words, and melodies to create discussion and reflection on history and misrepresentation of Native cultures. It was insightful when he expressed how his creativity can really flourish when limitations are present and they can be catalysts necessary to produce something amazing. It was enjoyable as an art education major with some music experiences to be able to identify and hear the real growth in the production, complexity, and style of his music as he walked us through songs he created at different points in his life.”

Kaitlyn, student

Of Mary Kathryn Nagle’s talk –

“It’s one thing to say that art and film can have a profound, real-world impact on lives everywhere, but Nagle’s story of Ruth Bader Ginsberg being affected by her work [...] really stuck with me. Something I’ve always admired about the arts is its ability to not only capture feelings and experiences but share them in a way that affects people, inspires them to do something (anything). It’s one if [*sic*] the biggest reasons I have pursued a BFA instead of a typical business or law degree.”

Anna, student

Of Pat Pruitt’s talk –

“My favorite topic he brought up was the growth in accessibility of the technology that we use to create. I really appreciate how he shared with us his enthusiasm just to ‘sit back and watch’ as all these crazy things are happening in the world around us, especially with the rise of AI. The world is going to continue advancing rapidly and I really appreciated Pat’s calm, accepting, and grounded thoughts about it all.”

Haley, student

And the responses have continued.

As AI moved to the forefront of the news cycle with increasing anxieties surrounding ChatGPT and other emergent technologies, students have excitedly referenced Pat Pruitt’s talk in which he addressed AI in the arts, remarking on the “sneak peek” Pruitt had provided. When

news of the U.S. Supreme Court's support of the [Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#) recently broke, colleagues and students asked if we had heard the news, a case they likely would not have known about if not for Mary Kathryn Nagle's talk.¹⁸ These energizing responses led the two of us to realize that *In the Round* could not be a "one year and done" endeavor, but rather a sustained and continual program. So, we dedicated ourselves to going beyond 2022.

Before discussing the ways "beyond" has manifested in 2023 and in future planning, we want to speak to some of the obstacles that have made this project seem impossible at times. A daunting task involved in the creation of projects such as this is, of course, funding. Ultimately, Jenn and I raised \$44,000 for the 2022 series through the generosity of various departments and units on campus, as well as the provision of funds from a Foundation account dedicated to supporting guest speakers in Art. For 2023 and beyond, however, we realized that we need to foster more community partnerships and pursue external grants to financially sustain the series. This, of course, takes much capital in terms of time and labor.

Our campus has an Office of Sponsored Research and Programs which we must work through to apply for grant support. As is the case with many, if not most academic institutions, the Office concentrates much of their focus and energy on grant opportunities within the sciences. Furthermore, much of the experience and expertise of those who work in the Office falls within the realm of grant-writing for the sciences. Thus, those who work in the Office have limited experience advising faculty in the arts about funding sources. When factoring in the

¹⁸ ICWA was established in 1978 in response to the high rate of Native children being removed from their families and placed in non-Native families. The act provided increased sovereignty for tribal nations in terms of custodianship of Native children, helping to ensure that Native children would stay within their own tribes or another tribe, rather than being sent to non-Native placements. In the Supreme Court case, *Haaland v. Brackeen* (2022), the plaintiffs sought to have ICWA declared unconstitutional. Mary Kathryn Nagle, who worked on the case as an attorney, discussed it during her talk at BGSU, a few weeks before hearings for the case commenced. In June 2023, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of ICWA. Hyperlinked within the text above is the Supreme Court syllabus on the case. For more information, see also [NPR's "The Supreme Court leaves Indian Child Welfare Act intact" by Nina Totenberg and Meghanlata Gupta, All Things Considered, June 15, 2023.](#)

number of staff employed within the Office, the funding amounts awarded in the sciences versus the arts, and the significant role successful grant acquisition plays in faculty promotion in the sciences, it is understandable why *In the Round* does not garner as much attention. Nonetheless, as we continue the series, external grants will be a vital source of funding. Heidi participated in an introductory grant-writing workshop provided by the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research, which introduced us to a program that enables users to search and identify potential grants. This tool has allowed us to initiate our own searches for outside funding opportunities.¹⁹

An unexpected challenge in our planning has been securing space for the events. As we suspect is the case at many institutions, spaces are at a premium on our campus and there are few that hold groups exceeding 150 people. Our ideal location is always the proscenium theatre space that the Theatre and Film department uses, but as many of those reading this likely know, performance space is typically occupied by set builds and production work throughout a given semester. Notably, using spaces outside of the theatre requires extra coordination as well as fundraising. Using a campus space outside those within the jurisdiction of our home departments incurs rental fees leading to increases in the budget.

On our campus, like other institutions, publicity must be channeled through the marketing department. Another unit that is under-resourced, marketing often must be strategically selective about the initiatives and projects on which it can focus attention. Fortunately, jenn is a graphic designer and has been able to work with an alumnus of the program, Jessie Walton, who is an enrolled citizen of Cherokee Nation. jenn incorporated printmaking elements created by Walton in several of the design artifacts. (Please see Appendix for examples of this design work.) While

¹⁹ BGSU subscribes to [SPIN](#) and also suggests Grants.gov and [Philanthropy News Digest RFP Bulletin](#) as additional tools to locate funding.

we do much of the publicity ourselves, we still need to work with the university's marketing department to follow protocols regarding local media outlets, etc.

While these obstacles exist, we have come to learn they are not, in fact, impossibilities. Many seeming impossibilities have become exciting possibilities and positive partnerships. We once again collaborated with the Mazza Museum and Wood County District Public Library (WCDPL) and hosted [Kevin Noble Maillard](#) and [Juana Martinez-Neal](#), author and illustrator of the award-winning children's book [Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story](#). The marketing department connected us to the university PBS affiliate, [WBGU](#), which along with other community partners, enabled us to purchase over 1000 copies of Fry Bread for all K-3 students and teachers in Bowling Green City Schools, for families who attended the WCDPL talk, and for graduating BGSU Inclusive Early Education majors and Arts Ed majors. To further the connection BGSU students, we expanded the programming surrounding Fry Bread by coordinating a tour of the Mazza Museum with Maillard and Martinez-Neal and students enrolled in a Picture Book Workshop course offered through the English Department. We are incredibly grateful for these opportunities to provide stories created by Indigenous authors to area children and future teachers in order to address the curricular gaps in primary education and to combat the harmful misrepresentations perpetuated through media and the prevalence of mascots in Ohio.

During the current (2023-2024) academic year, we welcomed [Ryan RedCorn](#) (Filmmaker, Photographer, Founding member of the 1491s, graphic designer, screenwriter on Hulu's [Reservation Dogs](#)).²⁰ In addition to sharing his insights through a campus talk, RedCorn screened his short film, *Dead Bird Hearts*, and met with film and graphic design students for a

²⁰ For more information on RedCorn, check out his Instagram ([redcorn](#)). For more information on the sketch comedy troupe, the 1491s, please see their [website](#).

smaller group discussion. [Talon Silverhorn](#) (Historical Interpreter, Cultural Programs Manager for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources) also contributed to the series.²¹ In addition, we teamed up with Bowling Green City Schools to host 5th graders for a talk with Silverhorn as a supplement to living history curriculum they received earlier in the school year. Following this event, we received reports from school principals and district administrators that the school librarians saw an uptick in the number of books focused on Native American topics being checked out by students. Silverhorn also connected with a “History and Podcasting” graduate course offered through BGSU’s History Department, which includes a focus on public history. Additionally, WBGU-PBS featured Silverhorn as a guest on [The Journal](#), a “weekly public affairs program” whose aim is to “bring the issues currently affecting Northwest and West Central Ohio into focus,” further expanding the audience beyond the campus community.²²

We are currently preparing for Traci Sorell’s visit in March 2024.²³ A Young Adult and children’s book author, Sorell will speak on campus and at WCDPL, as well as to a smaller group of Arts Education, Inclusive Early Childhood, and Creative Writing students. We will once again distribute books to area students, this time Sorell’s *Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer*. We continue to develop programming surrounding Sorell’s visit that will help to engage both the campus and local communities.

While we are committed to continuing *In the Round* as long as we can, we also imagine a “beyond” past this initial beyond. There is a sculpture garden on campus situated along the “arts corridor” between the Fine Arts Building and the Wolfe Center for the Arts. Developed within the last decade and named after past University president, Dr. Sydney A. Ribeau, this garden has

²¹ For more on Silverhorn, please see his [website](#).

²² [WBGU-PBS, The Journal](#). For Silverhorn’s episode, click [HERE](#).

²³ For more information on Sorell, please see her [website](#).

ample space for additional sculptures. Our hope is to commission works to feature within this space by artists from tribes for whom this area is homeland. For the speaker series, we would like to secure grants that would allow us to invite guest artists for longer residencies. What might the impact be if students could take two-week long intensives or semester-long classes from Native artists? What might the impact be if students could work on a theatrical production with a Native director or a short film with a Native filmmaker? How might the impact of such collaborations extend to and resonate with audiences? What might happen if students find new narrative voices outside of Western paradigms by working with Native authors? We hope that these steps to moving beyond will result in a culture shift, wherein in-state students will come to find the erroneous depictions of Native Americans presented to them early in their educational and social development to be demeaning, false, and unacceptable. We also share the dreams many faculty and staff have that institutions will one day offer tuition waivers to Native students.

Two areas less logistical in scope continue to beleaguer us as we try to envision new possibilities. The first is connecting more with Native individuals and groups throughout the planning and developing stages of this project, specifically Native individuals in Ohio and tribal nations for whom this region is homeland. One idea we have discussed is the formation of a consulting group comprised of Native individuals, though we also want to make sure that in doing so we do not take up too much of the group members' time and energy. In thinking toward future speakers, we want to invite more artists from the tribal nations for whom Ohio is home given that a large portion of BGSU's student body also considers those places and spaces home. Silverhorn is a citizen of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, a nation whose homeland is Ohio. While BGSU and its satellites are not located on Shawnee homeland, many students' hometowns are.

The second concerns the place and value of this type of work within our institutions and our fields. This work impacts our institutions, communities, and fields because of the remarkable impact the guest speakers have on the campus and surrounding communities. We hear this in the responses we receive from students, faculty staff, and community members through various modalities including the pin award responses, verbal feedback, articulation of Native concepts and issues within the classroom, and continued attendance at the events (collectively, the talks have garnered over 2000 attendees). Academic units have asked how they can get more involved and offer financial support (without us asking!). Colleagues in the library ask who the next author will be. Jessie Walton, the student whose work contributes to the series' publicity materials has been commissioned by Frank Waln to do design work. A Native undergraduate theatre student interested in playwriting connected with Mary Kathryn Nagle who offered mentorship. jenn, in her role as a designer, collaborated with Pat Pruitt on a wallpaper project, launched in May 2023 by Wolf-Gordon that incorporates AI creations. We appreciate the positive feedback we have received and are grateful for the myriad stories about how the speakers influence attendees and inform their ways of thinking and being.

And yet, figuring out how this work is situated within the ways that labor is recognized at institutional and disciplinary levels has proven difficult. This may be part of the reason we have struggled in establishing sustained communication with marketing, advancement, the grants office—all units that often do not get to determine the prioritization or distribution of their efforts. And while we do this work because we believe deeply that it is essential and urgent, we work within an industrial complex whose priorities do not always align with what we consider “essential” and “urgent.” For instance, tenure and promotion processes often pose challenges to how this work is evaluated by measuring high-impact, community-engaging, collaborative

projects against more traditionally product-driven, solo-created work that can be more easily assessed. And while Scholarship of Engagement is a term that is often thrown around our university and some may say is befitting the series we've just described, the phrase is one that evades clear definition within unit documents and can therefore be unpredictable when it comes to faculty dossiers. As Heidi prepared her tenure file, she was advised by multiple people to count *In the Round* as service in terms of tenure and promotion. A concern we have in this respect is that categorizing such work as service disincentivizes faculty from embarking on similar projects, especially those that involve collaboration across units, because to secure their positions and future promotions, focus must be placed on pedagogy and more traditionally construed (and often solo-authored) forms of scholarship. Carving out time to curate and facilitate this type of project—activities that rely upon research and scholarly faculties—diverts energies from the types of activities that more clearly fall within categories of labor that privilege the types of tangible products valued and demanded by neoliberal institutions.

Auxiliary activities—that is activities resulting from and about the original project rather than the actual contribution of that original project—include publishing and presenting at conferences and offer the occasion to not only share these experiences and questions with others who likely find themselves in similar positions, but at the risk of sounding self-serving, can provide an opportunity to connect the project to the research portion of one's dossier. When initially considering to which 2023 MATC symposium we would submit these ideas, we circled the impossibilities of the siloes we often find in our fields and in higher education. Do we submit to Pedagogy? To Practice and Production? Does this really fit into any of the symposia? Fortunately for us, MATC is incredibly open to blurring borders and thus allowing for many possibilities. We are grateful to the 2023 Practice and Production Symposium chairs and the

editors of *Theatre/Practice* for allowing us to push the boundaries of what can be considered “practice.” How possibilizing many conceptions of the term ‘impossible’ opens space for a wider array of meaningful and impactful projects that can foster transformative change within institutional, disciplinary, and local communities.²⁴

²⁴ We have included an appendix of images that help tell the story of *In the Round* thus far, including promotion, events, interview recordings, etc. We hope this will help to clarify and visualize what we’ve just described.

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Further Reading:

- [Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements for Cultural Institutions](#)
- [“Are You Planning to do a Land Acknowledgement?”](#) by Debbie Reese, American Indians in Children’s Literature (updated October 30, 2016)
- [“Land acknowledgements in the academy: Refusing the settler myth”](#) by Joe Wark, Curriculum Inquiry, 2021.
- [“Making Land Acknowledgements in the University Setting Meaningful and Appropriate”](#) by Corrie Whitmore and Erik Carlson (2022)
- [“This Land is Their Land: Land Acknowledgements and Beyond”](#) by Larry Beck (2021)
- [“Why Give an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement \(and How to make It Matter\)”](#) by Cheryl Crazy Bull (December 4, 2020)
- [“Acknowledging Native Land is a Step Against Indigenous Erasure”](#) by Mariah Stewart (December 19, 2019)
- [“OPINION: Land acknowledgments fall short in honoring Indigenous people”](#) by Summer Wilkie (February 6, 2021)
- [“Recognizing Place: Indigenous Land Acknowledgements”](#) by Alexander Cotnoir (July 15, 2021)
- [“Praxis Sessions for Virtual Collaboration: Land Acknowledgments”](#) hosted by Unsettling Dramaturgy: Crip & Indigenous Dramaturgies (March 31, 2020)
- [“Land Acknowledgment Guide,”](#) IllumiNative (2022)
- [HONOR NATIVE LAND: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement](#), U.S. Department of Arts & Culture

- [#HONORNATIVELAND \(video\)](#), U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, (October 3, 2017)
- [“Acknowledging Native Homelands”](#) by Christine DeLucia (2020)
- [Native Governance Center](#)
- [“Native Land interactive map,” Native Land Digital](#)
- [LANDBACK: Building lasting Indigenous Sovereignty](#)

Appendix:



Poster collection from the 2022 In The Round Series. Poster on left features the University Land Acknowledgment Statement, center posters feature speakers for the semester, and right posters are feature speaker posters. Photographic images of the Maumee River, six miles west of Bowling Green campus, a major tributary to Lake Erie taken by jenn stucker. Printmaking elements in semester poster created by Jessie Walton, BGSU graphic design alum and enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation.



In The Round 2022 Social Media promotions. The design work has been recognized with several national and regional design awards by GDUSA, UCDA, and The American Advertising Federation (Toledo).



In The Round Speakers. Left: Frank Waln performs. Top right: Carole Lindstrom talks about We Are Water Protectors. Bottom right: Ryan RedCorn addresses 300 attendees. Photo credits of speakers: Doug Hinebaugh and Sarah Thomas.



In The Round Speakers. Top left: Pat Pruitt. Top right: Mary Kathryn Nagle. Bottom left: Special edition In The Round Enamel pins on promotional cards. Bottom right: Promotional postcard. Photo credits of speakers: BGSU and Doug Hinebaugh.



Social media promotions for 2023 In The Round Series. Bottom right: Kevin Noble Maillard and Juana Martinez-Neal hold a copy of their book Fry Bread, A Native American Family Story. Photo credit of speakers at talk: Doug Hinebaugh.



Children at Crim Elementary hold up their copies of Fry Bread. Photo credit: BGSU



An 80-page *In The Round* year-in-review book shares the highlights and purposes of the series.