Barkhouse, Mary Anne. *Settlement / Regency*. St. Catharines, ON: Rodman Hall Centre / Brock U, 2014. 106 p.

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“This publication documents two exhibitions by artist Mary Anne Barkhouse: *Settlement*, an outdoor artist garden featuring bronze cultures, and *Regency*, an indoor exhibition featuring digital prints, mixed media installations.”

Contents: “Our House, Our Garden: Shifting Territories in the Work of Mary Anne Barkhouse” (Stuart Reid) / Folio: *Settlement* / “Punk Rock & Heavy Metal: In Conversation with Mary Anne Barkhouse” (Michelle Lavalley) / Folio: *Regency*.

“Mary Anne Barkhouse was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and belongs to the Nimpkish band, Kwakiutl First Nation. She is a descendant of a long line of internationally recognized Northwest Coast artists [...]. She graduated with honors from the Ontario College in Toronto [...]. Barkhouse currently resides in the Haliburton Highlands of Ontario.”

Settlement, started in 2012 in the garden of Rodman, and *Regency* (21 June – 8 September 2013) were complementary exhibitions reflecting on – and exposing – the colonial past of Canada by reinforcing Aboriginal perspectives on their relation to the land and on the arrival of Europeans. Outside, in *Settlement*, the bronze sculptures of a coyote and a badger, two significant animals in Aboriginal worldviews, are keeping watch, friendly yet fully alert, at the entrance of Rodman Hall. For *Regency*, different sculpted, print, paper-cut animals found their way inside the house and settled in the boudoir where they quietly observed the colonial décor of the museum.

The catalogue photographs, many of them full page, superbly document the two exhibitions. In particular, they display delicate, enveloping, deep colors likely to make us feel as if we wanted to sink comfortably in them – hazy blues, grassy greens, iridescent light, nightly mauves, etc. Looking at the photographs is like taking a leisurely walk through the seasons on the grounds and in the hall of Rodman, and is so a sensitive way to enjoy Mary Anne Barkhouse’s art.

Four quotations from the book

“The four corners of the *Settlement* garden are occupied by mounds of earth that give the seeds planted there drainage and warmth. Each mound is planted with corn, beans, and squash. These plants, called “The Three Sisters,” are staples in the agricultural practices of certain North American Aboriginal peoples. Their companionship in the garden benefits all three species. The corn provides a natural trellis for the beans to climb, and the beans reinforce the strength of the cornstalk. The beans infuse the soil with nitrogen from their roots that benefits the corn in years to come. The broad squash leaves shade the ground, keep weeds down, trap moisture, and provide rich mulch at the end of the season.” (Stuart Reid)

“*Settlement*’s border gardens at Rodman Hall were not weeded this summer. We let the diversity of plants proliferate, allowing the plants to exist side by side – those that were planted there and those that found their own way there and flourished. The deer were not hindered from eating what they wanted. The pollinators were encouraged to visit the many flowers. Although we didn’t see them, we think the raccoons ate all the corn.” (Stuart Reid)

Regency – “[...] a chandelier made from a thorny hawthorn branch hangs from the ornate plaster medallion on the ceiling. In fashioning it, the artist has hand-cut the shapes of hundreds of butterflies from sheets of Japanese paper in shades of white, yellow, and orange. Each of the butterfly shapes is pierced on one of the spiny thorns of the hawthorn branch. The chandelier also features a twinkling strand of LED lights that winds through the branch from tip to stem. The light slowly glows and pulses, changing shades from lime green to fiery red to an artificial lavender.” (Stuart Reid)

“I feel like I’ve always been outside looking in, and being this person that goes around and looks at what’s happened here in Southern Ontario, between American and Canadian, British, French, Dutch, and all Aboriginal history – how has that all collided? Who has been in collision with whom? And who stood to benefit from these things?” (Mary Anne Barkhouse)

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