

LI IYÁ:QTSET WE TRANSFORM IT

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DIRECTOR'S FORWARD

Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It is the culmination of a year-long collaboration that brings together some of the most vital and important Indigenous artists and cultural leaders working in Stó:lō territory today. At its heart, the project is characterized by a remarkable range of individual, formal, conceptual, and material approaches to creative production and transformation.

The exhibition was developed in conjunction with a film series, entitled *Reel Change*, that ran over an eight-month period at The Reach. Each artwork displayed in the exhibition was created, in response to a *Reel Change* film screening, by an Indigenous artist, writer, scholar, or cultural leader of Stó:lō ancestry, or with significant ties to Stó:lō culture and territory. In many ways, this unusual approach to exhibition-making was a response to the question: how do we bring together so many vastly talented but disparate cultural influencers in one exhibition? The response was to engage the participants in a creative dialogue with Indigenous filmmakers and storytellers from across the continent and around the world. This approach emphasizes the magnitude of the global Indigenous cultural resurgence that is taking place right now, while also reflecting on the specific nature of this groundswell here in S'ólh Téméxw (the Fraser Valley).

Those included in this exhibition represent a cross-section of the many talented makers, thinkers, scholars, and writers active in Stó:lō territory today. We also recognize the exciting pace at which new voices, minds, and hearts are engaging in this work, and hope that this project is only the beginning of a sustained effort to create a platform at The Reach from which these valuable perspectives can be shared with wider audiences.

The project was truly a collaboration from the beginning, and as such it intentionally avoids a singular curatorial perspective. Instead, *Li iyá:qtset* brings together ideas, opinions, voices, and suggestions from many contributors and perspectives. Foremost amongst this group, I would like to acknowledge the work of Andrea Pepper, who has been a member of our team at The Reach since 2016, first as the Indigenous Curatorial Intern

and then as Project Coordinator for both *Reel Change* and *Li iyá:qtset*. Together with Adrienne Fast, Curator of Art & Visual Culture, Andrea helped shepherd the project as it took on a life of its own throughout the film screenings and the discussions they encouraged. We are grateful to all those who attended the screenings and shared their thoughts in the meaningful discussions that followed, and to the many people who offered us advice, suggestions, and direction as the project unfolded and transformed in response to that guidance.

This important project would not have been possible without the financial support of the British Columbia Arts Council, the Canada Council, the Lohn Foundation, the Government of British Columbia's Multiculturalism Grants Program, and our generous donor Janet Barrie. We thank them for seeing the potential in this project from the beginning.

Finally, we extend our deepest thanks to the artists, scholars, and writers who have contributed their work to the exhibition, and who came with us on the journey of transformation that connects the films, the conversations, the artwork, the exhibition, and this publication. I offer our profound appreciation for their generosity, creativity, and truly inspiring contributions to art making, here in S'ólh Téméxw. We thank them for the opportunity to share their gifts with visitors to The Reach in the coming months, and with readers who will explore this publication for years to come.

— Laura Schneider
Executive Director

FOSTERING TRANSFORMATION: AN EXPERIMENT IN CURATION

Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It emerged from an unconventional exhibition development process, one that required something of a leap of faith on the part of all participants. In the early stages of creating this exhibition, we had to place trust in each other at a time when many of us were still strangers. We had to allow the project to reveal itself, rather than forcing it to fit a certain model or even a pre-determined timeline. We could not have known in advance how the process would unfold, but we remained hopeful throughout that something exceptional would result; we have not been disappointed.

The exhibition has its origins in a public programming initiative that stands somewhat removed from typical exhibition development methodologies. It began with an eight-month-long film series showcasing both local and international films featuring Indigenous stories, filmmakers, and actors. Titled *Reel Change*, the film series was offered free to the public and was hosted roughly every other week at The Reach between October 2018 and June 2019. A total of 17 films were shown over that period, ranging from shorts to feature length films and spanning genres that included documentary, horror, science fiction, and biography.

The audience for these film screenings was varied and unpredictable, but in every instance we were fortunate to have mixed audiences that included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, in a community that is often racially and culturally segregated. After each screening, we invited audience members to participate in a conversation about the film and the issues it raised, with the goal of encouraging dialogue to address the knowledge gap identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which highlights the inadequacy of existing mainstream education with regard to Canadian colonial histories, and Indigenous cultures and

worldviews. During these encounters we repeatedly saw the value of promoting conversations about the history of colonization and its destructive and ongoing legacy, particularly amongst our non-Indigenous attendees. We witnessed the transformational power of Indigenous peoples telling their own stories through the films and the discussions, and we felt the innate potential of the simple act of listening. We could not have anticipated the moments of clarity, growth—and sometimes frustration—that transpired during those discussions, any more than we could have predicted who would be in the audience from one week to the next. But in every case, groups of strangers came together to share an experience that deepened their understanding and appreciation for the creative and lived experiences of others.

The community-building that occurred over the course of the Reel Change film series was valuable in and of itself, but the goal was to somehow also extend this experience into an exhibition that would also register a modest cross-section of the enormous intellectual and creative achievements that are occurring at this precise moment in S’ólh Téméxw (what is commonly known as the Fraser Valley). To achieve this, we sought the support and participation of a diverse group of Indigenous artists, writers, and scholars who were each invited to attend a screening event (in many cases also selecting the films themselves), to participate in the conversations that followed, and to create a new work in their chosen medium that responded to or was inspired

by the experience in some way. Although they have a range of professional backgrounds, all the creative respondents are connected through their Stó:lō heritage and/or the contributions they have made to culture in Stó:lō territory. One of the goals of the exhibition, and this publication, is to recognize and celebrate the significant and ongoing contributions to contemporary culture





being made by creative Indigenous innovators in this region, and to contribute an important and overdue acknowledgement of contemporary Stó:lō creative, cultural, and intellectual practice.

The scope of the project required that a distinction be made between the separate, but connected, film series and exhibition. *Reel Change* was a suitable name for the film series, but did not adequately embody the qualities that were emerging in the works being created as a result. In this matter we were fortunate to have the guidance and advice of Laura Wee Láy Láq, who helped us arrive at an appropriate Halq'eméylem title. After hearing about and carefully considering the concept of the exhibition—a shared experience of watching and discussing films, with artists then transforming that experience into new works of art—and reflecting also on her own experience as a creative practitioner, Laura suggested the phrase *Li iyá:qtset*, meaning “we transform it.” It is a title that perfectly embodies the nature of the project, both in terms of the myriad kinds of transformations that occur in the creative process itself, and in the metamorphic potential of shared, cross-cultural experience.

The works in the exhibition are exceptionally varied, but despite the diversity of media, creative approaches, and source material, the exhibition as a whole is remarkably cohesive. Many of the works are linked by themes that presented themselves organically as the exhibition came together in its final stages.

Amongst these themes, the traumas of colonization, oppression, racism, and the histories of the Residential School System can not be ignored. The violence and legacy of these historical realities came up time and again during the screenings and the following discussions, and as a result this subject matter is central to the work of several artists in the exhibition.

For example, Jay Havens chose to respond to *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, an unflinching film that draws on horror and revenge-fantasy genres to explore very real historical violence, telling the story of an Indigenous teenager who exacts revenge on a

corrupt Indian Agent who sends her away to Residential School. For his contribution to the exhibition, Havens responds to the film by paying homage to the thousands of children for whom such retribution was never a possibility, while simultaneously illustrating the various ways that the physical presence of Residential School buildings have been handled in different communities around the country. In his installation *Boarding School*, Havens uses photographs taken at the sites of three former Residential Schools with which he has a personal connection: the Mohawk Institute in his hometown of Brantford, Ontario (1829-1970); St. Mary's in Mission, BC (1863-1965), located in the Fraser Valley where he lived for more than 20 years; and St. Michael's in Alert Bay, BC (1929-1975), where Havens' family is connected to the community through marriage. The photos reveal that St. Mary's is strikingly absent of signage or commemoration of any kind, in contrast to the situation in Brantford where the local community is actively preserving the Mohawk Institute through a "Save the Evidence" campaign. Meanwhile, Havens' photos also document the school in Alert Bay as it was demolished by, and for, the local community in a ceremony that Havens witnessed and participated in.

At that ceremony, pieces of the school's floorboards were distributed to those in attendance. Havens took a collection of these fragments to Haida Gwaii, a community from which many children were removed to attend St. Michael's. Havens' photographs are cropped and arranged to resemble floorboards of such a building, and installed where two gallery walls meet in a manner that suggests the childhood punishment of standing in the corner. An actual piece of floorboard from the Alert Bay school is on display on a nearby plinth, placed on top of a photo of the ceremonial fire that Havens and others built and used to destroy other floorboards in Masset. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to pick up the remaining board, a piece of lacquer that bares nearly illegible words "Made in Canada" embossed on one side. In replacing the object onto the image of the ceremonial fire, visitors are invited to participate in an act of acknowledgement and healing.

Writer and scholar Nicola Campbell also explores the legacy of historical trauma in her work, one of three essays contributed to the exhibition and this catalogue. Campbell's "Adanac Trail" is a powerful statement of growth and self-understanding that includes the author's clear statement that "as an intergenerational survivor of Indian Residential School, I am also surviving the genocide of my ancestors." In her writing Campbell describes the continual work that is required to deal with that legacy with a profound honesty that will be immediately relatable to many readers. Campbell's prose is rhythmic, beautiful, and at times staggeringly raw, its poignancy borne of its difficult truths. In a declaration of personal and intergenerational perseverance she writes, "it is lifelong process of steadfast learning, strategizing, and actively employing new skills. Staying consistent, being self-observant and self-aware of internal struggle, because quitting and self-sabotage can no longer be part of the equation." Campbell's voice is powerful and gripping, leaving room for

her readers both to relate and to reflect on the nature of struggle itself, while insisting on the importance of vigilance and determination in its presence.

Roxanne Charles' work *The Lesser Blessed* also explores intergenerational trauma and healing. This complex, multi-media wall hanging combines various kinds of leathers with cedar, copper, bone, glass beads, rivets, fabric, fir, and sinew. The relationship of intertwined materials is not easily decipherable and gives the overall effect of a shape-shifting organism that appears to writhe on the static surface of the gallery wall. Forms that recall human heads arise from the patchwork of natural materials as through struggling to pull forth in an act of emergence and assertion in this institutional space. The textured layers of the piece shift under the gaze, defying singular definition, and culminate in an unsettling beauty. The work was created by Charles with the help of her children, and the significance of



the work manifests as much in its process as in its final aesthetic form. Like the film *The Lesser Blessed*, Charles' work embodies the struggles of navigating a contemporary world in an Indigenous body, while also speaking to the primacy of survivance in family bonds and material traditions, even, perhaps especially, as they grow and change over time.

Jocelyne Robinson's multi-media installation, *Our World Ad/Dress*, also draws on themes of familial strength, both in its form and its realization. Two of Robinson's sons played important roles in the creation of the work. Dave Robinson is an accomplished carver whose recent residency at UBC's Museum of Anthropology provided the cedar shavings that are incorporated into *Our World Ad/Dress*. Meanwhile, Randy Robinson assisted his mother in the installation of the intricate work at The Reach. In her practice, Robinson is concerned with environmental stewardship and the importance of intergenerational, cross-cultural education as a tool for greater understanding and social well-being. Robinson relates our responsibility to care for nature through both spiritual and cultural practices. In response to the film *Our People Will Be Healed*, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, Robinson's work consists of a life-sized dress form that mimics a Victorian-era hoop shirt, but is constructed from chicken wire, feathers, cedar shavings, paper towels and small wooden alphabet blocks of the kind used by children when first learning language. This humanistic form sits atop a platform teeming with a layer thick layer of twisting, shining black strips of recording tape that in some ways resembles a glittering bed of futuristic seaweed, conjuring notions of disparate sensory



memory, as tidal deposits on the shore or recordings generated by human technologies.

Robinson's work reminds us that our activities leave marks on the environment, and on each other, and that we cannot underestimate the impact of our efforts to secure a better future for ourselves and generations to come. Robinson's dress is a visually compelling object, but the garment is also an appeal to protect humanity's common address, our shared planet and interrelationships. As the artist explains: "How we choose to transform our relationship with Mother Earth depends in great measure on how we perceive our responsibilities to sustaining

the earth. For many Indigenous Peoples, how we learn is directly tied to our cultural identity and relationships to Mother Earth. Cedar is not just a metaphor for healing but a medicine for purposes of well-being."

Jo-ann Archibald, who invited Robinson's response as a complement to her own, also took inspiration from *Our People Will Be Healed*, in her case in the form of a letter addressed directly to the film's director Alanis Obomsawin. Obomsawin's film documents a Cree community

in Manitoba that is enriched by its sovereign approach to education. For Archibald, who has been a teacher, curriculum developer, researcher, university leader, and professor, and whose scholarship is directly related to Indigenous knowledge systems, the subject matter is paramount. Taking up the role of witness during her experience at the screening, Archibald's essay reflects on the resonant messages in the film, emphasizing in particular its moments of "hope, happiness, and healing." Like others in the

exhibition, Archibald signals the importance of intergenerational learning and family as foundational to healthy communities, and individual wholeness.

The importance of familial bonds is also exemplified, albeit somewhat differently, in the work of Ronnie Dean Harris who responded to the classic film *Smoke Signals*. Harris’ large-scale painting titled *Holuh?* depicts Leonard George, a former Chief of the Tseil-Waututh Nation, in bold, graphic style. George had a small but highly memorable role in the film as Lester Fallsapart, the traffic correspondent at KREZ radio station who sits atop a broken-down van, reporting the comings and goings in the community. George’s deftly delivered lines, including the one memorialized in the title of Harris’ painting, provide subtle and consistent humour in a storyline that revolves around complex family and intergenerational issues, especially as they relate to absentee fathers. Harris created this painting soon after the birth of his first child, when the role of fatherhood was obviously a point of deep personal reflection. On a more tangible level, Harris’ regard for familial matters is also embodied in his approach to creating a portrait of Chief Leonard George, in asking the George family first for permission, and then offering the painting as to gift to them when the exhibition closes.

New parenthood was also on the mind of Raphael Silver when he envisioned his response to *Rabbit Proof Fence*, a film that tells the true story of three young girls who escaped a colonial training camp for domestic workers in Australia, and who walked over a thousand miles to be reunited with their Aboriginal mother and grandmother. Reflecting on the strength of familial bonds in the film, Silver was inspired to revisit a painting he completed when he and his wife were expecting their first child. Titled *Nesting*, the painting depicts multiple birds whose forms partially overlap and encompass each other, rendered using the sophisticated formal principles of Coast Salish design. A plain, rough panel of hardwood completes Silver’s diptych, representing a carved version of this painted design that is yet to be completed.

While *Reel Change* focused on Indigenous stories from Turtle Island, it was important to include films from elsewhere in the world, such as *Rabbit Proof Fence*, to draw attention to the ways that colonialism functioned as a global system of oppression. *Rabbit Proof Fence* tells an Australian story, while the film *Boy* is a Maori coming-of-age story set in Aotearoa (New Zealand) in 1984. The film tells the story of Boy, a devout eleven year-old Michael Jackson fan whose reintroduction to his absentee, and highly mythologized, father is characterized by a series of misunderstandings and disappointments. Left in charge of his siblings while his grandmother is away, and heading up a group of local peers, Boy’s responsibilities in the film extend far beyond his age.

Cease Wyss, who chose to respond to this film, was moved by this depiction of youthful self-reliance and vulnerability. Her installation *Haka Thriller* consists of a handwoven shawl onto which an edited series of film-clips and Michael Jackson images are projected. As she explains, “I chose to weave a small shawl to represent the covering of Boy, for his resilience in growing up in post-boarding school era and the rebuilding of family, culture, and community that was a world Indigenous time of healing. The colours of the weaving are inspired by Michael Jackson’s Thriller song and persona, and the short film is a balanced view of both Boy, his father, and their worldview of heroism, and Michael Jackson and his early life to the eventual downward spiral of his stability, life, and career.” Connecting the realities of Boy’s challenging homelife to his fantasy world of celebrity through an object used in care and honouring, Wyss symbolically wraps Boy, and children like him, in a gesture of protective compassion.

Many works in the exhibition address notions of tradition and the simultaneous contemporaneity of Indigenous lived experience. In addressing the role of tradition in Indigenous cultural production, Theresa Warbus considers how some traditions have changed in their material manifestations but remain fundamental to cultural resurgence and continuity. In *Where Have all the Trees Gone?*, Warbus repurposes mass-produced, polyester blankets decorated with Indigenous-style designs, such as those that are



commonly gifted in modern potlaches and other ceremonies. Although the blankets themselves may not be traditional in their origin, they nevertheless allow for the continuation of traditional gifting practices. Warbus deconstructs the blankets to create a vibrant red dance regalia, which she envisions could be worn by a young woman celebrating her culture through dance. Woven, wall-mounted panels made from cedar and wool, materials associated with traditional dress, flank a dress form clad in the regalia created from entirely “new” material. Warbus’ work speaks to the necessity of adaptation and innovation in maintaining the momentum of cultural traditions at a time when Indigenous peoples’ access to their own lands and traditional materials is increasingly under pressure. This work underscores the ongoing need to balance the importance of traditional practices and materials against the ever-changing context of contemporary life in order to ensure that Indigenous culture may thrive in the future.

The work of master carver Rocky LaRock similarly incorporates materials and processes that have shifted over time. Deeply informed by his environment in Sts’ailes (Chehalis), LaRock finds both inspiration and creative purpose in natural materials, as

his ancestors have done for millennia, while employing a wide range of contemporary carving tools—including chainsaws and power sanders—to achieve his unique artistic visions. During the screening of *The Northlander*, the film to which he responded, it was the harsh, stylized setting of the film that resonated most with LaRock. The unforgiving, post-apocalyptic backdrop of the film returns its characters to a cyclical future time, when survival and reliance on one’s surroundings are paramount. The boundaries between the natural, human-made, and mythic worlds are blurred in the film. Its unique visual qualities, characterised by terrestrial hues teeming with materials like bone, leather, wood, antler, and feathers, was the source of ready inspiration for the artist. LaRock’s carved mask in the exhibition captures the severe, surreal aesthetic of the film in a style that is purely the artist’s own. From one angle, the mask resembles a semi-human face, with a swath of tangled, wild hair spilling around it; from another, the face dissolves into a skeletal visage with a milky-white orb suspended in its empty eye socket. The finished form bends what appear to be equivalent halves of the same face in a subtle distortion of perspective. LaRock’s mask embraces the liminal space between beings, forms, and worlds in an unnerving homage to filmmaker Benjamin Ross Hayden’s film.



The centrality of material is also evident in Brenda Crabtree’s diptych of elk hide drums titled *Sacred Roots*, created in response to the documentary films *Cedar: Tree of Life*, and *Hands of History*, both of which highlight the important work of contemporary Indigenous female artists. Crabtree’s drums have been painted to emulate cross-sections of a tree, and are inscribed, respectively, with the words “Sacred” and “Roots.” Crabtree is well known for her weaving and basketry work that directly uses cedar bark and roots, but for her contribution to this exhibition she pays homage to the cedar through the suggestively performative form of the drum. Though static and silent in the exhibition space, it is easy to imagine this work brought to life through drumming and singing, practices that acknowledge the importance of the cedar tree in the cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, and community life of the Stó:lō people. That the black inscribed text on the dyed red drum skins is somewhat obscure and hard to make out further suggests a barrier—or at least an obstacle—to full translation or understanding.

When Carrielynn Victor created her work *St’ewókw’ - White, Powdery, Diatomaceous Earth*, she also considered such gaps of understanding, as they exist across language and across knowledge systems. Victor was inspired by the traditional, hand-carved snow-goggles used to protect against glare and snow blindness featured in the Inuit film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*. Victor, whose interdisciplinary practice frequently incorporates her own experience with the harvest, preparation, and use of traditional plant medicines, used the opportunity to further inquire about the kinds of materials and processes that would have been used daily by her own ancestors, but which are no longer handmade due to the preference for manufactured items. She explored aspects of weaving customs that are no longer widely practiced today, and found that many of the processes and tools inherent in traditional practice have been supplanted by contemporary materials and techniques. In her words, “Through available information among the hearts and minds of Stó:lō community members, I accessed a location where St’ewókw’ is still known to exist, and worked through the process

of transforming it into its appropriate form for use in treating wool for making blankets. The end-product acts as an insecticide, larvicide, degreasing agent, and texturizer for the wool.” Victor’s installation in the exhibition presents various stages of processing St’ewókw’ in bell jars that recall scientific specimens, suggestive of the way the daily practices of Indigenous peoples have been collected and historicized by Western disciplines like anthropology and museology.

The relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges and worldviews is also explored by scholar Wenona Hall who interrogates the complicated and culturally-specific meanings attached to the simple question: “where are you from?” Responding to an episode of the documentary mini-series *1491: The Untold Story of the Americas Before Columbus*, Dr. Hall succinctly unpacks the complexities of this question in way that drives at the heart of colonial systems of knowledge and language. This question, “where are you from?” for those with Indigenous heritage is a question of belonging: to place, family, and the responsibilities inherent to both. This question for a non-Indigenous person is more likely to be interpreted temporally as an inquiry about current place of residence. In teasing out these differences, and their connection to colonial histories, Dr. Hall’s essay also challenges readers to consider who, in these circumstances, has the privileged authority to shape narrative and map history, asking the weighty question “who gets to tell the story?”

In her prodigious sculptural installation *Sch’ats’el*, Deb Silver opts for a more enigmatic approach to a similar theme. Silver has constructed a large wooden form that recalls the communal seating of bleachers that is familiar to those acquainted with Coast Salish longhouses. The steps of this architectural form are supplanted by vague shapes that suggest drums and bundles, but the entire structure is rendered inaccessible by an enveloping layer of diaphanous white fabric. The resulting form is ghost-like, rendered silent and still against a black background. The configuration deliberately frustrates extraction of meaning; in this way, *Sch’ats’el* emphasizes the responsibilities of those within a



culture to protect and preserve specific knowledge, while also reminding those outside the culture to respect and value those cultural teachings, whether withheld or shared.

These are the creative responses that make up the exhibition *Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It*. They provide a glimpse into the abundant creative, cultural, and intellectual environment of S’ólh Téméxw today, while also acting as guideposts in navigating the global de-colonial process. We thank the artists, writers, thinkers, and scholars in *Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It* for sharing their distinct practices, and for their engagement in the experimental, intertextual, and intercultural process that provided the framework for this exhibition. For each participant in the screenings, the discussions, and the exhibition that resulted, we hope that the experience has created space for some form of transformation. We are grateful to each and every person—the filmmakers, creative respondents, screening audiences, and those who will attend the exhibition and those who pick up and read this publication—for taking this journey with us. We hope that our individual and collective transformations will continue to unfold in a positive and meaningful way.

– Adrienne Fast
Curator of Art & Visual Culture

Adrienne Fast, Curator of Art & Visual Culture, and Andrea Pepper, Aboriginal Curatorial Intern, worked closely together on *Reel Change*, the Indigenous film series presented at The Reach from October 2018 to June 2019. This film series served as the catalyst for the exhibition *Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It*.

Shortly after the exhibition opened, they sat down to discuss the experience of screening the films: what went well, what didn't, lessons they learned, and transformations they felt or witnessed. The following conversation provides context and background about the films and the series, the unorthodox process that laid the groundwork for the exhibition, and the necessity and complexities of bringing together mixed-audiences for community programs that address difficult subject matter.

ADRIENNE FAST AND ANDREA PEPPER IN CONVERSATION

Adrienne Fast (AF): *Reel Change* took place over eight months, which really allowed us to try things out, evaluate, and adjust as we went. I'm so glad we had time to work this way, but it might have felt drawn out for some of the artists, especially those who were responding to the films at the very start of the series, almost a year before the exhibition opened.

Our first screening was October 26, 2018, we showed both *Shi-shi-etko* and *The Lynching of Louis Sam*. I remember we started the series with those films because they have real local significance to the Stó:lō community, and we always want to start with an acknowledgement of the place where we live and work. *Shi-shi-etko* was filmed in Stó:lō territory in the Halq'eméylem language and *The Lynching of Louis Sam* was commissioned by Stó:lō Nation, it's the true story of when a lynch mob crossed the Canada-US border in 1884 to kidnap and hang a young Stó:lō boy for a crime he didn't commit.

But by the time we showed those first films, you and I had already been thinking and talking about this project for a few months, and yet I remember feeling so pressed for time. We had the basics in place: we had movies to watch, a creative respondent coming to participate [Nicola Campbell], we'd put out some marketing for it, and we had such a good turnout—the largest audience that we had for the whole series—but I don't think we were really prepared for what we were starting.



Andrea Pepper (AP): Not at all. And that first screening didn't go smoothly. I remember the conversation after the film was pretty awkward. We had the room set up for the film, so the whole audience was facing the front, but that made it feel like a classroom where none of the students want to talk. It was not a great way to have a discussion. And then when we did get questions from the audience, some of them made me really uncomfortable.

AF: We definitely learned from our mistakes in that first screening. From then on we rearranged the chairs after every screening so that everyone was in a circle for the discussion, which made things better. And I remember some of those uncomfortable questions, I've thought about it a lot since then. I think we were really lucky to have mixed audiences throughout the film series, with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. But what was really clear to me at that first film screening was how challenging it was going to be to strike a balance between providing a safe and respectful space for the Indigenous audience and participants, where they aren't being subjected to insensitive questions from non-Indigenous folks, and on the other hand also trying to create a non-judgmental space where people can ask questions and have conversations that maybe they aren't able to have elsewhere in their lives.

AP: Yeah, at first I was worried that our respondents, and myself, were going to be spending a lot of time being asked to answer questions on behalf of all Indigenous people, which is obviously not okay. But I think we got good at finding that balance by the end of the series. It took time, and it helped that a lot of our audience members came back again and again so we were able to build trust over a longer period of time. That really mattered.

AF: Absolutely. I look back at that first film screening and I see we didn't start with all the tools in place that we should have had, but this whole experience has been a process of learning, building relationships, and hopefully getting better at creating a place where difficult conversations can happen in a way that balances out some of the emotional labour.

What I also realized during that first screening when we were watching those two films, one about a young girl on her way to residential school, and the other about this horrific act of violence that seems to have had no diplomatic resolution, was that we also hadn't fully understood or prepared for the potential impact on our audience. It was so clear in that moment while we were watching the films in that room full of people that we were going to have to be more aware of, and responsible for, the traumatic potential of some of these films. It seems really naïve in hindsight.

AP: That's when we reached out to the IRSSS [Indian Residential School Survivors Society], they became such a great resource and partners for us.

AF: They were—Sadie [McPhee] and Ross [Muehlfarth] [Cultural Support Workers for the IRSSS] were so amazing. They came out to so many of our screenings and they were such a great help to everyone, including both of us.

AP: Then the day after that first screening, we had the first gathering of the creative respondents, and that was also hugely important. Nicola [Campbell], Deb [Silver] and Carrielynn [Victor] were all there, and they were clear about how things could be done better.

AF: We were lucky to have those three women sit down and talk to us about how we could improve. We had to learn some hard lessons fast, and although it was in some ways awkward, I'm so grateful they were willing to take the time to teach us. I remember they had some specific advice for you, can you talk about that a bit?

AP: Yeah, that conversation really empowered me. They said I needed to step up, and my voice needed to be heard. After that, even though I hate public speaking, I got up and welcomed everyone at the start of every film screening, and I spoke up in the discussions afterwards. I don't think I would have done that otherwise, and I did get more comfortable with it by the end. Looking back, I get it—part of my ancestry is to stand up and speak, in this place. This is my place, I am the one who needs to speak here.

AF: We learned so much from that first screening, and we had to start putting some of that into place right away, because the next film screening was scheduled for November 9, 2018 and it was supposed to be *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*.

Before the public screening, you and I watched that movie together we both agreed that it was not appropriate for us to show that as the second film in the series, when we were still trying to build trust and get our bearings. The scheduling of the films was largely based on the practicalities of respondents' schedules, and in this case it meant having to work with Jay [Havens] to pick a new date, but we just knew it would be a bad choice to follow a rocky start with the most violent film in the entire series.

AP: It's still a hard film to watch, and we definitely weren't ready to show that film yet. We just weren't prepared to support our audience ourselves, and we didn't yet have confirmation from the IRSSS about whether one of their cultural support workers could attend that film. We knew their help would be crucial when we showed that movie.

AF: So we made a quick decision to postpone the movie a few months and instead sent our audience, and ourselves, back to school a little bit with the film *Reel Injun*, a documentary that looks at representations of Indigenous people in film over the course of a century. For those who ended up attending regularly, I think this was an important piece of context for the rest of the series.

AP: This is also when we also started preparing some discussion questions in advance, printing them out, and leaving them on the audience members' chairs so they could see them before the movie started. It helped to give some direction to the conversation and made some of the questions less random, more about the themes and ideas of the film instead of directly personal for our respondents.

AF: That was a good change too. Then the last two films we showed before the holidays were *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* and *The Lesser Blessed*. Both films are part of a strong pattern we saw in the series: many of these films focus on young people and children. We talked about this a bit in the conversations, why are so many Indigenous films focused on young people? Is it that they represent hope for change in the future?

AP: I think maybe in some cases that's true, but neither of those two films really have an uplifting or positive end to the story. In fact, I would say that one thing that characterizes all the films, even the funny ones, is that there is always a dark undertone somewhere.

AF: I agree. In *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* there isn't a suggestion that things are going to change. It's a portrait of the characters and their community, without any attempt to explain why they are the way they are, and no real analysis of the social and intergenerational issues it presents. It just tells the story of people living in that reality. It was clear that this way of telling stories was uncomfortable for some of our audience. I think we're accustomed to certain narrative arcs, where things are explained and things are resolved. These are definitely not Hollywood-esque movies. They're not exactly romantic comedies.

AP: The first film we saw after we came back from the break over Christmas and New Year was *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*. It was also the first movie that we took out to one of the communities, we showed it out at the Seabird Island Reserve. That led to a whole other series of changes and transformations for the project.

AF: That was one of my favourite parts of the series, the opportunity to go out to the communities.

AP: It was sort of an organic thing that happened too. I had been dropping off posters and brochures about the film series to the various Stó:lō reserves, and the response I often got was “yeah, that sounds nice, but can you just show the movies here?”

And Seabird was already planning their own movie nights in February, so we ended up showing two of our films there, and then attending some of their screenings too. It was such a great experience, and so different from watching the movies at The Reach, with everyone sitting in straight rows of chairs. At Seabird, families came out to the gymnasium for the screening and brought their lawn chairs and blankets, and the kids were running around playing the whole time.

AF: The other thing that was great about Seabird was that Leanne [Ellis], who was organizing the movie nights, also provided a free meal for everyone who attended. That was when we looked at each other and realized, we should not be charging people for snacks and food at The Reach when we're showing movies.

AP: Up until that point we'd been selling popcorn, candy, pop, and chips, but that's not really in keeping with Indigenous protocols where you're expected to feed your guests. So from then on we always offered refreshments free of charge.

The second film we took out to Seabird was *Rabbit Proof Fence*, and it was interesting to see how different the audience reaction at Seabird was compared with the reaction to the film at The Reach.

AF: I remember that, the conversation at The Reach sort of focused on the similarities and differences between the Indigenous experience in Canada versus Australia. Whereas at Seabird, at that triumphant moment at the end of the film when the girls who have escaped the forced training centre finally make it back to their mother and grandmother, I remember people cheered.

AP: We ended up showing films in the Soowahlie and Skwah communities too. In fact, we met John [Williams], from Skwah, at Seabird and he helped us coordinate some screenings in that community. One thing led to another with this project.

AF: So after those quite positive experiences, I think we were better prepared for the film that came next, which was finally *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*. It was still hard to watch, but I’m so glad we didn’t show it earlier, I’m glad we waited until we were on firmer footing and feeling more prepared.

AP: And thankfully we had Sadie from the IRSSS attend for that screening, which was important because some of our audience members got very emotional, it was really hard. The film is a combination of horror and revenge fantasy, and it’s often extremely violent. I found myself wondering if the means justified the ends in this film. It was tough for our audience, and for us, but I think most of us felt like we knew each other by then and had the sense that we were able to get through it together.

AF: Yeah, that was a rough week though. But after that, we got a bit of a comic reprieve with the movie *Smoke Signals*. It is such a classic movie, I think a lot of people have a real soft spot for it. I was amazed at how well the humour in this movie held up. It’s such a funny film despite the heavy topics it deals with: broken families, absent fathers, abusive and dysfunctional relationships. In terms of themes that we saw emerge, this film epitomizes the important role of humour.

AP: I think someone in the discussion afterward said something like “when you’ve been through what our people have been through, there’s nothing you can’t laugh about.”

AF: *Smoke Signals* was also screened out at Soowahlie. How was it for you showing this movie in your own community?

AP: It was a bit weird, because a lot of folks out there don’t know what I do at The Reach, so it was kind of a meeting of two worlds. But it was also great to share this part of my life with them. People were talkative throughout the movie, like everyone knows the story and would speak along or comment on it throughout, it was like a family movie night.



AF: Then after that we showed two documentaries, *Cedar: Tree of Life* and *Hands of History*, both of which are about strong women who are part of the artistic and creative continuance in their communities. I think this was the closest we came to bridging the subject matter of the films with the methodology of the exhibition. Not to mention that two of our creative respondents are featured in those films.

AP: And after that I think we went to the other extreme with *The Northlander*, which must have been the strangest film in the whole series. It’s a post-apocalyptic, sci-fi story, which is totally my thing, but there’s a point in the movie where it all got really confusing. I remember

wondering what our creative respondent was going to do with this film. Little did we know that Rocky LaRock, the creative respondent for the film, was a perfect fit. If there was one artist who could do something great with that movie, it was Rocky.

AF: He was so enthusiastic about it, he said that the encampment of the people in the movie, this semi-nomadic group of hunter-gatherers, reminded him of the large property around his house where he takes much of his inspiration. And then the carving Rocky made for the exhibition is perfect – I can see a little bit of the film in it, but it’s also just awesome on its own.

AP: The next film we watched was *Boy*, the New Zealand film, which was the funniest movie in the whole series and everyone really loved it. You were away for that screening and I was leading the discussion on my own. Cease [Wyss] was the respondent for that one, and she was such a huge help facilitating the conversation, she was really wonderful.

AF: Our next film was an episode from the documentary series *1491: The Untold Story of the Americas before Columbus*. This was a really special screening, because aside from having Wenona Hall as our respondent, the filmmaker Barbara Hagar also attended. It was so valuable, because a lot of times during the discussions, people had really specific questions about the films that we couldn’t address, so it was nice to be able to have those questions with Barbara here.

AP: We were lucky for the next screening too, when we showed *Roundhouse* and *The Road Forward*. Theresa Warbus, who made *Roundhouse*, was our creative respondent and she answered some questions about her creative process.

AF: The final film of the series was the documentary *Our People Will be Healed*. We made the deliberate decision to close the series with this hopeful, uplifting story about how Indigenous approaches to education have helped strengthen the community of Norway House in Manitoba.

AP: I’m glad we ended on that film too. But an interesting thing happened at that film that brought some things into perspective. I think ultimately our goal for the film series was to bring people closer together through shared experiences, and I think that did

happen with members of our audience who came back again and again. Over the course of eight months of screenings, we built trust with a lot of people. But after this final screening there were still some questions from the non-Indigenous audience that made me uncomfortable.

AF: Me too. I remember one person kept asking “what’s different about THIS Indigenous community, that’s allowed them to succeed?” and I found that to be such a simplistic and condescending question. I think we handled it okay, and I think the conversation moved on and was still valuable, but it felt disappointing to get that kind of question at our last screening. But then I realized afterwards: I don’t think that person had attended any of our earlier film screenings. I hadn’t seen him before, had you?

AP: No, each screening brought in new people as well as our “regulars” which was great, but also made for some uneven conversations.

AF: So for you and me, and the audience who came to the screenings regularly and who really engaged in the conversations, we kept learning as our perspectives shifted and expanded. We learned from each of our experiences in this series, and from each other, starting from day one. But what that last screening drove home for me is that that there is no end to this process, because our final screening and discussion is still someone else’s day one.

AP: So I guess we have to do this again?

AF: Absolutely.

“ I AM FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE RIVER



and know that spending time on
and by the water develops a
feeling of kinship with the
waterways and its resources and
has a healing power of its own to
help deal with historic trauma.

JO-ANN ARCHIBALD

A LETTER TO ALANIS OBOMSAWIN

BY JO-ANN ARCHIBALD

Responding to the film
Our People Will be Healed

September 1, 2019

Ey Swayel (Good Day) Alanis Obomsawin,

I am from the Stó:lō First Nation (Coast Salish) in southwestern British Columbia (BC), with ancestry from the St’at’imc First Nation in the BC interior. In Coast Salish tradition, I raise my hands in thanks and respect to you for the powerful National Film Board documentary, *Our People Will Be Healed*, which was featured as part of a film series, *Reel Change*, organized by The Reach Gallery Museum located in Abbotsford, BC. After the film series, I volunteered to respond to your documentary as part of the *Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It* exhibit of The Reach Gallery Museum. My reflective response is in an open letter format to you so that those who view the exhibit will be able to read it. In Coast Salish gatherings, some of the guests are asked to take on the role of a witness for the work that is carried out. The witness watches and listens, and then shares some thoughts at the conclusion of the gathering. The witness also has the responsibility to tell others what occurred at the gathering, as a way of carrying out oral history. I have written this letter, as if I had been asked to be a witness for the *Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It* exhibit by speaking about what I heard and saw in your documentary. Because I am also an educator, who has worked in all levels of education, I have also included what I learned from the film.

First, I convey my deep appreciation for the thoughtful story of the Kinosao Sipi Norway House Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. There are multiple stories within the big story that are intertwined in seamless ways. So often the media emphasizes the dire circumstances that rural and remote Indigenous communities face, so that at times it seems like a hopeless intergenerational cycle where the children and youth are doomed for continuing hardships. Yet, there are many hopeful circumstances and stories that exist, despite the on-going attempts to colonize and assimilate Indigenous people. Your documentary portrays hope, strength, pride, and success despite the difficulties that this

community has faced with laws that prohibited ceremonies such as the Sundance; abuses in the early provincial schools, denial of Cree language and traditional culture, and missing and murdered Indigenous woman and girls who were community members. One of the stories that is dear to my heart, is about education in this community. I really appreciated an emphasis on kindergarten to grade 12 education provided in and by the community.

The community and school leaders demonstrated their priority for education by ensuring that the school is resourced very well through its tuition agreement with the Frontier School Division, which ensures that Cree culture, language, and knowledge of treaty rights are taught as part of the provincial school curriculum. You probably remember the 1972 landmark national policy developed by Indigenous people across Canada that was called, the *Indian Control of Indian Education Policy*, where the principles of local control, parental responsibility, Indigenous language and culture, good facilities, and well-prepared teachers were emphasized. This policy paper was in response to the federal government’s attempt to abolish Indigenous rights and to continue further assimilation of Indigenous people across Canada. The Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre seems to be a prime example of fulfilling the 1972 *Indian Control of*

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Indian Education Policy with an impressive new school building where all levels of students are within the same complex, having many Indigenous/Cree teachers (almost half of its 84 teachers are Cree/Indigenous), building upon Indigenous values, culture, and language, and ensuring that the families and community have local control and responsibility for education. The commitment and courage of the school leaders to focus on strategies to increase the success of students by changing the school schedule, by developing the ‘gifts’ of each student, and focusing on key areas that needed it are remarkable. Through these collective efforts, the graduating class has quadrupled. Graduation rates are one measure of success. Students’ feelings about their schooling are another measure. A high school student who will graduate said, “high school was the most wonderful experience to go through. It is going to be heartbreaking when I am done. I want to take this school with me to Winnipeg.” Often Indigenous school students do not have such positive feelings about their high school.

Another inspiring story is about the two-week canoe trip where community member Gord Walker, culture and language advisor, takes young people to experience living with the environment, especially the waterways. He has led this canoe trip for nine years, which is a long-term commitment on his part and that of the families and community. The young people are taught important lessons about navigating the water systems, self-reliance, team work, and a survival work ethic. Often in education, the term place-based education is used. This canoe trip exemplifies this type of education and much more. I am from the People of the River and know that spending time on and by the water develops a feeling of kinship with the waterways and its resources and has a healing power of its own to help deal with historic trauma.

The lived experience stories that portray the Cree community members’ experiences of racism, bullying, and violence in public schools where Cree students attended before the high school was offered in their community, remind us that Indigenous children who suffered these forms of abuse often felt afraid to ‘tell

someone’ or that their abuse was ignored. Some of the adults can now give voice to their fears and trauma that they experienced as children. One person said, “...as girls we never walked alone... never sure what to expect...nobody believed us...it was just us kids.” This statement is in stark contrast to the experiences of the current-day high school student who loved the school offered in his community.

Helen Betty Osborne’s tragic story of being brutally murdered in 1971 in The Pas is haunting. However, the Kinosao Sipi Norway House Cree Nation has honoured her by naming the new school after her, The Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre. It seems so fitting because she had wanted to become a teacher. But, the tragic stories of women and girls who left this community and who were subsequently murdered or are still missing continue to be told. Now, more than ever, the recommendations of The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls need

serious attention and action by governments and all of the sectors implicated in the recommendations.

After discussing emotionally difficult topics, one of my friends encourages us to end our conversation with a happy thought. Not that we would ignore the actions that had to be taken to improve these difficulties, but to remember the good things in our lives that help us heal. I smiled through all of the scenes about fiddle music, from a teacher teaching young students in school to play the fiddle, to the York Boat Festival, to the annual Frontier School Division Annual Fiddle Jamboree, where 500 students come from across this school division to learn from master fiddlers and each other. These gatherings show that family and community members support each other and continue an intergenerational learning approach that is fun and meaningful for individuals and for the group. At the same time, music, as one teacher mentioned, is a way that an individual can use to cope with difficulties. Ceremony and Indigenous language are other key coping strategies, which are gaining momentum in the lives of the community members.

As I write this letter, I wonder how you and your film crew were affected by the stories and experiences of the Kinosao Sipi Norway House Cree Nation. The beautiful scenes of the environment, especially of the water ways, getting to know many of the community members who shared their gifts of leadership, culture, innovation, and commitment, and learning more about their colonial history must have impacted your group. Watching and learning from this documentary has given me additional strength to keep advocating for Indigenous control of Indigenous education, the use of land-based learning, cultural-based education, Indigenous language revitalization, and preparing Indigenous and all teachers to respect and respond to Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing that create success for students.

In the documentary, I heard many powerful teachings about hope, happiness, and healing. I heard members of the Kinosao Sipi Norway House Cree Nation say,

There are all kinds of tress growing here. All of them are reaching upwards. They all aim for the sky. That is what I am hoping for my people. To stand together in that way, here in our community and for people everywhere. We should cooperate with each other, love each other, and help each other. To hold each other’s hand, in health, happiness and with enthusiasm.

It’s about keeping people and families together, that is where true happiness lies.

The young people who have danced show me a little of my wish, that my people, our people will be healed.

Once again, I raise my hands to thank you for portraying stories and transformative teachings that will heal and strengthen the heart, mind, body, and spirit. In my witnessing role, I encourage the guests who visit the *Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It* exhibit to watch and learn from the insightful documentary, *Our People Will Be Healed*, so that the circle of understanding expands about the impact of Canada’s colonial history, appreciation for Indigenous peoples’ resilience, action for Indigenous self-determination, and ways to increase community strength. Our Elders say that there is always room for one more to join the circle.

Respectfully,

Jo-ann Archibald Q’um Q’um Xiiem
PhD, O.C., D.Litt., LL.D
Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia
www.indigenoustorywork.com

“ Watching and learning from this documentary has given me additional strength to keep advocating for Indigenous control of Indigenous education, the use of land-based learning, cultural-based education, Indigenous language revitalization, and preparing Indigenous and all teachers to respect and respond to Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing that create success for students.



JOCELYNE ROBINSON



JOCELYNE ROBINSON

Our World Ad/Dress, 2019

Responding to the film
Our People will be Healed





BRENDA CRABTREE





BRENDA CRABTREE

Sacred Roots, 2019

Responding to the films
Cedar: Tree of Life and *Hands of History*





ROCKY LAROCK



ROCKY LAROCK

The Northlander, 2019

Responding to the film
The Northlander





CEASE WYSS





CEASE WYSS

Haka Thriller, 2019

Responding to the film
Boy

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WHERE ARE
YOU FROM?



WHO
GETS TO
TELL THE
STORY?

WENONA HALL

QUESTIONS RAISED

BY WENONA HALL, PHD

Responding to “Episode One - Origins” of
1491: The Untold Story of The Americas Before Columbus

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

Simple question, yet can mean different things to different people. For example, when you ask most Indigenous peoples where they are from they tend to answer with the name of their Indigenous nation. This nation places them somewhere on Turtle Island and, regardless of where the person is currently residing, it also tells us to whom they belong. Whereas you ask most non-Indigenous people where they are from, they tend to answer with the current city/town within which they reside, or the name of town/city in which they were born. It can be confusing to an Indigenous mind that understands the question to mean “who are you from, to what do you belong?” and therefore the question predates colonial towns and cities. The question is intimately linked to one’s ancestry that goes back thousands and thousands of years, to, as the Old People say, “time immemorial.” So when someone answers Vancouver or Toronto, it really isn’t answering the question according to an Indigenous worldview.

For an Indigenous person asking a settler to Turtle Island “where are you from?” the question means where did you come from? To whom do you belong? One does not come from Toronto, one lives in Toronto. One comes from Scotland, Ireland, England, Holland, France, etcetera, which means one belongs to the French people, or English people and so on. If when answering this question according to an Indigenous worldview one is offended or becomes defensive, we need to think deeply about why.¹ From an Indigenous worldview, it is important that we always know where we come from and to whom we belong no matter where in the world we may live or how much time has passed.

As a result of this Indigenous worldview, it can be confusing to be told by non-Indigenous peoples and/or non-Indigenous ways of knowing, that we are not “from” Turtle Island, that we migrated here from other parts of the world. According to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous ways of knowing, we have always been here.

WHO GETS TO TELL THE STORY?

Episode One of the eight part series *1491: The Untold Story of the Americas before Columbus* has us thinking deeply about “where are we from?” It explores non-Indigenous ways of knowing such as genetics and archeology, as well as Indigenous ways of knowing and creation stories to explain how Indigenous peoples populated Turtle Island. It is fascinating to explore all these theories. However, it is also important to challenge eurocentric mindsets that tend to put the western ways of knowing as somehow more valid and reliable than the Indigenous ways of knowing. It is this type of arrogance, epistemic violence, and eurocentric thought that harms us all and maintains dysfunctional colonial relationships.

It is important that we pay attention to who is telling the story. The loudest person in the room is not necessarily the most accurate story teller. For me personally, when I want to learn Irish history I would prefer to learn directly from the Irish. When I want to learn Nigerian history I would prefer to learn from Nigerians. The Western point of view is well known and well disseminated, but it is long overdue to make space and place for other equally important ways of knowing.

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From an Indigenous worldview, it is important that we always know where we come from and to whom we belong no matter where in the world we may live or how much time has passed.

1. Interesting dynamic when white settlers ask brown settlers this question they often mean original ancestry but may fail to apply to themselves when asked.

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PUSHING, PULLING, FIGHTING,
PROTECTING, RECLAIMING.



Transforming into power.
Transforming into strength.
We do not die.
We cannot die.
We cannot concede.
We transform.
Resurgence is our only choice.

NICOLA CAMPBELL

ADANAC TRAIL

BY NICOLA CAMPBELL

An excerpt from the author's memoir, forthcoming from HighWater Press, Winnipeg

Responding to the films *Shi-shi-etko* and *The Lynching of Louis Sam*

The gate swings shut as I walk down East Georgia Street past my cool white Pontiac Sunfire. My world has changed and my godmother left us to walk on our own. In previous years, the annual orbit of the sun normally resulted in seasonal travels to harvest and preserve berries, fish, and deer; as well as travelling to ceremonies; travelling to sober dances at the North Vancouver Alano Club; and visiting loved ones throughout Nle?kepmx territory, Secwepmc territory, occasionally over to Sł'ał'imx and Lil'wat and then Syilx tmxulaxw, including the Similkameen, all the way back around to the territories of the Tsleil-Waututh, Skwxwú?mesh temíxw, Xwməθkwəy'am and the City of Vancouver. However, my beloved car is dead in the street. I have been forced to still myself and sit in the centre of my grief. February has lost the battle and winter is ending. Creator kwulencuten's blessings of love and fury have broken up the ice and now the high mountain snow begins its melt-off. Once again, the land is awakening to spring. A torrential, thunderous cleansing saturates absolutely everything. Mother Earth sings the most beautiful songs of the land and mountains breathing, reclining, arising, awakening to the changing of seasons.

Spring comes early on the West Coast, and when the world awakens the only trail that matters to a paddler is the wake marking the passage of our canoes. It is time to train. All the paddlers on the land rise to the call. Minds, bodies, and spirits hunger for the stretch and pull of cedar blades reaching and gathering water; the rip and tear of muscles and tendons growing. I watch a female cyclist zip past as I continue to trudge along the street. That cyclist is stronger cycling up the hill than I feel going down. I own a bike but I'm scared to ride it. If I rode my bike, I would save so much time. If I rode my bike, I would be strong. My steps are heavy and I feel weak as I run to catch the bus on Commercial Drive. Too soon the bus arrives and I'm still running. It glides through a puddle, narrowly missing me, and continues down the street without stopping. The sky is a ceiling of falling silver ribbons. I have been lax. I have been lazy, and I have become stale in the funk of my grief and depression. I know how it feels to be physically strong. I know what I need to do. The season is changing, and it is time for an awakening.

The first budding leaves unfold themselves into the glory of spring and the grass is growing. The rain has created a sea of emerging greenery. When I was younger, my counsellor explained that being healthy meant balancing all elements of my life: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. This year, I have realized that as an intergenerational survivor of Indian Residential School, I am also surviving the genocide of my ancestors. I am not alone on this path, yo-yoing between suicidal thoughts, depression and my efforts to gain physical and intellectual strength. This healing journey is not an individual thing. It is the healing of all the generations that have gone before and all the generations that will come after. It is the healing of my children. Our ancestors broke this trail and it is our job to maintain it. Being of the seventh generation means that we carry a burden that is so much greater than ourselves. We continue the work of our ancestors, towards healing and transforming our lives for the benefit of future generations. So that, like our ancestors, our future generations can live blessed by heartfelt peace, joy, health, and abundance. The way they were meant to live.

"Draw the medicine wheel and map out all four realms: mental, spiritual, emotional, physical. Free-write about how they are reflected within your life." It's true, the teachings of the medicine

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This healing journey is not an individual thing. It is the healing of all the generations that have gone before and all the generations that will come after.

wheel are not Salish. I am not certain, but I suspect that the teachings embedded within represent a compendium of other teachings from a multitude of Indigenous Nations. It has worked for people like me who needed a methodology, a map to follow in order to gain courage and skills to recover from the hurt of the past. Along with the guidance of my Elders, it has helped me transform my life. This journey of healing and transformation is different for everyone.

It is a lifelong process of steadfast learning, strategizing, and actively employing new skills. Staying consistent, being self-observant and self-aware of internal struggle, because quitting and self-sabotage can no longer be part of the equation. Shame-based thoughts, like tape recordings on repeat, falsely told me, "You're nothing but a loser, a failure. You're not worthy of love." But none of that is true. I am worthy. I am not a failure. I am capable. I am intelligent. I know what it takes to be strong. And I can achieve this goal of graduating from university.

I chose to quit drinking in my teens because I came to believe that everything painful that I had witnessed or experienced as a child had been linked to someone's addictions. Leaving that stage of life behind was my first step toward creating and learning to live a happier, healthier life. Now I also understand all the issues interwoven with alcoholism and addictions are deeply interlinked with intergenerational grief and trauma resulting from colonization. Genocide. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called it cultural genocide, but the genocide was not limited to an attack on Indigenous culture. It was a strategic attack on an entire group of people. The original people of this land now called Canada. So many strategic actions and so many

layers of loss. The theft of women and children, the theft of land, the theft and destruction of resources, including the destruction of entire water bodies and ecosystems critical to Indigenous subsistence economy. Indian Reservations, created with laws enforced that denied “status” Indigenous people the right to leave the reserve and travel throughout their traditional territories in order to hunt, trap, fish, and harvest food. Métis people denied the right to peacefully raise their children and harvest on the lands of their grandmothers. Resulting in their road allowance homesteads. Why? Because they were considered not Indian enough and not white enough to belong. Our grandmothers and grandfathers could no longer access and cultivate the bountiful abundance of riches from the sacred tmixw temexw tmxwulaxw that had always nourished and sustained our ancestors. Every element of Indigenous seasonal rounds related to the independent harvest and provision of traditional Indigenous foods and medicine sources was controlled and forbidden, resulting in severe poverty, disease, and starvation.

Entire communities of Indigenous children stolen, even at gunpoint and forced into Indian Residential Schools, into foster homes, exposed to disease, sexual and physical violence. Children deprived of safety, deprived of love, deprived of food. A graveyard outside of every single Indian Residential School in Canada means 130 graveyards for Indigenous children. A burial place for the times the church chose to be forthright about the children and babies who died in their care. In Stó:lō solh Temexw—the Fraser Valley, British Columbia—this included the theft of children by miners during the gold rush. The theft of children left entire communities barren of laughter, barren of love. The theft of children resulted in two generations of my family being taken away. Babies and children need love to survive and so do adults. Canadian government policies stated that their intention was to “kill the Indian and save the man.” “Save the child” is what they

said, by denying Indigenous children the physical, emotional, spiritual safety of loving family while also starving the children in order to conduct nutrition experiments. And then silently and secretly burying them without ever telling their families. Canada. Can you imagine a country without children? A country barren of the sound of children’s voices calling, crying, laughing, making sing-song as they called out for their Yayahs and Spepazas? As they cried out the names of their brothers, sisters, and cousins? The only thing left within our Indigenous communities was the echoes of silence. These are the blankets of sorrow, these are the generations of grief and loss that today’s generations are working so desperately to lift. This is our journey as Indigenous people. Recovering ourselves, our families, our communities, our cultures, recovering our secret and sacred places, recovering our songs and traditional names. Recovering the ability to live, love, and experience joy without shame.

“ Can you imagine a country without children? ”

“During the time of deepest grief, don’t let your mind get away with you, especially at night. Don’t believe the nighttime thoughts.” These words, spoken during a time of great sorrow, were shocking at first and required self-reflection. In that process, I realized that it was during the late-night hours of insomnia when I struggled the most with depression, hurt, worthlessness, and

self-hatred. It was during those hours that I contemplated and planned my suicide. It was during the late-night hours of grief and aloneness when the heart and spirit felt most vulnerable. My questions: How does a person recover from grief? How do you overcome a lifetime of depression and begin healing?

The answers shared by many included: Find a good counsellor or therapist and make sure any therapist you see is actively engaged in their own personal healing. Research the places that offer support: on campus, at the community health centre, friendship centre, or at a counselling referral agency. Organizations that focus their programming on intergenerational survivors of Indian Residential Schools have a better understanding of the needs of Indigenous clients healing from intergenerational trauma. Consistently and regularly attend appointments with therapists. And be alert to the red flags. If at any point you feel unsafe or judged by the counsellor, find someone else.

A country barren of the sound of children’s voices calling, crying, laughing, making sing-song as they called out for their Yayahs and Spepazas? ”

Emotional and spiritual healing is not an overnight process. It takes self-discipline, endurance, and courage to rise. Seek out sacred and safe spaces: land, mountains, water, people. Cedar, fir, or juniper trees will always welcome you within their boughs and cover you with their unconditional love. Paddle to a secluded beach, run or

walk a mountain trail, walk them all because endorphins are an essential element of joy. Go to the sweatlodge and pray, go to the longhouse, listen and sing the songs of our homelands. Go to the water to pray and brush off the negative energy. Rain or shine, get out on the land. If not, go to the gym. Shake it off, sweat it off. Crack your own whip and bust your own ass, especially when you’re sinking. Find ways to create the healing energy you need to keep going. Spend time on the land harvesting traditional foods. Find a safe place by clear, moving water and do those four dunks that our Elders have taught us to do. The task is to create a wellness plan and follow it. To meditate and pray with every step that touches the ground, with every reach and pull of the paddle. The task is to do what it takes to stay alive and to transform the hurts of the past into a source of strength.

Go to the homes of beloved Elders and clean their kitchens. Every stage of cleaning helps clear the mind of negative energy. Our Elders taught us to work hard, keep our hands busy, and keep our minds busy. And it’s okay to have a bad day. Falling off the path doesn’t mean it’s the end; it just means you have to dust yourself off and start again. Every moment is a chance to remember, to reset and start again.

At canoe practice, coach once said, you can’t quit paddling when you’re tired, especially if you’re in the middle of the lake or on the ocean. If you run as far as you can in one direction, you still have to turn and run, walk, or paddle home. Everything in life is about self-discipline and our ancestors lived by these laws in order to survive. Those original teachings of self-discipline, as taught by our Elders and sacred Knowledge Carriers, are what we must return to in order to recover ourselves.

In the city, it can be hard to maintain balance. Trudging a street surrounded by cement and manicured lawns forces a person to

get creative to stay fit. Growing stale due to inactivity is not an option. I fish my cell phone out of my coat pocket, pick away the lint, and scroll through my contacts list until my mechanic’s phone number pops up. “Hi, Ron. You mentioned you had a buyer for my Sunfire? Yes, please, I want to get rid of it. Sure, I’ll take that. Do you have a tow truck? Awesome.” A few hundred will cover rent, food, and bills. That’s my priority. That lime green and blue road bike has been gathering dust in the junk room for too long. It’s not going to dig itself out. Shred anxiety and just ride. YES, the car is dead. Roadtrips are not an option. Driving to the grocery store or to North Van for a ride on my canoe is not an option. Beached. Ride, walk, or catch a bus across the Second Narrows Bridge to visit my canoe. Those are the options. Transformation requires endurance and steadfast motivation.

skins: the death of the grieving body and rebirth of a living body. A loving heart is the feeling that comes as sorrow releases its hold. My canoe is calling. The tug, push, and pull of cedar all around me, digging my blade into the waves: complete transformation. I need to feel a different kind of pain, the kind that results from muscles stretching, flexing, and growing. This is the kind of pain that will make me strong again.

East Van is stink, with the chicken factory down the road and the occasional rotten chicken part lying on the street in front of the factory. When the breeze is “right,” it smells like fresh stink chicken any day of the week. I never thought I’d attend university and live in East Vancouver, down the road from a chicken factory. Persevere. My ancestors survived much harder times than this. I can and I will complete this degree.

When I dig out my road bike, both tires are flat. But that’s not the end. I wipe off the dust and walk it the few blocks to the bike store where they inspect my tires and lube the chain. When I pick it up, it rolls smooth on the street. It doesn’t make sense to walk my bike, so despite growing anxiety, I give it a try. The wheels are so narrow I can hardly balance on the seat. The gear tension isn’t right, so my feet swing around the pedals way too fast. I adjust the gears and keep going. Riding it on a hillside for the first time is ridiculous. The bike wobbles, and I have to pedal harder in order to stabilize with my legs and stomach muscles. Beyond terrified

and self-conscious of all the passers-by, I ride around the block until I can maintain my balance. These Italian road bike tires are superfast and today, I feel like a super geek.

Every day and every week, muscles continue to reawaken and grow with the awakening of spring. The running has helped, now the bike. A few blocks at a time with distance consistently

lengthened. It’s easy to get lazy and it’s easy to quit, so every time I start feeling depressed and toxic thinking slips in, I put on my workout gear and go for a run or go for a ride. My goal is to ride across the Second Narrows Bridge all the way to Tsleil-Waututh. I run as far as possible in one direction, with the knowledge that at the end, I have to turn and run all the way home. Just like when I am paddling. I paddle to the end of the lake, or around the islands by Deep Cove, then turn and paddle all the way back to the beach. I buy a really good double bike lock from a bike store on Commercial Drive. Every day, I ride my bike a little bit further until I decide to start riding to the university. I ride my bike to Commercial and East Broadway, then throw it on the bike rack for the trip up to campus, then cycle to class. Afterwards, I ride the city bike trails all the way home to Commercial and East Georgia.

She is there, the woman on the bike who blazed past me in the rain. She gave me the inspiration to gather my courage and start riding. That woman bikes past almost every single day, to and from wherever she goes. Dusk on a spring night on my way back from campus. She’s trying to pass me again. Amidst other cyclists on Adanac Trail, the decision is made. Today is not the day. Today, I’m not going to let her pass me by. She picks up speed; I push my bike pedals harder. My antique Italian road bike is fast, faster than her fancy new one. She pushes even harder; I can hear her breathe. On the hillside going up, she goes for the pass. The muscles on her legs and forearms bunch as she stands and digs with her feet, pushing hard on her pedals. That’s when I hit it even harder and give it everything I have. She paces me for the last five blocks, all the way up the hill to the street outside my building. When I pull over outside my place, she passes me and says, “Good race.” I could cry because I am so proud of myself, but instead I just give her a nod and a wave.

The breeze picks up as I ride up East Georgia Street to Victoria and then from Adanac Trail to Sunset. My cedar canoe is stored beside the ocean in the community of the Tsleil-Waututh. I feel

superfast on my road bike; strong, alive, and so electric. The bike trail leading up to the Second Narrows Bridge is steep. The rumble of a thousand vehicles is thunderous. Not the sound of torrential rain falling on the lake. Not the sound of a spring storm releasing and ravishing the land. It is the artificial sound of machines, crashing and banging on the bridge as they cross the Indian Arm. The drivers of those vehicles do not care that this ocean, these waterways, this land is infused with the blood, the DNA, and the life force of a thousand generations of Indigenous people. As Indigenous people, we are fused with the life force of these waterways and this land. There is no ending, no beginning between us; we are the land, we are the water. We have journeyed this landscape, these water highways since millennia and we will not stop. We can never stop. Wind from the ocean channel, wind from the mountains, the wind is the breath of our ancestors. The wind is endless like our blood, and like the wind our spirits will carry on forever. This land and these mountains are woven with the bones and hair of our ancestors and we will never leave.

Pushing, pulling, fighting, protecting, reclaiming. Transforming into power. Transforming into strength. We do not die. We cannot die. We cannot concede. We transform. Resurgence is our only choice.

“The wind is endless like our blood, and like the wind our spirits will carry on forever. This land and these mountains are woven with the bones and hair of our ancestors and we will never leave.

Amidst cigarette butts and banana peels left by my upstairs neighbours, I stretch calves, back, quads, hammys, and do a few squats and lunges. I try to look like I know what I’m doing. A tin can tread leads past telephone poles and bushes and beneath blossoming cherry trees. Strategy: run and walk from one telephone pole to the next. East Georgia over to Venables; walk and run the hill all the way to Trout Lake. This is the shedding of



ROXANNE CHARLES



ROXANNE CHARLES

The Lesser Blessed, 2019

Responding to the film
The Lesser Blessed



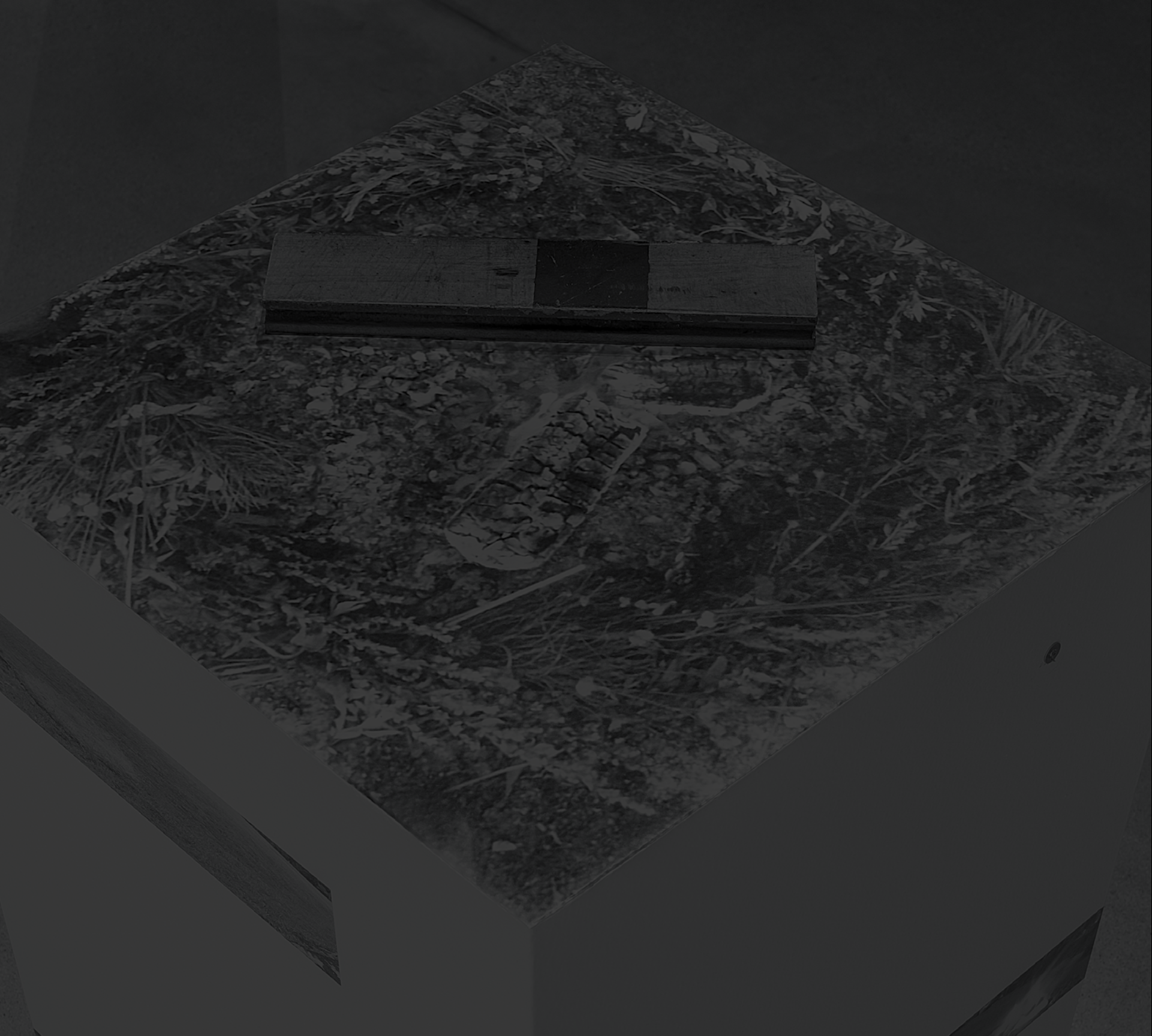
RONNIE DEAN HARRIS



RONNIE DEAN HARRIS

Holuh?, 2019

Responding to the film
Smoke Signals



JAY HAVENS



JAY HAVENS

Boarding School, 2019

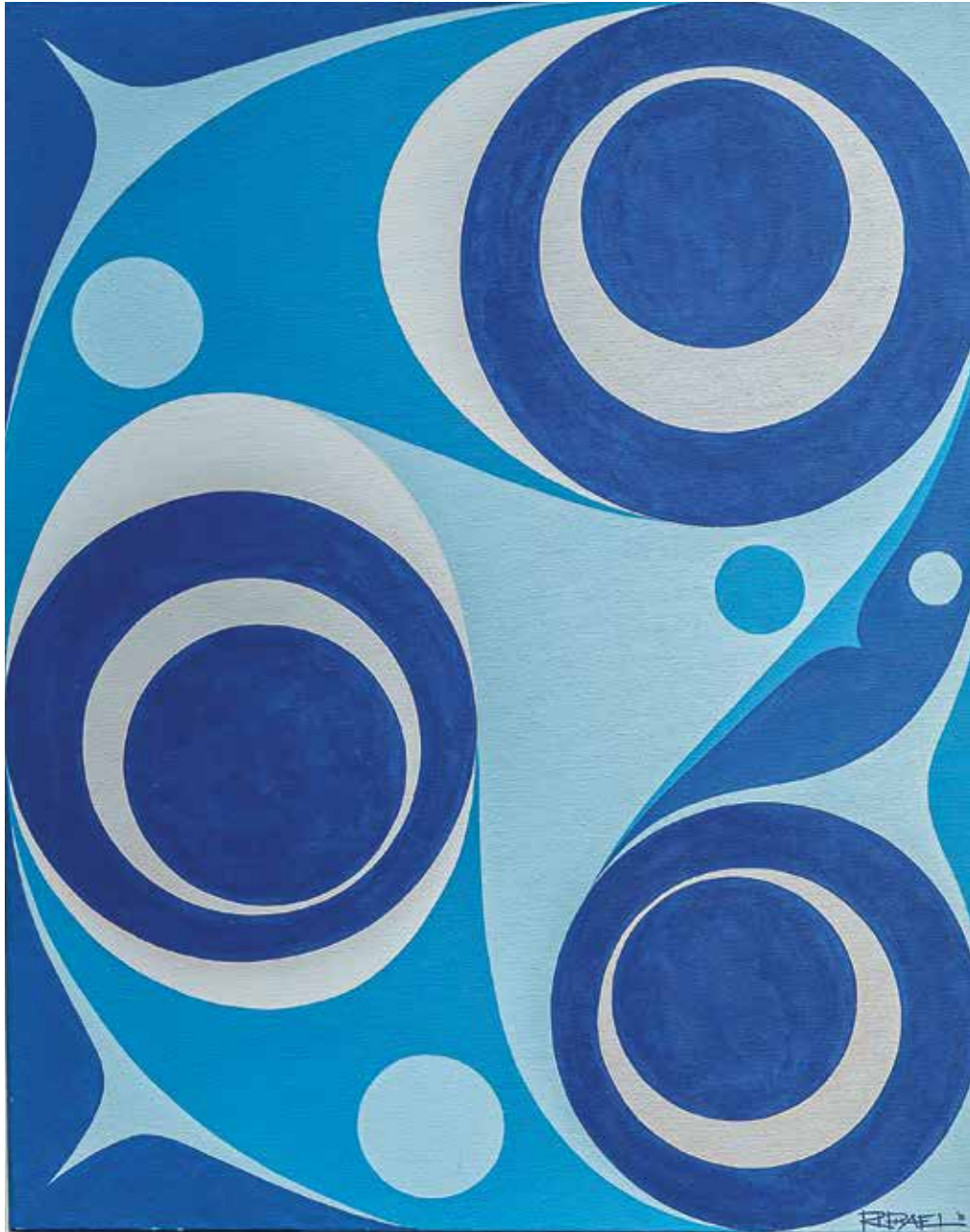
Responding to the film
Rhymes for Young Ghouls





RAPHAEL SILVER





RAPHAEL SILVER

Nesting, 2011-2019

Responding to the film
Rabbit Proof Fence





CARRIELYNN VICTOR



CARRIELYNN VICTOR
St'ewókw' - White, Powdery, Diatomaceous Earth, 2019
 Responding to the film
Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner





THERESA WARBUS



THERESA WARBUS

Where Have All The Trees Gone?, 2019

Responding to the films
Roundhouse and *The Road Forward*



DEB SILVER





DEB SILVER

Sch'ats'el, 2019

Responding to the film
Songs My Brothers Taught Me



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Jo-Ann Archibald, Q’um Q’um Xiim, is a member of the Stó:lō Nation and has St’at’imc ancestry in British Columbia, Canada. She is Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columba (UBC). Archibald received a Bachelor of Education degree from UBC, followed by a Master of Education degree and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from Simon Fraser University. Over a 45-year educational career, Jo-ann has been a school teacher, curriculum developer, researcher, university leader, and professor. Archibald’s scholarship relates to Indigenous knowledge systems, storywork/oral tradition, transformative education at all levels, Indigenous teacher and graduate education, and Indigenous methodologies. In 2018 Archibald was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for her substantial work in Indigenous education.

Jocelyne Robinson is a member of the Timiskaming First Nation in Quebec. Her Algonquin Anishinaabe name is Kokomisminan Dibik-kakizis Nésaywin (Grandmother Moon’s Breath). She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University, and a Masters in First Nations Curriculum in Education from Simon Fraser University. She earned her PhD in Education in the Cross Faculty Inquiry Department in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. Both her scholarly work and her artistic practice focus on bringing together Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Robinson has worked nationally and internationally as a sculptor and performance artist. Nationally, she was a finalist for one of Canada’s largest First Nations public art commissions for the University of Regina. Internationally, her work “Dancing to the Songs of the Universe” was the first Canadian permanent public art sculpture mounted in Shanghai, China.

Brenda Crabtree’s practice focuses on weaving using traditional fibers such as inner cedar bark, cedar roots, and spruce roots. She received her BA and MA in Cultural Anthropology from Western Washington University. A member of the Spuzzum Band, she has both Nlaka’pamux and Stó:lō ancestry. She has been the Director, Aboriginal Programs at Emily Carr University of Art + Design since 1998, and she has been instrumental in supporting that institution’s annual Aboriginal Student Art Exhibition, developing scholarship programs, and developing workshops in First Nations Studio Art, Design and Technology. In 2016, in recognition of the

contributions she has made to B.C.’s First Nations art community, the B.C. Achievement Foundation established an emerging artist award in Crabtree’s and Bill McLennen’s honour (Crabtree McLennen Award). Her work has recently been exhibited at the East West Gallery (Honolulu) and the Legacy Gallery (Victoria). She has recently had an essay published by Or Gallery titled “What becomes of the broken hearted.”

Rocky LaRock was born in Seattle, Washington, and as a boy moved with his family to his mother’s Coast Salish traditional territories where he still resides, in the community of Sts’ailes (Chehalis) in the Fraser Valley. His forty-year career as a First Nations artist began with an apprenticeship under master carvers Francis Horne Sr. and Ron Austin. His work is greatly influenced by the forests, surrounding wildlife and a lifestyle rich in Coast Salish culture. His work has been shown and collected extensively in British Columbia. LaRock has worked as an instructor and studio technician for the University of the Fraser Valley’s Indigenous Design and Technology program, and also as a counsellor and teacher with Indigenous youth and inmates, using art as a means to recovery and wellness.

T’uy’t’tanat- Cease Wyss is an interdisciplinary artist of Skwxwu7mesh, Stó:lō, Metis, Hawaiian, and Swiss ancestry who works with new media and other mediums, community engaged, and public art. She is currently developing a public art site in Vancouver based in permaculture and other land based work, with Dene artist Anne Riley entitled “A Constellation or Remediation,” a multi-year project focused on plant remediation on various sites around the City of Vancouver. Cease is an Indigenous Ethnobotanist and an emerging cedar and wool weaver with a textiles art practice that includes plant and other natural dyes. Through the IM4 :: Indigenous Matriarchs (An Indigenous Futurisms Lab, with Loretta Todd), Cease has become an emerging developer of XR Futures, and is developing a series of VR experiences for her “Sacred Teachings Series.” Cease is a beekeeper and a member of the Aboriginal Writers Collective West Coast and lives in North Vancouver.

Wenona Hall is an Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley. Dr. Hall, who is Stó:lō, earned a bachelor’s degree with a joint major in criminology and psychology, and a master’s degree in traditional forms of Stó:lō justice. Her PhD thesis was titled “XeXa:ls and the Power of Transformation: The Stó:lō, Good Governance and Self Determination.” Before joining the University of the Fraser Valley, Dr. Hall was the director of the Stó:lō Nation Justice Department. She is from the Ts’elxwéyeqw tribe and is a member of the Skowkale community. She has three children, Jade, Justice, and Alexis.

Nicola Campbell is Nl̓eʔkepmx, Syilx and Métis and is named after her home, the Nicola Valley, British Columbia. She is the author of the children’s books Shi-shi-etko, Shin-chi’s Canoe, and Grandpa’s Girls. Her most recent children’s book, A Day with Yayah, shares a story of a grandmother passing on important land-based cultural teachings about harvesting traditional foods. Shin-chi’s Canoe was the recipient of the 2009 TD Canadian Children’s literature award, and is on the 2009 USBBY Outstanding International Books List. Shi-shi-etko was co-winner of the 2006 Anskohk Aboriginal Children’s Book of the Year Award. Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi’s Canoe were both produced into short films in the Stó:lō Halq’emeylem language set in Stó:lō solh temexw and have been shown at film festivals around the world. Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi’s Canoe, both the books and films, are used in core educational curriculum focusing on Indian Residential Schools across Turtle Island. Campbell’s PhD dissertation research through UBC Okanagan draws upon Indigenous scholarship with a focus on contemporary and traditional Indigenous storytelling practices. Campbell’s forthcoming memoir, featuring a combination of poetry and prose, will be published by HighWater Press, Winnipeg.

Roxanne Charles is a mixed media artist of Strait Salish and European descent. She is an active and proud member of the Semiahmoo First Nation in Surrey, BC, where she promotes art, language and culture. Charles completed a double major from Kwantlen Polytechnic University receiving a BA Double Minor in Cultural Anthropology and Art History along with a BFA. Roxanne also holds a certificate in Northwest Coast jewelry design from The

Native Education College. She works with a wide range of media and her work often explores themes such as spirituality, identity, hybridity, the environment, urbanization, and various forms of structural violence. In 2018 Charles was a guest curator for the Vancouver Mural Festival. The same year she was the recipient of a Civic Treasure Award from the City of Surrey.

Ronnie Dean Harris, a.k.a. Ostwelve is a Stó:lō /St’át’imc/ Nlaka’pamux multimedia artist based in Vancouver, BC. As a musician under the name Ostwelve, he has performed in numerous festivals and has opened for acts such as Guru, K’naan, Abstract Rude, and Snoop Dogg. Harris has also had the opportunity to perform as a part of the red diva projects ensemble project “The Road Forward” at the 2014 PuSh Festival in Vancouver. He has been very active in facilitating and creating workshop programs for youth empowerment in media arts and hip-hop, and he also spent a number of years as a cultural programmer with the W2 Community Arts Society and the Vancouver Indigenous Media Arts Festival. Currently he is working as the Program Director for “Reframing Relations” with the Community Arts Council of Vancouver delivering programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to interface with students and youth in schools and communities around the concept of reconciliation. As a visual multi-media artist, Harris has had his work shown at the Vancouver Art Gallery, The Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, and with the Vancouver Mural Festival.

Jay Havens is a multi-disciplinary artist of Haudenosaunee-Mohawk and Scottish-Canadian ancestry. Born on Haudenosaunee Territory in Brantford, Ontario Havens’ has lived primarily on unceded Stó:lō and Musqueam lands near Vancouver, British Columbia for over 25 years. Jay works across Turtle Island as a freelance artist, educator, and scenographer creating large-scale collaborative projects including mural making, costume, and set design, as well as exhibiting artwork and installations with two sculptural pieces held in the permanent collection of the New York State Museum. Havens’ has been nominated for two Jessie Richardson awards and one Dora Mavor Moore award. Presently they divide time between Salish Territories in British Columbia, Haudenosaunee Territories in Ontario and New York State, as well

as Pueblo Territories in New Mexico. Havens holds a BFA from the University of British Columbia (2008) and an MFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design (2016). Jay is a proud member of the Six Nations of the Grand River, Mohawk Bear Clan.

Raphael Silver grew up in Sumas Nation and has been a life-long Abbotsford resident ever since. He was taught to carve by his father Ray Silver, and has been a professional artist for more than twenty years. Silver’s work can be seen around the Fraser Valley, notably at The Kariton Art Gallery, several schools such as Yarrow and Bakerview Elementary Schools, Abbotsford Middle School, and Yale Secondary, as well as the McCallum Roundabout and two house posts at Fraser Heritage Park in Mission. Following in the footsteps of his father, Silver has taught art classes at most schools in the Abbotsford district, and also takes on apprentices to teach young people the craft of First Nations art.

Carrielynn Victor is an artist and traditional plant practitioner of mixed European and Coast Salish ancestry. Her work fuses ancestral knowledge and a deep connection to her culture with contemporary techniques and styles. Her practice considers gender and sexuality, community, interconnectedness, land, and sustainability. Her work has been featured in the Vancouver Mural Festival, on street banners decorating the Mt. Pleasant area, and in exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art in Vancouver, Ranger Station Gallery in Harrison Hot Springs, Plaskett Gallery in New Westminster, and the ACT Gallery in Maple Ridge. In addition to maintaining her art practice, Victor also operates and manages an environmental consultancy that provides reviews and reports of projects and initiatives with a blended focus, pairing Stó:lō cultural and heritage understanding with ecological knowledge.

Theresa Warbus is a female Indigenous filmmaker who wants to tell authentic stories that have never been told before from the perspective of Indigenous people. She holds a BFA in film production from UBC. Theresa has worked in the arts and as an activist and hip hop artist for over ten years. She recently turned her attention to filmmaking and hopes to bridge gaps in knowledge and understanding to tell stories that are both modern

and traditional. The traditional oral history of the Stó:lō and Coast Salish people has yet to be documented and Theresa wants to be a part of this important work. She wants to make films that are impactful, not only for her people, but for everyone.

Deb Silver is an emerging contemporary artist from the Sumas First Nation, living and working in the Fraser Valley, producing culturally and environmentally inspired art. A recent graduate from the BFA program at the University of the Fraser Valley, Silver’s photographic/sound art installation in the graduating exhibition was singled out as particularly strong, well-conceived and executed, and a strong indicator of the successes ahead for this emerging artist. Silver is currently pursuing a Masters of Fine Arts at Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver.

LIST OF WORKS

<p>Jo-ann Archibald <i>Letter to Alanis Obomsawin</i>, 2019 text-based work</p>	<p>Ronnie Dean Harris <i>Holuh?</i>, 2019 acrylic on panel 36 x 60 x 1.5 inches</p>
<p>Jocelyne Robinson <i>Our World Ad/Dress</i>, 2019 cedar wood, bark, rope, sawdust, charcoal, feathers, wooden alphabet letters, metal fencing wide, eco paper towels, cassette tape ribbons 88 x 91 x 95 inches</p>	<p>Jay Havens <i>Boarding School</i>, 2019 photographs on adhesive vinyl, floorboard fragment dimensions variable</p>
<p>Brenda Crabtree <i>Sacred Roots</i>, 2019 elk hide, wood frame, acrylic ink two drums, 22 and 24 inches in diameter respectively, 4 inches deep each</p>	<p>Raphael Silver <i>Nesting</i>, 2011–2019 two pieces, acrylic on canvas, and to-be-carved wood panel canvas: 30 x 24 inches, panel: 31 x 23 inches</p>
<p>Rocky LaRock <i>The Northlander</i>, 2019 maple wood, horse hair, leather 45 x 21 x 9 inches</p>	<p>Carrielynn Victor <i>St’ewókw’ -White, Powdery, Diatomaceous Earth</i>, 2019 willow wood – xwá:lá:lh alder wood – xéyth’elh hand harvested earth - st’ewókw’ wool – sá:y ball jars, glass lids – q’p’á:letstel acrylic paint ancestral phaliform Pestle – kw’ó:qwstel 3 specimen jars, 9.25 x 4.5 x 4.5 inches each installation dimensions variable</p>
<p>Cease Wyss <i>Haka Thriller</i>, 2019 video projection on wool weaving weaving: 63 x 16 inches video: 2 minutes, 7 seconds</p>	<p>Theresa Warbus <i>Where Have all the Trees Gone?</i>, 2019 polyester blanket, wool, cedar dimensions variable</p>
<p>Nicola Campbell <i>Adanac Trail</i>, 2019 text-based work</p>	<p>Deb Silver <i>Sch’ats’el</i>, 2019 mixed media 58 x 73 x 63 inches</p>
<p>Roxanne Charles <i>The Lesser Blessed</i>, 2019 yellow cedar, repurposed leather, deer hide, copper, bone, glass beads, aluminum rivets, found fabric, wool, fur, sinew approximately 72 x 34 x 6.5 inches</p>	

SCREENING DATES & DESCRIPTIONS

October 26, 2018

SHI-SHI-ETKO

Directed by Kate Kroll | 12 mins | 2009
Shi-Shi-Etko is based on the children’s book by Nicola Campbell, telling the story of a young girl’s last four days before being taken to a residential school. In 2009 the book was made into a short movie, filmed on Stó:lō territory in the Halq’eméylem language (with English subtitles).

THE LYNCHING OF LOUIE SAM

Directed by David McIlwraith | 52 mins | 2005
The Lynching of Louie Sam recreates the events of February 1884, when a mob of over 100 men crossed the American border to kidnap and hang 14-year-old Stó:lō boy Louie Sam. Commissioned by Stó:lō Nation, *The Lynching of Louie Sam* examines the ongoing struggle of First Nations communities to have the wrongs of the past examined in a meaningful way.

Creative respondent: Nicola Campbell

November 9, 2018

REEL INJUN

Directed by Neil Diamond | 85mins | 2009
In this feature-length documentary, Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond takes an entertaining and insightful look at the portrayal of North American Indigenous people throughout a century of cinema. Featuring hundreds of clips from old classics as well as recent releases, the film traces the evolution of the “Hollywood Indian.”

November 23, 2018

SONGS MY BROTHERS TAUGHT ME

Directed by Cloe Zhao | 98 mins | 2015
Songs My Brothers Taught Me provides more than just a glimpse into the lives of the Oglala Sioux people of the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. Both poignant and heartfelt, it’s

an intimate portrayal of a community in crisis, illustrating the traumatic realities of postcolonial life with resolute clarity.

Creative respondent: Deb Silver

December 7, 2018

THE LESSER BLESSED

Directed by Anita Doron | 86 mins | 2012
Based on the novel by Richard Van Camp, *The Lesser Blessed* is an eye-opening depiction of what it is like to be a vulnerable teenager in today’s modern world. Set in a remote community in the Northwest Territories and told through the eyes of Indigenous teenager Larry Sole, the film tells the story of three unlikely friends discovering what they can of life and love amid racial tensions and the recklessness of youth.

Creative respondent: Roxanne Charles

February 1, 2019

ATANARJUAT: THE FAST RUNNER

Directed by Zacharias Kunuk | 172 mins | 2001
Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner is an epic film made by and about the Inuit peoples of the Canadian arctic, telling a story of a crime that ruptures the trust within a closely knit group, and how justice is achieved and healing begins. Director Zacharias Kunuk and writer Paul Apak Angilirq collected oral versions of an Inuit legend from several elders, collated them into a story, submitted the story to the elders for suggestions and then filmed it as a collaborative expression.

Creative respondent: Carrielynn Victor

Also screened at Seabird Island First Nation on February 2, 2019

February 15, 2019

RABBIT PROOF FENCE

Directed by Phillip Noyce | 94 mins | 2002
Three young girls are taken from their Aboriginal mother and sent over a thousand miles away to a training camp for domestic workers as part of the Australian government’s policy to try integrate Aboriginal youth into white society. Based on a true story, the film documents the girls’ escape and long journey on foot through the Australian Outback in their efforts to reach home.

Creative respondent: Raphael Silver

Also screened at Seabird Island First Nation on February 16, 2019

March 1, 2019

RHYMES FOR YOUNG GHOULS

Directed by Jeff Barnaby | 88 mins | 2013
Rhymes for Young Ghouls is an unflinching film that draws on post-apocalyptic and revenge fantasy genres to explore very real historical violence. It tells the story of teenager Alia who uses the proceeds from dealing drugs to bribe the corrupt local Indian Agent. When her cash is stolen she is taken to Residential School, but soon escapes and vows revenge.

Creative respondent: Jay Havens

March 15, 2019

SMOKE SIGNALS

Directed by Chris Eyre | 89 mins | 1998

A road movie about two Native American young men on both a literal and figurative journey, *Smoke Signals* is the first feature film to be written, directed, and co-produced by Indigenous Americans. *Smoke Signals* explores Native American stereotypes in popular cinema by both seriously challenging them and poking fun at them.

Creative respondent: Ronnie Dean Harris

Also screened at Soowahlie First Nation on March 23, 2019 and Skwah First Nation on March 31, 2019

March 29, 2019

CEDAR: TREE OF LIFE

Directed by Odessa Shuquaya | 11 mins | 2018
This short, expressionist documentary explores the relationship between cedar and three Salish women who work with it, weave with it, and live with it.

Also screened at Soowahlie First Nation on March 23, 2019

HANDS OF HISTORY

Directed by Loretta Todd | 51 mins | 1994
This acclaimed documentary profiles four contemporary female Indigenous artists who seek to find a continuum from traditional to contemporary forms of expression. The film is a moving testimony to the vital role Indigenous women play in nurturing Indigenous cultures.

Creative respondent: Brenda Crabtree

April 12, 2019

THE NORTHLANDER

Directed by Benjamin Ross Hayden | 98 mins | 2016
The Northlander is set in a time after humanity, when nature has recovered the land. A hunter is called to protect his people, a once-nomadic band of survivors in need of food and water that is growing scarce. This film’s futuristic styling of Canadian history has made it a point of reference in the science fiction movement of Indigenous Futurism.

Creative respondent: Rocky LaRock

April 26, 2019

BOY

Directed by Taika Waititi | 88 mins | 2010
Set on the east coast of New Zealand in 1984, Boy, an 11-year-old child and devout Michael Jackson fan, gets a chance to know his absentee criminal father, who has returned to find a bag of money he buried years ago. This coming of age story is a celebration of the strength and resilience of children.

Creative respondent: Cease Wyss

May 3, 2019

1491: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE AMERICAS BEFORE COLUMBUS

Directed by Barbara Hager | 45 mins | 2017
Based on the book by Charles C. Mann (Knopf, 2005), this film brings to life the complexity, diversity, and interconnectedness of Indigenous peoples in the Americas before the arrival of Columbus. Presented from an Indigenous-perspective, this is a journey along a timeline that dates from 20,000 years ago to 1491.

Creative respondent: Wenona Hall

May 31, 2019

ROUNDHOUSE

Directed by Theresa Warbus | 10 mins | 2017
Roundhouse is a short film that tells the story of Liya, a teenage girl conflicted about balancing her Aboriginal culture and social life. This tension is heightened when she is invited to a party and feels the pressure to fit in. The night takes an unexpected turn when she’s reminded of the value of her roots.

THE ROAD FORWARD

Directed by Marie Clements | 101 mins | 2017
This musical documentary connects the beginnings of the Indian Nationalist movement of the 1930s to the powerful momentum of First Nations activism today. The film is a rousing tribute to the fighters for First Nations rights, a soul-resounding historical experience, and a visceral call to action.

Creative respondent: Theresa Warbus

June 7, 2019

OUR PEOPLE WILL BE HEALED

Directed by Alanis Obomsawin | 97 mins | 2017
Our People Will Be Healed reveals how a Cree community in Manitoba has been enriched through the power of education. The Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre in Norway House, north of Winnipeg, receives a level of funding that few other Indigenous institutions enjoy. Its teachers help their students to develop their abilities and their sense of pride.

Creative respondents: Jo-ann Archibald and Jocelyne Robinson

Also screened at Skwah First Nation on April 23, 2019

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