

HIDE

SKIN AS MATERIAL
AND METAPHOR

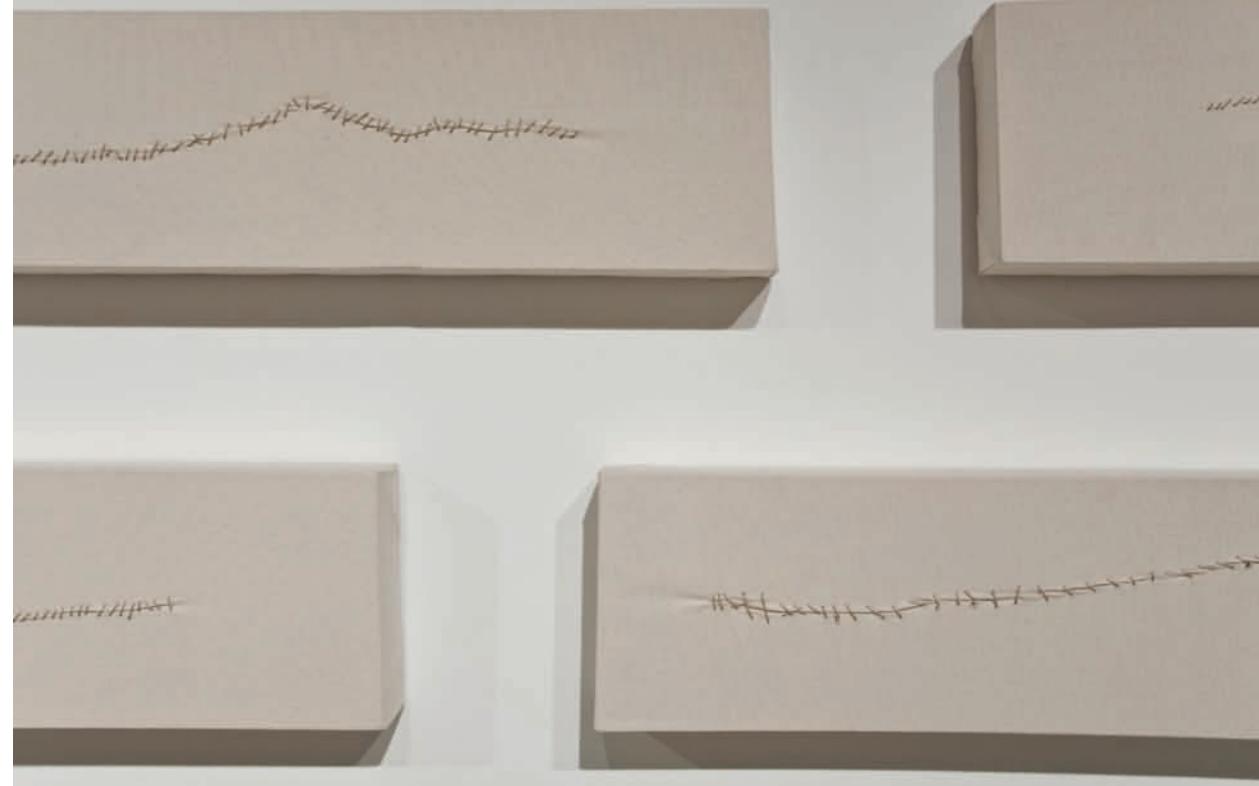


SONYA KELLIHER-COMBS (Inupiaq/Athabaskan) creates sculptural and mixed-media work that captures both vulnerability and strength in her use of organic and synthetic materials. A repeating motif in her work, the amorphous pouch forms seem to have once covered some form or shape that has now vanished, and they appear as ghostly, empty shells. They are perfect containers for her to wrestle with secrets that are unspeakable or forced into hiding.



Above: *Small Secrets* (installation and detail), 2009. Walrus stomach, human hair, glass beads, and nylon thread.

Right: *Salmon Walrus Family Portrait with Trim* (in progress), 2009. Acrylic polymer, walrus stomach, paper, reindeer fur, nylon thread, glass beads, archival ink, and fabric. Photos by Kevin G. Smith.

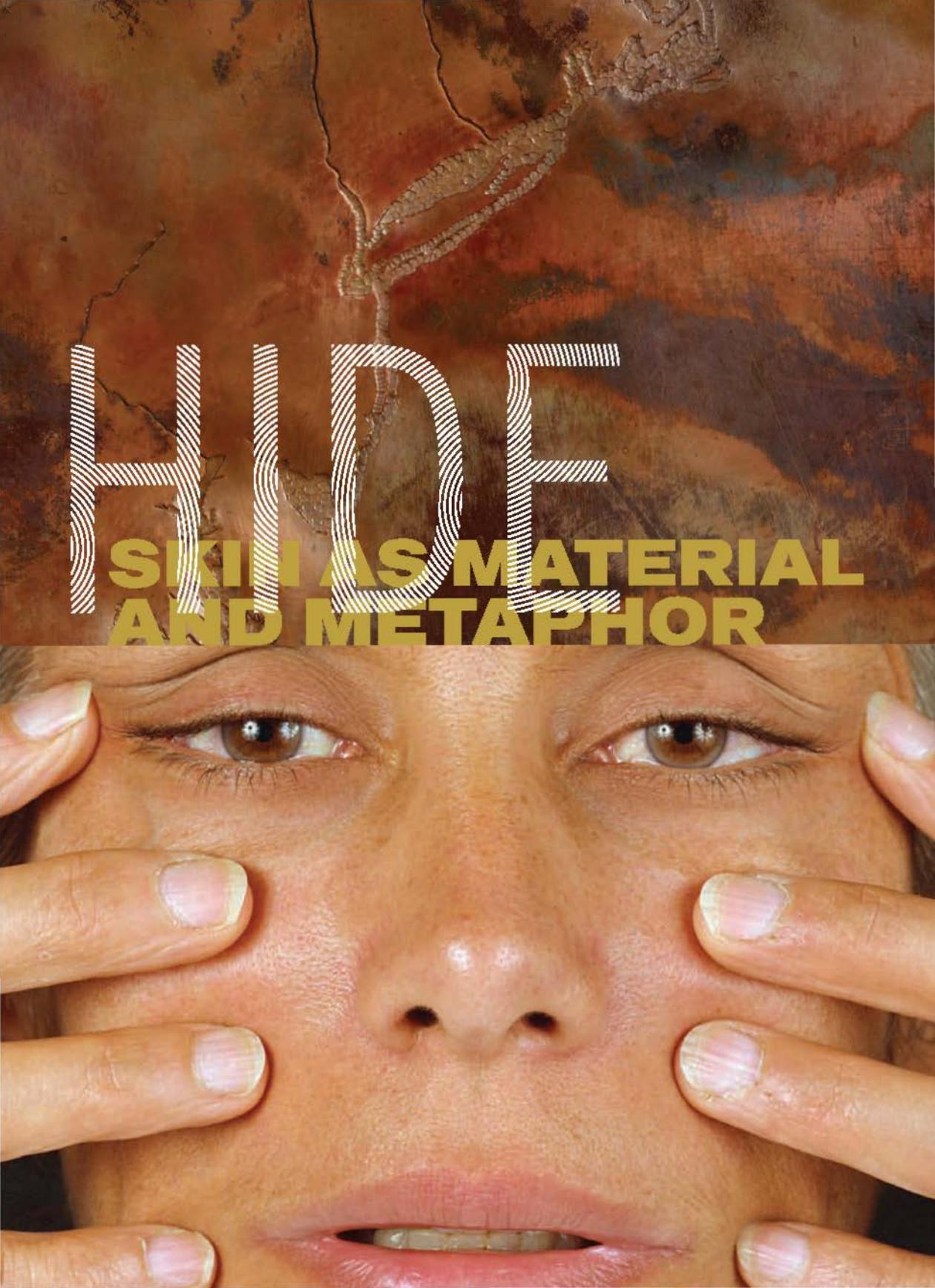


NADIA MYRE (Anishinaabe) explores scars, both personal and communal, in her mixed-media and video creations. Myre's epic work, *The Scar Project*, includes hundreds of canvases, each representing an individual's scar story. All of these "scars" tell stories of trauma and conflict but, like literal scars, the healing process itself can make the site of the wound stronger.

Above: *Landscape of Sorrow* (detail), 2009. Canvas, cotton thread.

Below: *Inkanatation*, 2004. Digital video, 1:27 min. Art © Nadia Myre/Licensed by CARCC, Ontario and VAGA, New York.





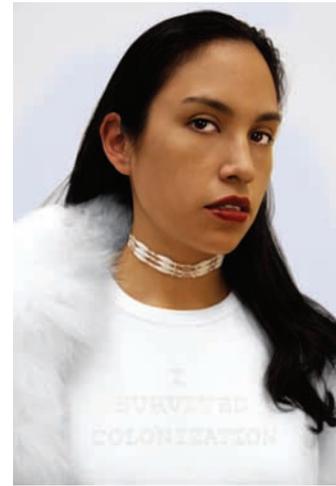
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Left: *Shorelines*, 2006. Hammered copper. Photo by Michael Cullen.
 Below: *Dark Water* (detail), 2009–10. Hammered copper, steel.

MICHAEL BELMORE's (Ojibway) sculptural works are meditative reflections on North American topography. With his work in hammered and chiseled copper he has transformed inert, heavy metal sheets into thin, undulating membranes. Like any skin its surface shows scars, whether from human activity or natural events.



KC ADAMS (Métis) creates enhanced images of people who are racial hybrids with both Native and European ancestry.

ROSALIE FAVELL (Cree Métis) draws her subjects from the Native community of artists and curators in Canada and around the world, celebrating their individuality and acknowledging their participation in a global indigenous community.



The *Urban Indian Series*, by **TERRANCE HOULE** (Blood), is a narrative work that walks us through a “normal” day for an urban Indian, invisibly observing him and forcing us to face our assumptions about Indian identity.



Mask, by **ARTHUR RENWICK** (Haisla), is a confrontational series that is not beautiful or romantic but visceral and inescapable.

SARAH SENSE (Chitimacha/Choctaw) weaves together scraps of stories to create a personal narrative that integrates her family's complex histories.



Clockwise, from top: **KC ADAMS**. *Cyborg Hybrid Cody*, 2009. Digital print on paper. **ROSALIE FAVELL**. *Tania Willard*, from *Facing the Camera* series, 2008. Photographic print. **SARAH SENSE**. *Karl 1* (detail), 2009. Digital prints on paper and mylar, artist tape. **ARTHUR RENWICK**. *Carla* from the series *Mask*, 2006. Inkjet print on paper, artist's proof (ed. of 3). Photo courtesy of Arthur Renwick and Leo Kamen Gallery. **TERRANCE HOULE**. *Urban Indian Series*, 2007. Eight digital C-prints. Photo by Jarusha Brown.

HIDE: SKIN AS MATERIAL AND METAPHOR

For Native people, skin encompasses an entire universe of meaning. Our own skin functions as a canvas that we can inscribe with messages about our identity or use as a shield to protect and hide our secrets. As a material, animal skin or hide has had a long history within Native culture. It is a symbolic reminder of historical misrepresentation, exploitation, and racial politics. The artists selected for *HIDE* draw upon this subject in multi-faceted ways, using both the material and concept of skin as a metaphor for widespread issues surrounding identity and personal, historical, and environmental trauma and perseverance. In their work, they interrupt our understanding of race, distort our perception of “skin,” and breach the artificial boundaries created by this potent subject matter. Rather than hiding difficult issues, they expose what is beneath the surface.

Sonya Kelliher-Combs, Nadia Myre, and Michael Belmore each present bodies of sculptural and mixed-media work that explore skin as a surface—revealing, concealing, and defining. The work of these artists awakens the senses, drawing the audience into a tactile experience of the materiality of their work as well as making them think about the complex ideas that emerge from this compelling art. The photographers invited to participate in the exhibition—Arthur Renwick, KC Adams, Terrance Houle, Rosalie Favell, and Sarah Sense—have created a diverse collection of portraits that play with and challenge our notions about the representation of Native people.

Kathleen Ash-Milby, Curator

SONYA KELLIHER-COMBS: MARCH 6–AUGUST 1, 2010

NADIA MYRE: MARCH 6–AUGUST 1, 2010

MICHAEL BELMORE: SEPTEMBER 4, 2010–JANUARY 16, 2011

PHOTOGRAPHY/SHOWING SKIN: SEPTEMBER 4, 2010–JANUARY 16, 2011

HIDE: Skin as Material and Metaphor is a two-part exhibition. Part One will be open to the public March 6, 2010 until August 1, 2010. Part Two will be open to the public September 4, 2010 until January 16, 2011.

George Gustav Heye Center
One Bowling Green
New York, NY 10004

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Cover One, above: **SONYA KELLIHER-COMBS**. *Sea Lion Brand with Blue* (detail), 2009. Photo by Kevin G. Smith.
below: **NADIA MYRE**. *Scarscapes* (detail), 2009. Art © Nadia Myre/Licensed by CARCC, Ontario and VAGA, New York.

Cover Two, above: **MICHAEL BELMORE**. *Shorelines* (detail), 2006. Hammered copper. Photo by Michael Cullen.
below: **ARTHUR RENWICK**. *Jani*, from the series *Mask*, 2006. Inkjet print on paper, artist's proof 2 (ed. of 3). Photo courtesy of Arthur Renwick and Leo Kamen Gallery.