

THE BROAD

NEWS

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THE BROAD PRESENTS POLARIS PRIZE WINNING ARTIST TANYA TAGAQ ON OCT. 1 AS NEXT PROGRAM IN FEMINIST PERFORMANCE SERIES



Tanya Tagaq, photo by Nadya Kwandibens

LOS ANGELES—The Broad announced today that renowned Canadian-born Inuit improvisational performer, composer, actor and experimental recording artist **Tanya Tagaq** will perform as part of The Broad's *Tip of Her Tongue* feminist performance series on Saturday, Oct. 1. The Broad will be the first Los Angeles institution to present a solo performance by Tagaq who won the Polaris Prize in 2014.

Tagaq is known for performances that challenge ideas of genre and culture, and contend with themes of environmentalism, human rights and Indigenous issues. Along with percussionist Jean Martin and violinist Jesse Zubot, she will perform a live accompaniment to Robert Flaherty's controversial 1922 film, *Nanook of the North*, which portrays the lives of an Inuit family in Arctic Canada.

Flaherty's silent film, considered the world's first major anthropological documentary, is rife

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with contradictions and incorrect assumptions about Inuit life that persist to this day. The director lived and worked with Inuit for years, but still included staged scenes of buffoonery and feigned Inuit ignorance of modern accoutrements. His film established a cinematic language for documentary filmmaking and for representing Indigenous Arctic people as outside Western culture.

"*The Tip of Her Tongue* series has featured women performance artists who work with language and the body. Their creative practices mirror those of visual artists in the Broad collection such as Kara Walker, Barbara Kruger, Ellen Gallagher or Jenny Saville, whose representations of the body in their artworks speak loudly about gender and politics in contemporary society," said Ed Patuto, director of audience engagement at The Broad. "Tagaq's performances are a powerful and punk-like physical reworking of an Indigenous art form. In *Nanook of the North*, she pairs her performance with the appropriated images of the Inuit people in Flaherty's film. In the same way that artists such as Kruger and Walker utilize appropriation to reframe perspectives of the female or African-American body, Tagaq utilizes her body and voice to recontextualize Flaherty's and our commonly accepted views of Indigenous peoples."

One of Tagaq's most celebrated projects is the artist's reclamation of Flaherty's controversial film through this performance. Tagaq sings over the film, and makes it mean something different. Drawing on her childhood on Nunavut's Victoria Island, and on her mother's memories of forced relocation from the film's Northern Quebec location, Tagaq's sense of the sound of the Arctic spaces shown in the film transforms the images, adding tremendous depth to a complex mix of beautiful representations and racially charged clichés. Her improvisations and expression ferociously refute lazy assumptions about contemporary, experimental Indigenous art's relationship to tradition, a style she has perfected over a decade of performances on major stages worldwide.

"Tanya Tagaq is not only an internationally celebrated vocal artist, she is also a feminist activist associated with the fight for justice on behalf of Indigenous women," said Jennifer Doyle, professor of English at UC Riverside and guest curator of *The Tip of Her Tongue* series. "Her *Nanook* performance is an intense occupation of history; a disorienting layering of the past and the present. *The Tip of Her Tongue* foregrounds experimental performance that pushes the envelope—in terms of genre, and in terms of what can be said, and how. As an artist, Tagaq explores the edges of music, performance and noise. Hers is a profoundly feminist and decolonizing practice."

Tickets for the Saturday, Oct. 1 performance of *The Tip of Her Tongue: Tanya Tagaq in Concert with Nanook of the North* are \$30 and will go on sale Monday, Aug. 15 at 12 p.m. PT at thebroad.org/programs. The performance will take place at the Zipper Concert Hall at The Colburn School, just across the street from The Broad in downtown Los Angeles.

Tanya Tagaq in concert with *Nanook of the North* was commissioned by the Toronto International Film Festival, where it premiered to critical acclaim in 2012 as part of TIFF First Nations. Since then, she has performed unique iterations of *Nanook of the North* at Lincoln Center, the Mondavi Center (Bay Area), Luminato (Toronto), PUSH International Film Festival (Vancouver) and Helsinki Festival.

About Tanya Tagaq

Tanya Tagaq won the 2014 Polaris Music Prize for *Animism*, an album which disrupted the music world in Canada and beyond with its powerfully original vision. Tagaq joined Björk on her 2000 world tour and album *Medúlla*. She was named one of the "10 new artists to know in 2015" by Rolling Stone. Tagaq contorts elements of punk, metal and electronica into a complex and contemporary sound that begins in breath, a communal and fundamental phenomenon. Tagaq will be releasing the follow-up to *Animism* this fall on Six Shooter Records.

While 2014's Polaris Music Prize win signaled an awakening to Tagaq's art and messages, she has been touring and collaborating with an elite international circle of artists for over a decade. Tagaq's improvisational approach lends itself to collaboration across genres, and recent projects have pulled her in vastly different directions, from contributing guest vocals to

a recent F**ked Up song (a hardcore punk band from Toronto) to premiering a new composition made for Kronos Quartet's *Fifty for the Future* collection. In numerous interviews, Tagaq has stressed the importance of considering her work in the context of contemporary—not traditional—art. This statement is not just about sound, although her music is decidedly modern and technically intricate, but about deep-rooted assumptions about Indigenous culture in general and Canada in particular.

Tagaq's exquisite improvisations and expression ferociously refute easy (or lazy) assumptions about contemporary Indigenous art's relationship to tradition, a style she has perfected over a decade of performances on major stages worldwide.

About *The Tip of Her Tongue Series*

Barbara Kruger's *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989, is a stark emblem for feminist art practice—if the body is our battleground, it is through language that we fight. Inspired by Kruger's work and by similarly discursive artworks in the Broad collection, *The Tip of Her Tongue* program series features feminist artists in performance who work with language and embodiment. The artists in this series have intense stories to tell and experiment aggressively with the telling. The artists work with words to explore how the body's relationship to language is mediated by histories large and small. The body may both anchor and disrupt the story. It is a source of desire, grief, shame and laughter. These intimate performances explore the politics of representation—with how gender is produced in, through and as language; and how the stories we tell circulate around, move through, against and with the body.

About The Broad

The Broad is a new contemporary art museum built by philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. The museum, which is designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Gensler, opened Sept. 20, 2015 with free general admission. The museum is home to the nearly 2,000 works of art in the Broad collection, which is among the most prominent holdings of postwar and contemporary art worldwide. With its innovative "veil-and-vault" concept, the 120,000-square-foot, \$140-million building features two floors of gallery space to showcase The Broad's comprehensive collection and is the headquarters of The Broad Art Foundation's worldwide lending library.

For more information on The Broad and to sign up for updates, please visit thebroad.org.

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