

FROHAWK TWO FEATHERS  
**MATRIX 170**

ON ERYTHANG (ON EVERYTHING)

OCTOBER 2, 2014 - JANUARY 4, 2015



WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

# ON EVERYTHING

*“History...is indeed little more than the register of crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.”*<sup>1</sup>

—EDWARD GIBBON (1737–1794) FROM *THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE*

*“History is more or less bunk.”*<sup>2</sup>

—HENRY FORD (1863–1947)

Do you ever stop to read historical signs? An old New England city like Hartford teems with them. On the grounds of Center Church, across the street from the Wadsworth Atheneum, stands an official sign that provides a brief history of the founding of Hartford. It traces the various names of the area, from the original Native American “Suckiaug” (meaning black, fertile earth), to the Dutch “House of Good Hope” (from when they first colonized in 1633), to the English “Hartford” (after they permanently settled in 1637). The sign states nothing of the conquests and controversies that took place among the Sequin and Pequot tribes, the Dutch, and the English in the interest of controlling this rich land of the Connecticut River Valley.

Putting aside any real account of the story of Hartford—but isn’t “truth” in history a misnomer anyhow?—the Los Angeles-based artist Frohawk Two Feathers contributes his version in 2014. Through a fantastical series of official portraits, battle paintings, territorial maps, and military paraphernalia, the artist compiles a tongue-in-cheek, alternative tale of the city, set in the late eighteenth century. Part of a larger epic narrative he began in 2006, Two Feathers’ chronicle commences in 1658 and focuses on the rise of “Frengland”—a fictitious union of France and England. Merged as one huge, colonial super-empire, Frengland’s complex international saga of exploration, colonization, and world domination is documented by Two Feathers in an ongoing project that will one day conclude in 1880. The visual narrative is told through portraits of duplicitous royal family members, corrupt military leaders, and rebel assassins, all coded with facial and body tattoos. They don tribal costumes, military uniforms, and European fashions, supplemented with pertinent accessories. Intricate maps of expeditions and battle sites document the progress of the unstoppable superpower. Frengland’s territories expand as Two Feathers participates in exhibitions in cities around the world, where each new setting becomes part of the ongoing story of conquest.

COVER: ON LOVING SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T LOVE YOU BACK AND COMPENSATING FOR THAT WITH PLOTTING AND MURDER. T H O T 1 7 9 1. THAT HIGH-BORN ON THE TEAM. LUCRETIA THEROUX. SELF-STYLED QUEEN OF NEW YORK AND FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF BAST. OR, ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE HISTORICAL SIDE-CHICK, DIPPED IN THE LATEST FASHIONS, FRONTING LIKE SHE REAL.

HARTFORD SIGN. ERECTED 1971 BY THE CITY OF HARTFORD, THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AND THE SOCIETY OF THE DESCENDANTS OF THE FOUNDERS OF HARTFORD.



Hartford's Native American history and subsequent colonization by the Dutch and English in the early seventeenth century dovetails perfectly with Two Feathers' already-established narrative between two main global forces—the kingdom of Holland and Zeeland and the republic of Frengland. The artist's story begins in December of 1791, combining real, imagined, and conflated historical place names. The Frenglish North American Expeditionary Force, led by Bonnie Prince Johnnie (a pawn of the ruling family), has conquered New Amsterdam, forcing the Dutch to flee northward via the Fresh River (Connecticut River) into Adriaensland (Connecticut).

Their destination is Suckiaug's Fort of Goede Hoop, where they plan to regroup and bolster the defenses of the fort, which is rumored to store a great cache of gold. The Frenglish, along with a host of allies—Harlemites, the Lenape, and others—aim to follow and take the fort. With the plundered wealth, they plan to rebuild the war-devastated New Amsterdam, which Johnnie renames New York in order to stake his claim for Frengland with an acknowledgment of his lineal descent from the House of York.

As seen in his portrait, the white heraldic rose that symbolizes the real House of York emblazons Prince Johnnie's entire right cheek as a tattoo. Coded tattoos adorn most of Two Feathers' subjects, making reference to ancient cultures and contemporary culture, including gangs, prisoners, Goths, and hipsters. Under Johnnie's right eye, the struck-through name "Anibal," flanked by a skull and a heart, denotes his male lover who is now dead. Under the left eye, the words "Sidney" and "Frengland" name his family's House and the Country of his loyalty. Black tears, underlined by swords pointing to them, represent kills (as in prison culture), and the willingness to kill again for one's country. The prince's left cheek bears an Egyptian cobra, a symbol of the goddess of the north, evoking both Johnnie's feminine side and his geographical location (North America).<sup>3</sup>

Egyptian references permeate the Frenglish society. Lucretia's face displays a pyramid tattoo. Johnnie's crown is a *Khepresh*, the ancient war helmet worn by a Pharaoh. Made of blue leather, studded with sun discs, and fronted by the traditional *Uraeus* (asp), the royal crown also features a red bandanna doo-rag—a nod to the street and a typical mash-up by Two Feathers. The heavy gold chain universally exhibits wealth, from royal family jewels to rap star bling. Fur coats pervade the

ON LOSING THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE TO TREACHERY, FIGHT A GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST A NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR FOE, AND STILL MANAGING TO KEEP YOUR FEET ON EVERYBODY'S NECK. IT'S MAGIC, BABY! P O N Y 1 7 9 1. PHARAOH OF NEW YORK. BONNIE PRINCE JOHNNIE. CONQUEROR OF THE DUTCH IN NORTH AMERICA AND SELF-STYLED LIBERATOR OF THE LENAPE. CROWN RULER OF THE LOWER HUDSON. OR, A RUTHLESS THUG, OUT FOR SELF, SNATCHING CRIBS AND PAPER ON THE FLY, LOOKING COOL IN HIS FINERY.

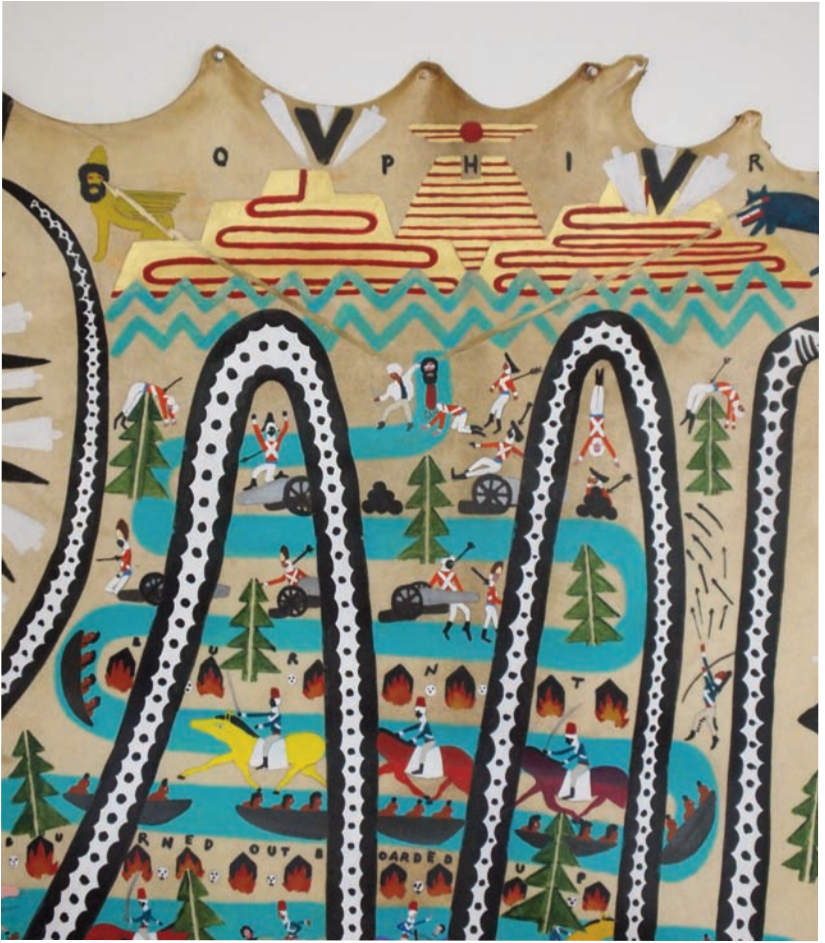




ON THE TOPIC OF WHO RULES AND  
WHO SERVES AND ON WHO WORE IT  
BEST. (RED ARM)



ON THE TRAGIC FOLLY OF HOLOFERNES,  
REPLAYED AT THE AMERICAN OPHIR TWO  
MILLENNIA LATER. (DETAIL)



ON THE TRAGIC FOLLY OF HOLOFERNES,  
REPLAYED AT THE AMERICAN OPHIR TWO  
MILLENNIA LATER.



hip-hop elite as well, but relate to the fur trade in this winter tale, and Bonnie Prince Johnnie's pelt of choice is a regal ermine. His coat, crossed by a red, white, and black beaded sash, acknowledges Frenghland's Iroquoian allies. According to Two Feathers, the black and white collar of his gold silk jacket "is significant because the colors are [connected to] Apophis or Apep, the Chaos Serpent, also associated with Set or Seth, the personification of evil in the Egyptian pantheon."<sup>4</sup> The collar displays the prince's vicious nature since his lover's death. Finally, the painting's title includes *PONY1791*. PONY stands for "Pharaoh of New York," but the full title alludes to KONY2012, the recent campaign to stop African war criminal Joseph Kony, a comparable figure to Johnnie. References consistently cross cultures and time periods, distant past and present day, insinuating the cyclical nature of history.

*On errythang (On everything)*, the exhibition's title, points directly to this idea—that the artist's story applies to all power struggles. But *On errythang* cites a term from African American street vernacular meaning "no matter what" or "going all out."<sup>5</sup> This exemplifies Frohawk Two Feathers' committed band of Frenghish soldiers, the Toucouleur Army (or All Color Army), led by Major Neville Longstreet. This motley crew of fierce and unsavory collaborators includes Supreme, Red Arm, Captain Gamal Celso, and the Fire Witch. The artist writes a detailed account of each epic adventure before planning to paint. These ten densely written pages reside in the gallery. Key figures in the narrative have become the portrait subjects, modeled by family and friends. Some characters carry over from previous installments, like Johnnie and Lucretia, who stand as figureheads of the war. Descriptive text accompanying each painting reveals another layer of the complex tale. Cartographic and pictographic maps display the contested territory and the campaign. A battle scene and death scene are at

ON SEEKING REVENGE WHILST INEBRIATED. ON RIDING FOR YOUR  
DEAD HOMIES. OR, THE TRAGEDY OF BELLEROPHON REPLAYED.  
(CAPTAIN GAMAL CELSO)



once traditional and anything but, as the former features ghosts and the latter inappropriate laughter. Sculpture takes the form of primitive weapons, ritual masks, and an object ridiculing the prince. Every title begins with *On...*, echoing and punctuating the exhibition title *On errythang*.

In consideration of the history and tradition of the Wadsworth, Frohawk Two Feathers requested that the gallery be designed as it would for the presentation of eighteenth-century European paintings. The deep blue wall color and the white chair rails of the MATRIX gallery were copied directly from the museum's eighteenth-century British paintings gallery. The ornate, antique gold frames and classical pedestal were borrowed from the museum's substantial inventory. An idle glance into this gallery might suggest a conventional presentation of centuries-old military portraits and history paintings. However, the expected white-male Eurocentric history has disappeared. In its place, a lively and provocative counter narrative of epic proportions explodes with diverse characters, reminding us of many an untold history, including one in our own front yard.

**PATRICIA HICKSON**

Emily Hall Tremain Curator of Contemporary Art



ON INAPPROPRIATE LAUGHTER AT A FUNERAL. THE REAL PROBLEM  
WITH MERCENARIES AND THE FINAL DEATH OF NEVILLE.



KHPRESH DE YORUBA.

# FROHAWK TWO FEATHERS

## EDUCATION

2000 BA, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, IL

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *MATRIX 170 / On errythang (On everything)*, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT  
*Heartbreaking and Shit, But that's the Globe: The Battle Of Manhattan*, Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2013 *And Those Figures Through The Leaves. And The Light Through That Smoke. Part Two of 'The Americas'*, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV  
*You Can Fall*, Visual Arts Center of NJ, Summit, NJ, also travelled to the Wellin Museum, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY
- 2012 *All Gold Is Everything. An Elegy*. Taylor De Cordoba, Los Angeles, CA  
*We Buy Gold, We Buy Everything, We Sell Souls*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO  
*It's Yours: Wars of the Frenglish Revolution and Other Conflicts*, Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2011 *The Edge of the Earth Isn't Far From Here*, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*La Guerre De Machettes Danseuses (The War Of The Dancing Machetes)*  
*Crocodile Company Part 1*, Taylor De Cordoba Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010 *The Wolf and Hawk Wars*, PULSE Miami, Solo booth, Morgan Lehman Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2009 *Frohawk Two Feathers @ Scenic*, curated by Simon Watson & Craig Hensala, New York, NY  
*New Work*, Galerie Emmanuel Post, Leipzig, Germany
- 2008 *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, Taylor De Cordoba, Los Angeles, CA
- 2006 *Last Night, After the Lights Went Out, We Fell*, Taylor De Cordoba, Los Angeles, CA  
*25 Bold Moves*, curated by Simon Watson & Craig Hensala, House of Campari, Venice, Italy  
*The Easter Seal*, Bent Gallery, South Pasadena, CA  
*C-Note Show*, Project, Los Angeles, CA  
*You and Me*, Unitard Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2005 *The Union vs. The Confederacy, Marvimon House*, Los Angeles, CA  
*Tundrafoot vs. The Vikes*, Han Cholo, Los Angeles, CA  
*Cool Heat*, Blue Chips Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, MA  
Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA  
21C Museum, Louisville, KY  
Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, NY

Born in Chicago, Illinois, 1976  
Lives and works in Los Angeles, California

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

All works courtesy of the artist and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.

### Painting

*On losing the love of your life to treachery, fighting a guerilla war against a numerically superior foe, and still managing to keep your feet on everybody's neck. It's magic, baby! P O N Y 1 7 9 1. Pharaoh of New York. Bonnie Prince Johnnie. Conqueror of the Dutch in North America and self-styled Liberator of the Lenape. Crown ruler of the Lower Hudson. Or, a ruthless thug, out for self, snatching cribs and paper on the fly, looking cool in his finery.,* 2014  
Acrylic, ink, coffee, and tea on canvas  
36 x 29 in.

*On loving someone who doesn't love you back and compensating for that with plotting and murder. T H O T 1 7 9 1. That high-born on the team. Lucretia Theroux. Self-styled Queen of New York and founder of the Order of Bast. Or, another example of the historical side-chick, dipped in the latest fashions, fronting like she real.,* 2014  
Acrylic, ink, coffee, and tea on canvas  
35 1/2 x 29 3/4 in.

*On realizing one's death and being kind of ok with it. (Neville),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
21 1/8 x 18 1/8 in.

*On the ability to change your fate and dramatically improve your condition. (Supreme),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
40 1/4 x 30 1/4 in.

*On accepting the charge of reformer, gambling with the future of your people, and losing that bet. (Uncas II),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
41 1/2 x 30 1/2 in.

*On getting yours at all costs no matter the consequences. ("King" Henry),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
32 x 28 1/2 in.

*On infiltration and execution. (Judith),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
29 x 21 3/4 in.

*On captives and collaborators. The Fire Witch. (Demetria),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
29 5/8 x 23 1/2 in.

*On loyalty and honor and the lightening of past mistakes. (Irene),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
32 x 28 1/2 in.

*On the topic of who rules and who serves and on who wore it best. (Red Arm),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
30 x 22 1/2 in.

*On seeking revenge whilst inebriated. On riding for your dead homies. Or, the tragedy of Bellerophon replayed. (Captain Gamal Celso),* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
34 1/8 x 41 1/2 in.

*On inappropriate laughter at a funeral. The real problem with mercenaries and the final death of Neville.,* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
44 3/4 x 36 in.

*On the country.,* 2014  
Acrylic, graphite, tea, and coffee on canvas  
44 1/4 x 59 1/2 in.

*On the tragic folly of Holofernes, replayed at the American Ophir two millennia later.,* 2014  
Acrylic on deer hide  
54 x 54 in.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 3 as quoted in John Bartlett, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, 17th Edition. John Kaplan, General Editor. New York, Boston, London: Little, Brown and Company, 2002, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Ford, Interview with Charles N. Wheeler, *Chicago Tribune*, 25 May 1916, as quoted in John Bartlett, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, 17th Edition. John Kaplan, General Editor. New York, Boston, London: Little, Brown and Company, 2002, p. 530.

<sup>3</sup> Email correspondence from the artist to the author, 15 September 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Coincidentally, *On errything* is also the title of a popular 2008 song by rapper Messy Marv. Two Feathers often cites rap and hip-hop songs in his texts, but in this case it is happenstance, and thus speaks to the ubiquity of the popular term.

## Sculpture

*All We Want Is Already Ours.*, 2014

Painted wood

70 x 48 in.

*A Song for Supreme.*, 2014

Wood

44 x 4 1/2 in.

*Ogun.*, 2014

Wood

17 1/4 x 10 x 1 1/2 in.

*A False, False Face.*, 2014

Wood and beaver pelt

17 x 11 x 1 1/2 in.

*Khepresh de Yoruba.*, 2014

Dyed deer hide and wire

14 x 12 x 12 in.

*Flag of the Dutch North America Company (GWC).*,

2014

Acrylic, charcoal, tea and coffee on canvas

24 x 36 in.

*Unofficial battle flag of the Toucolour Army of*

*Frengland made by a soldier.*, 2014

Acrylic, charcoal, tea and coffee on canvas

24 x 36 in.

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## ARTIST TALK

MATRIX Gallery Talk  
Frohawk Two Feathers  
Thursday, October 2  
6 pm

Frohawk Two Feathers will discuss his MATRIX project *On errythang (On everything)* in the Eleanor H. Bunce Gallery.

## PERFORMANCE

SUPERDELUXE  
Frohawk Two Feathers and Micah James  
Thursday, October 2  
7 pm  
Avery Court

## MEMBER MORNING

Patricia Hickson  
Friday, October 10  
9 am

Join Patricia Hickson, Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art, for an introduction to the work of MATRIX 170 artist Frohawk Two Feathers.



**Wadsworth Atheneum**  
Museum of Art

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[www.thewadsworth.org](http://www.thewadsworth.org)