

# Susan Hobbs

Zinnia Naqvi and Althea Thauberger  
*the pilgrim is always in danger of becoming a tourist*  
29 February to 13 April 2024



The first sentence you read under the *Play* header on the Niagara Falls Tourism website is "Niagara Falls Canada attractions create an authentic Ontario experience." This is in some ways an adjacent response to Lucy R. Lippard's question in *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art and Place*; "When we are tourists elsewhere seeing the sights, how often do we stop and wonder who chose the sights we are seeing and how they have been constructed for us?"

*The pilgrim is always in danger of becoming a tourist* begins with the artists contending with archival images that depict sites of tourism and/or familial reverence. The works in the exhibition probe familial history and notions of place as puzzle pieces that inform who they are and how they fit into and/or resist the cultural fabric of "Canada."

For Zinnia Naqvi, the equation between tourist and pilgrim equates to a continual interrogation of her place as a child of immigrant settlers from Pakistan. Throughout her upbringing, her family continually visited the same tourist sites and relied on them when relatives visited, seeing them as markers of place, culture and identity. In this body of work, she questions these types of attractions, wondering why these sites were pinned as tourist destinations. What exactly are visitors meant to learn about the country and themselves when visiting these places? What prescriptive narratives are being imposed? And how does engaging in these narratives reinforce Canada's nation-building project?

Althea Thauberger's body of work considers her own family history as colonial settlers to Treaty 4 territory in southern Saskatchewan. Her photographic collages are comprised of images taken by herself as a child, and by her father, John Thauberger, while he trained her to use a camera. They depict landscapes around the town of Holdfast, Saskatchewan, and interrogate her own sense of identity, regarding the lands that her ancestors homesteaded and farmed. How does reckoning with these pictorial conventions, learned from childhood, help deconstruct perspectives on personal and ancestral stories, and broader settler colonial histories?

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