

# **Working With Cross-cultural Collaborations.**

By Donald Morin

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## **Introduction of Tilm.com Creations President.**

[Tilm.com](#) founder Mr. Donald Morin performed at the [Neechie Festival, a benefit for the SikSika people](#) flooded outside of Calgary Alberta. The event was held at Hobbema Reserve, where Donald as well recorded most of the audio and visuals for the two day event co-produced by **Identity Records**. May, he was the [Technical Director and co-coordinator of The Edmonton Red Jam Slam](#) event with main coordinator Carrie Lawrence. He completed acting work on his recurring character Johnny on [BLACKSTONE](#), a Canadian TV series shot in Edmonton, AB. Other film involvement consisted of acting coach and camera work for auditioning aspect the film [The Family by Jason Jeffery](#). 2012 Mr. Morin also appeared at [The Calgary International Film Festival](#) in The World Premiere of the feature Film The Killing Games by Canadian Director Barry J. Gillis. He was also hired for the [Aboriginal Arts Festivals](#) held in Edmonton 2010 and 2011, and involved with [International Artist Rebecca Belmore with](#)

[her performance art work at the Museum of Anthropology](#) and the [Orr Gallery](#) in Vancouver 2010.

2008 Donald worked for [Monroe Communications](#) as an [actor on a web based project call The Law Project](#). 2007 he studied and worked with [Gunargie O'Sullivan](#) during the Ten Day Intensive of **The Activist Documentary Film Workshop** of the [Galliano Island Film and Television School](#) in BC. He also co-produced radio programs for [Coop Radio's](#) Community Radio programs [When Spirit Whispers](#) and [Snewaylh](#) Language program with Co-host/producer Gunargie O'Sullivan". □□2006, he performed for Rebecca Belmore and acted for [Infinity Films](#) of Florida, USA.

August, 05 he completed the lead role of "*Sam Wolf*" for [Caravan Farm Theatre summer musical IOU LAND](#). 04/05, he finished film mentoring work for [The Indigenous Media Arts Group \(IMAG\)](#) and completed teaching the Professional Development program for Native Artists at [IMAG](#). He has showed a 45 minute version of his [7 Fires](#) film and his academic paper [NDNs In the Age Of Terror](#) in Atlanta, Georgia, USA at the [University Of Georgia, Art & Design](#) and for [The Society for Cinema and Media Studies 2004 International Conference](#). 2004, he was one of the keynote Speakers/Presenters at The Annual AGM for [The National Alliance for Media Artists](#) at the [RimShot Media Festival](#) in Vancouver, and lighting for the short [The Birthday](#) produced by Wendy Nahanee. 2003, he completed the [S.E.A.R.C.H](#) program @ [The Alliance for Art and Culture](#), sat for the 2,003 [Canada Council For The Arts](#) selection committee and completed teaching the Native youth training program and the professional development programs @ the [Indigenous Media Arts](#)

Group. He also taught Digital Film program at [The Native Education Centre](#).

The **7 Fires 4 U...Kitchi Manitou** film was also presented @ the 13th. Annual [La Terres En Vue Film/Video Festival](#) in Montreal of June, 2,003. That year he also completed the direction of two video shorts for Monique Giard entitled **VICIOUS ATTACK**, and **I'M FIRST NATIONS AND PROUD OF IT**. 2,002, **7 Fires 4 U...Kitchi Manitou** premiered @ the 5th. Annual **IMAGeNation Indigenous Film/Video Festival** in Vancouver after his digital filmmaking teaching work. November, he directed and videotaped the one hour **DVCAM** production promoting **Elder's Care** for Producer Rasunah Marsden. Work also involved Film Consultant for German Company **Relevant Film's** project "[BluePrint](#)", photographed in Europe and Canada. In 2,001, Donald shot 16mm film for **7 Fires 4 U...Kitchi Manitou**, and worked with Robert Free of the **American Indian Movement** in Seattle Washington. 2,000, Mr. Morin also worked on various Television series such as **First Wave, and So Weird**. □ He also published the magazine edition of [The Métis Sauvage European Tour](#) website for [Mannitou Creations](#), and shot 16mm film footage of his 2,002 release.

1999, He produced and toured **The Métis Sauvage European Tour** in Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Paris, and London. March 94, he worked as a principal actor in the [NBC Movie of The Week](#) with Richard Crenna and Beverly De'Angelo in Seattle, Washington. Mr. Morin produced and edited The 96 minute documentary dance video of Karen Jamieson's cross-cultural production of **Gawa Gyani** in Tokyo, Japan 1994. Donald Morin has been involved with numerous cross-

cultural collaborations throughout his years as an inter-disciplinary artist. He has collaborated as a writer/performer for The Karen Jamieson Dance Company and as well as Headlines Theatre.

He has also collaborated as a Lead actor for Lux Film's 35mm French Feature Film Windigo, Donald was also the Writer/Director and Producer and fellow actor for NDNs & Dogs, A Multi-media theatre event at Neo-Nativist festival (90), Earth Voice Festival (92) & The National Native Youth and Multicultural Conference (94). Donald Morin performed the LEAD role of Eddy LaRoche in the Quebec 35mm film Windigo in 1994, which won awards at film festivals in Toronto and Cannes France. 1990, Donald was a studio director/production assistant/hall monitor for CBC news Vancouver.85/88/91, he was drama instructor/director for the Spirit Song Theatre Company, Vancouver, BC, where he re-wrote Sea Street to an eight person play for Native youth from a two person show for the 1987 Indigenous World Native Youth Conference, UBC, from one man play for Surrey Teachers Assoc. 1985, he was also the lead Actor for Soul Survivor, which toured the Edmonton Fringe Festival & Vancouver Fringe Festival. Donald Morin was with the Directors Guild of Canada from 1983-1989 and The Marie Morton Talent Agency from 1981-1992.

Donald Morin's television and film-making association began in 1981, when he was hired for promotion for George Hamilton's film vehicle Zorro, The Gay Blade, and then as an extra working with Britt Eckland and Winston Reckett's in Dead Wrong directed by Al Clapp. In 1982, he performed and worked on production with Sylvester Stallone's Feature Film First Blood, directed by Canadian director Ted Kotcheff. After graduating in 1989, at SFU, Burnaby B.C., *majoring in Fine &*

*Performing Arts, with a film concentration,* Mr. Morin continued his foray into performance and the intricacies of film-making with his work as an academic, educator, media artist, singer/songwriter and actor.

## **Cross Cultural Protocol and Concerns**

Even when working as a video Instructor in 1995 for the Semiahmoo people in British Columbia, Donald has constantly heard from Aboriginal people, how many new Canadians and current Canadians do not understand the reserve system, Indian legislation, and the many issues affecting us a people in Canada and abroad. With some of the major film funding institutions of Canada, there is a lack of understanding of First Nations values and cross cultural needs in relation to the dominant system of production, distribution, and consumption of cultural forms, ideas and thought. Other cultural apparatuses are slowly addressing these issues, as museums, art galleries, and theatre companies today are acknowledging the diversity of First Peoples art and culture.

When Non-Native or other Native people visit a reserve system or traditional territory not their own, it is important to acknowledge the traditional owners of the territory, but as well to bring a gift and offering to the senior chief or elder. This could be either the traditional offerings of tobacco, salmon, sweetgrass, and cedar or sage bundles. Regardless, if it is the senior elder or chief, any first nation person of which you are approaching, such offerings are the norm. Do not offer money, unless it has been stated otherwise from a respect community member. In some cases, money can be donated to a community cause.

With cultural protocol, it's important to give acknowledgement to the traditional owners of the territory and to ask permission to enter one's reserve or territory. This involves entrance to land, performance event, ceremonial processions, or cultural events, which bring the community together. To ignore First Peoples' traditional values, outside of western eurocentric thought or convention is an insult to Aboriginal people and will be read as such.

Cultural appropriation has been a thorny issue, in regards to who is telling our stories and producing our stories in traditional or western forms of communication. Dialogue is important in clarifying cultural differences and similarities, assumptions, opinions, oral history, and the written information depicting Aboriginal First people. From basic lexicons like the word "Indian" to "aboriginal", "indigenous", "First Nations" or "First People", the semantics of Native people is a curious one, whereas bastardization and popular culture has tended to confuse the meaning and issues of our people.

Don't be afraid to ask us if you don't know anything about us. Yes, there are many angry Native people, perhaps rightly or wrongly so, but Canada's history is the result of that anger, because of the lack to resolve political and cultural issues that affected us as individuals and as communities. A Cree or Metis would not tell a story from the Haisla people or the Inuits. Hiring First Nations artists as key collaborators, instead of below the line talent or crew will help resolve these issues and as well a hiring a First Nations consultant/advisor will help clarify issues and needs of each collaborative project. Understand oral tradition and as well written history, so you know who has rightly or

wrongly interpreted us in the written literacies. We are not only reserve people, urban people, skid row people, or political charged people. We are human beings like our sisters and brothers of the white, yellow, and black race. All part of Mother earth, all part of the four directions, the four elements and the four races. First Nations philosophy has never consider owning the earth or the resources of this great country. We share and mange it with everyone equally and consensually. To change the status quo, First Nation people must be an intricate part of mainstream Canadian society. From production distribution and consumption of material and ideological forms, First Nation cultural forms must be integrated into the educational and cultural apparatuses of dominant society.

From videoconference meetings with aboriginal artists in Canada and Australia, to e-mail and telephone dialogue with Aboriginal artists in Denmark and Greenland, dialogue and sharing of language and culture is paramount in order to understand the ravages of colonialism. History has affect all cultures and we must now live and work together with honesty, humility and respect. Tilm.com (The Indigenous Literacy Company is being formed to address the issues and ideas in this article, and to produce authentic stories based on honest humility and respect. In closing I hope these words give you a better understanding of the issues affecting cross-cultural collaborations. Aho, all my relations.

Donald Morin, BA

Writer/Director of Tilm.com Creations. Call 587.521.2249 to inquire about services and cultural goals.

