HOULE, Robert (b. 1947, St. Boniface, Manitoba / né à St. Boniface, Manitoba, en 1947)

Born in St. Boniface, Manitoba, Robert Houle currently lives and works in Toronto. He studied art history at the University of Manitoba, art education at McGill University and painting and drawing at the International Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria. Houle has been exhibiting since the early 1970’s. His most recent exhibition was Paris/Ojibwa, first installed at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris in 2010, and most recently at the Art Gallery of Peterborough. Among his many solo exhibitions are Robert Houle: Troubling Abstractions, a co-production between the McMaster Museum of Art and the Robert McLaughlin Gallery; Sovereignty over Subjectivity, at the Winnipeg Art Gallery; Palisade, at the Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa; and Anishnabe Walker Court, an intervention at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. He has also participated in several important group exhibitions, including Notions of Conflict, at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Real Fictions: Four Canadian Artists, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; and Tout le temps/Every Time, at the Biennale 2000, Montreal. Houle was the first curator of contemporary Indian art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization from 1977 to 1981 and has curated or co-curated groundbreaking exhibitions such as New Work by a New Generation, at the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina in 1982, and Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada in 1992. He also taught Native studies at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto for fifteen years. Houle's considerable influence as an artist, curator, teacher and writer has led to his being awarded the Janet Braide Memorial Award for Excellence in Canadian Art History in 1993; the 2001 Toronto Arts Award for the Visual Arts; the Eiteljorg Fellowship in 2003 and in 2006, the Canada Council International Residency Program for the Visual Arts in Paris.

Houle draws from the sophisticated visual traditions of First Nations cultures, demonstrating their currency in contemporary art milieus. Utilizing Western art conventions he tackles lingering aspects of colonialism and their effects on First Nations peoples. Houle often appropriates historical photographs and texts, recontextualizing them by combining them with Anishnaabe language and traditional materials such as porcupine quills within his paintings.

Please cite in the following manner:

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