

# SHERI PRANTEAU: UNDISAPPEARED

**DIRECTOR**

Épopée

**YEAR**

2018

**ORIGINAL LANGUAGE**

English

**CATEGORY**

Installation

**DESCRIPTION**

The video installation *Sheri Pranteau: Undisappeared*, by Groupe Épopée, presents the story of Sheri Pranteau. In Winnipeg in 1999, Pranteau, a Cree-Anishinaabe woman from Manitoba, was sentenced to life in prison for manslaughter and armed robbery. In 2015, out on conditional release, she participated in a panel discussion on indigenous women in the Canadian penal system, organized by McGill University for its law school's moot court. The installation restores Sheri Pranteau's voice while highlighting the power structures that command our gaze, built into the very architecture of the moot court.

**SOUND**

5.1

**SHOOTING FORMAT**

HD

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**FURTHER INFORMATION****Artist statement:**

Groupe Épopée filmed Sheri Pranteau talking about her incarceration after she received a life sentence for manslaughter and armed robbery. Pranteau, a Cree and Anishinaabe woman from Manitoba, was tried in Winnipeg. She served fifteen years in prison, followed by two years in a halfway house in Montreal. Today, she is out on parole.

In September 2015, Pranteau was invited to participate in a discussion on the situation of Indigenous women in the Canadian prison system, organized by the Faculty of Law at McGill University. Following talks by two experts, she took the floor to recount her experience in prison.

The panel took place at the Moot Court at McGill University. This amphitheatre is a replica of a courtroom surrounded by tiered rows of seats and is used to train future lawyers. Pranteau therefore found herself in court once again, being scrutinized by an audience, within an amphitheatre that also conjures up images of dissection halls in European faculties of medicine during the Renaissance.

*Sheri Pranteau: Undisappeared* reconstructs her experience in the Moot Court. By concentrating viewers' eyes on Pranteau, this multiple-screen video installation emphasizes the power relations that underlie the very architecture of the amphitheatre. Pranteau is filmed in close-up in order to fully empower her words. The audience seats are empty. The absence of spectators and jurors removes the function of courtroom from the place.

As they experience the installation, spectators are called upon to observe the point to which the powers that be dictate our gazes, particularly with regard to Indigenous women. Historically, the representation of Indigenous people has alternated between invisibility and the spectacle of suffering. Groupe Épopée hopes that this project will help to expose (and defuse) a representation process that, under cover of good intentions, extends colonial measures.

**KEYWORDS**

First Nations, women, prison, colonialism, justice

**THEMES**

Socio-politics

Private life