

WRITING

MARGARET ATWOOD RETURNING TO HER ROOTS IN POETRY

Award-winning novelist Margaret Atwood is returning to her roots as a poet. Atwood, 80, won the Booker Prize in October for The Testaments, the sequel to her bestselling novel The Handmaid's Tale. She tied for the Booker with Bernardine Evaristo's Girl, Woman, Other. As it had done with The Handmaid's Tale, Hulu is adapting The Testaments as a TV series. Atwood, shown, began her writing career in the 1960s with poetry, winning the Governor General's Literary Award for poetry in 1966 for The Circle Game and going on to publish 15 other poetry collections in addition to many novels. McClelland & Stewart will release her new collection, Deary, on Nov. 10, with poems about "absences and endings, aging and retrospection ... gifts and renewals" drawn from the natural and supernatural world. Postmedia News



America's Got Talent controversy won't let up

OUSTED JUDGE

SADAF AHSAN

After actress and former America's Got Talent judge Gabrielle Union was ousted from the reality series for speaking up about the sexism and racism allegedly taking place behind the scenes, series host Terry Crews doubled down on his comments that, well, he just doesn't really care.

On the Today show last Thursday, Crews said of the drama, "I can't speak for sexism, because I'm not a woman. But I can speak on behalf of any racism comments. That was never my experience on America's Got Talent."

After clarifying that he also had not reached out to Union personally, he added that, in his opinion, AGT is "the most diverse place I have ever been in my 20 years of entertainment. The top 10 acts were Asian, women, older, younger, black, white. It was everything in the gamut."

Crews was hit with a torrent of backlash on social media for his comments, with many reminding him that Union and other black women had been the first and most vocal voices to support him when he revealed in 2017 that he had been sexually assaulted by a Hollywood talent agent.

In response, Crews tweeted on Monday, "I'm a hog. You're a chicken. Just 'cuz you gave me eggs - don't mean I owe you bacon."

In a less cryptic follow-up, he tweeted, to much ire, "There is only one woman one earth I have to please. Her name is Rebecca ... Rebecca gives me WINGS."

Crews was referring to his wife, Rebecca King, with whom he has five children.

The Atlantic writer Jenade Hill responded, tweeting, "Beyond disappointing, Terry Crews could have spoken to his experience without going overboard to discredit @Hsgabrielle. BTW, I didn't have to know Terry Crews or see what happened to him to support him. Sadly, black women are used to this."

The Friday after Crews's appearance on Today, Union tweeted, seemingly in response to it, "Truth telling, wanting change & having MULTIPLE witnesses who bravely came forward to let EVERYONE know I didn't lie or exaggerate, really exposes those who enthusiastically will throw you under the bus, forgetting quickly who stepped up 4 THEIR truth." She also tweeted, "Can someone please ask abt what happens to all that diversity folks are talking about BEHIND THE SCENES. Like, legit... where the hell is all that diversity in the production though homie? In the decision making ranks who control the fate of the diversity in front of the camera?"

The actress, activist and author shared that she had had a "lengthy" and "productive" meeting with NBC, the network that airs America's Got Talent. In a statement at the time, via the Associated Press, NBC said, "The initial conversation was candid and productive ... While there will be a further investigation to get a deeper understanding of the facts, we are working with Gabrielle to come to a positive resolution."

National Post



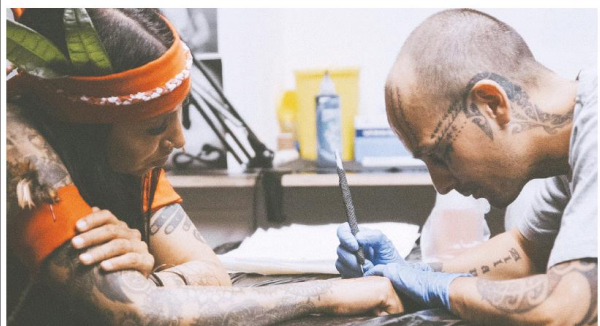
SARA BEN-SAUD

Isaac Murdoch (hidden) and Christ Belcourt (at right) are members of Onanem Collective in Ninkki Aashihkoong, Ont. Murdoch is a storyteller and traditional knowledge holder from the fish clan, Serpent River First Nation. His areas of expertise include traditional Ojibway paint, imagery and symbolism, harvesting, medicine walks, ceremonial knowledge, Anishinaabe oral history and birch bark canoe and scroll making. Christ Belcourt is a Métis visual artist of Manitow Sákahikan ancestry. Her work celebrates the beauty of nature. Belcourt is an author, co-author and collaborator on several books and titles.

BEAUTY, SKIN DEEP

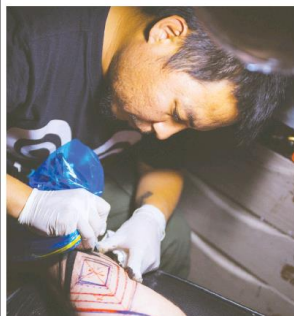
APTN CONTINUES TO EXPLORE TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS TATTOO ART

Now, that's entertainment! APTN series Skindigenous is in its second season, profiling Indigenous tattoo artists from around the world. Here's the work of some of the artists featured in the new batch of episodes, airing Tuesdays.



SARA BEN-SAUD

Joe Patty-Sabandar, from the Patawasi Allane clan, is a master tattooist. He practices ancient spiritual skin work from the islands of Molo'uku and is one of the last practitioners in the world of this ancient tattoo culture.



SARA BEN-SAUD

After developing an interest in ancestral Naga patterns and symbols, Mo Naga decided to spend more time researching their meaning. As a traditional tattoo artist in New Delhi, he helps preserve and revive part of his culture by tattooing these ancient designs on his fellow Naga people and sharing his Neo-Naga creations with others.



PHIL TWORAVENS

Phil TwoRavens is an Ojibwa tattoo artist born, raised and living in occupied Tongva territory in Los Angeles. After an incident while protecting water at the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota and South Dakota, he lost the vision in his right eye. TwoRavens tattoos only in grey scale and prefers Indigenous and realistic designs.

Master of horror sparks debate

KING ON DIVERSITY

SADAF AHSAN

After the Oscar nominations came out featuring many male nominees and very little diversity, the Academy was hit with much criticism.

Just about everyone had an opinion, including horror author Stephen King. The day after the nominations were announced, King tweeted that he is eligible to vote in three categories: best picture, best adapted screenplay and best original screenplay.

He also tweeted, "For me, the diversity issue - as it applies to individual actors and directors, anyway - did not come up. That said, I would never consider diversity in matters of art. Only quality. It seems to me that to do otherwise would be wrong."

That response was met with its own critique. Writer Roxane Gay tweeted back, "As a fan, this is painful to read from you. It implies that diversity and quality cannot be synonymous. They are not separate things. Quality is everywhere but most industries only believe in quality from one demographic. And now, here you are."

Director Ava DuVernay also responded: "When you wake up, meditate, stretch, reach for your phone to check on the world and see a tweet from someone you admire that is so backward and ignorant you want to go back to bed."

King then followed up, writing, "The most important thing we can do as artists and creative people is make sure everyone has the same fair shot, regardless of sex, colour, or orientation. Right now such people are badly under-represented, and not only in the arts. You can't win awards if you're shut out of the game."

King has further elaborated on his opinion in an op-ed for The Washington Post, published Tuesday.

In the piece, he doubles down on his opinion that the Academy should judge film while blind to race or gender, but that the current state of the world doesn't make that possible.

King writes, "Those judging creative excellence should be blind to questions of race, gender or sexual orientation. I did not say that was the case today, because nothing could be further from the truth. Nor did I say that films, novels, plays and music focusing on diversity and/or inequality cannot be works of creative genius. They can be, and often are."

He goes on to cite DuVernay's recent Netflix miniseries When They See Us as an example of this and questions whether, while the Academy is drowning in "man-fiction" (ex. The Irishman, Ford v Ferrari, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood), many voting members made an effort to watch Harriet or The Last Black Man in Hollywood.

While acknowledging that his perspective is "white, male, old and rich," King continues, "As with justice, judgments of creative excellence should be blind. But that would be the case in a perfect world, one where the game isn't rigged in favour of the white folks."

National Post