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HOMESCAPES: INDIGENOUS LAND ART AND PUBLIC MEMORY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

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Abstract

Indigenous North Americans make visual forms that demonstrate and provide for the practice of kinship connections with land. In art history, discourse about "Land Art" has often omitted Indigenous connections with land and place. This dissertation aims to create a more holistic narrative of Land Art in North America through analysis of both ancestral and currently living artists and their work, as well as through a rigorous examination of histories of land possession and dispossession. Rooted in a kinship paradigm that intervenes in dominant public memories about place, I analyze art by Native American, First Nations, and Indigenous diaspora North Americans. In this context, I consider artworks of both living and ancestral communities who create *in situ* artworks, works that are representational of place, and works that consider place in abstraction. These artworks provide a counterpoint to dominant historical narratives and memories of land.

Throughout my dissertation, I use the methodology, "Critical Place Inquiry," established by Unangax scholar Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie in their 2015 book *Place in Research: Theory Methodology, and Methods*. This approach provides the tools through which I focus on Indigenous perspectives on land, and through which I reject the normalization of settler colonialism. Through this lens I understood place as shifting in meaning as it is experienced differently. This approach empowered me to recognize the artworks under consideration here as interjections of Indigenous kinship in the dominant narratives and memories that are constructed about land. These are claims to home on the land of North America.

I first analyze *in situ* installations at sites of extreme historical tension and violence, battlefields and borderlands. The artists in this section include Colleen Cutschall (Lakota), Edward Poitras (Métis- Cree), Alan Michelson (Kahnawake), and the arts collective Postcommodity. Next I move to an analysis of Indigneous cartography through a series of maps painted by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish Kootenai, Métis, Shoshone). My analysis of Indigenous cartography gives way to a consideration of the connection between the Indigenous female body and the land through a series of photographs and sculptures by Cuban/ American artist Ana Mendieta and Faye Heavyshield (Kainai). All of the artists I analyze throughout this dissertation demonstrate through their art, their connections to land through a paradigm of kinship. This leaves me to conclude with a consideration of the concept of "home" for Indigenous peoples as connected to land. For this, I examine a photograph from Richard Ray Whitman's *Street Chiefs* series, and I conclude my study with a consideration of an installation by Serpent River First Nation sculptor Bonnie Devine, *Writing Home*. I end my dissertation with a brief history and context of my own kinship with land as an Assiniboine woman.

Being ancestrally at home on, and in kinship with the land of this continent underscores the conceptual framework of each of the artworks in this dissertation. Through my analyses I demonstrate some ways Native artists have given thoughtful artistic form to those connections with the land.

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I. Įkná˒otą˒į:
Medicine Wheels, Mounds, and Maps:
Ancestral Indigenous Land Art

For too many decades, the radical conceptual implications of Land Art have been stymied by the marginalization of both Indigenous artists and Indigenous peoples on whose homelands non-Native artists create work.[1] Indigenous land art throughout the Americas has largely been ignored or relegated to anthropological or archeological study at best, looting and theft at worst. Such actions have reinforced Indigenous trauma and erasures, as they contribute to dehumanizing perspectives.[2] Without an engagement with the histories and implications of Indigenous dispossession, coupled with a more valiant attempt to more fully comprehend Indigenous cultures' connections to the land, a full reckoning of Land Art can never be complete. My dissertation moves us closer to that fullness, by centering on the works of selected Indigenous artists from North America. My intention is not to provide a full record of the history of Indigenous place-based ontology, epistemology, cosmology, or place-based construction, but to closely examine

[1] The Earthworks generation of Land Artists, under the theorizations of Robert Smithson, proposed a revolutionary approach to art and art making that was external to the gallery and museum systems that had dominated Western arts production and consumption since WWII. This dissertation is not focused on the Earthworks generation.

[2] Many examples of this abound, but a prominent case is that of the anthropological excavation/looting at the earthwork complex at the Spiro Mounds site in northeastern Oklahoma. The excavation of the site has been a source of pain and a site of conflict about the validity of the Western concept of property, profit, respect for indigeneity, and Indigenous claims to place. For more, see David La Vere, *Looting Spiro Mounds: An American King Tut's Tomb* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

a selection of living artists' work that considers the role and history of place as it pertains to, and reflects, their diverse Indigenous backgrounds.

This dissertation studies a selection of themes that emerge from a variety of Indigenous North American place-based artworks. My dissertation serves as an intervention to the established discourse on Land Art. My objective is to focus attention on Indigenous relationships to place, and those aesthetic forms created to reflect those relationships, as a narrative about land in North America. Through this focus, my dissertation critiques and destabilizes settler colonial structures, and some of the art historical discourse that has contributed to those structures' normalization. The themes that I use to arrange this text represent foundational differences between Land art made by settler artists, and those whose perspective is Indigenous.

In this chapter, I outline the importance of telling a holistic narrative about the places where Indigenous culture arises and persists. I outline my methodology and the approach to the works which I will analyze in subsequent chapters. The logic that underpins my dissertation is often personal, political, and intentionally interrupts dominant North American narratives. In alignment with my commitment to honoring my own indigeneity, I have chosen themes and names for the subsequent chapters that are rooted in Assiniboine culture. The chapters all have names in Nakón i'abi and themes spring from Nakón wicoȟʾąge concepts of land, relations, and home.[3] Those themes will be developed more fully later in this chapter.

As a general categorization, I use the term "Land Art" to refer to visual interventions and earthen work that direct human attention and sensual experience to the

[3] Nakón wicoȟʾąge are Assiniboine traditions.

specificities of location. I am also interested in discourse on the representation of place through such materials as maps and stories that convey the phenomena of place in its absence. The definitions of Land Art that are customary in art historical discourse have marginalized and muted Indigenous relationships with place and land for too long, as I address throughout this chapter. Many scholars of Western art history seem reticent to consider the repercussions of North American settler colonialism, as it attends to the topic of Land Art. This paradigm creates half-telling of the history of place and visual interventions on the land. A lack of engagement (or at the very least acknowledgement) of Indigenous peoples' history on and relationships with lands in North America on which 20th and 21st century Euro-American artists practiced their craft is a tool in the colonial project of Indigenous erasure. For the muting of place portends the muting of Indigenous peoples. As Dr. Daniel Wildcat (Yuchi, Mvskogee Nation) puts it, "stated simply, *Indigenous* means "to be of place."[4] Without a deeper engagement with the concept of indigeneity or the existence of Indigenous peoples, art historical discourse about 20th and 21st century "land art" movements echoes the structure of settler colonial erasures at large.

I don't intend to "decolonize" art historical thinking about Land Art, nor to add more bulk to the margins. Rather, my dissertation works to intervene in narratives that have perpetuated an ongoing erasure of Indigenous thinking and relating to place, as I illuminate a variety of ways Indigenous artists have given such intervention aesthetic and conceptual form.

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[4] Daniel R. Wildcat, and Vine Deloria Jr., *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, Colorado: American Indian Graduate Center and Fulcrum Press, 2001): 31.

Dr. Eve Tuck, along with Dr. K. Wayne Yang, stress the importance of correct use of the term "decolonization," in their foundational essay "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor." Tuck and Yang assert, that the term "decolonization" is too often misused as a means to placate settler guilt over dispossession of Indigenous place, to which I am opposed. I want to point out the complexity, impact, and seriousness of Indigenous dispossession, while showing and analyzing the various creative and aesthetic forms that Native artists have taken to show that those relationships remain generative to our cultures. I am drawn to the installations of Postcommodity, for example, who use humor and Indigenous presence to interrupt spaces that carry an air of certainty about dominant historical narratives.

As Tuck and Yang state, "decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the *repatriation of land* simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically."[5] Some readers might be inclined to *want* this discussion framed in "decolonizing" terminology, because this work is deeply related to the impetus and need for real decolonization; the artists I have selected give aesthetic form to the cultural significance of land, their ancestral teachings about place, and the ways that Indigenous dispossession have impacted their communities. These are shared roots of the present demands for practical, real decolonial work at the international political level, of the sort I am not equipped to engage in. The histories in place with which I grapple here overlap the histories of settler ascendancy and the mechanics of the settler nation, which must be dismantled in the true work of decolonization. This overlap is not reason enough

[5] Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, No. 1 (2012): 7. Emphasis added.

for me to pretend that this work is even a weak example of "decolonization" in its true sense. And so, these few paragraphs are the only place that the word "decolonization" will appear in this dissertation. Until land is returned to Indigenous governance and full control, "decolonization" will continue to be an empty gesture.

Despite my resistance to accepting a "decolonizing" framework, I do believe that this analysis works to demonstrate ways that Native artists have aesthetically addressed colonial impositions in place, and by contrast shows the ways non-Native land artists have upheld settler colonial paradigms. One of the major understudied areas in the canon of the Earthworks movement of the mid-20th century is how those works functioned within (and often as an attempted rejection of) the market economy of their time. This point must be challenged, however, because regardless of the benevolent intentions of Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, and Walter de Maria for example, their work was created and institutionalized in a settler system. Land Art made by settlers can't function as a wholesale rejection of capitalism and the market economy, because the land used to create those works was still considered "property," in the sense that settler colonialism creates it as such. Beyond this, the land will always be stolen from Native people (until it is returned), and therefore inherently upholds the structure of settler colonialism. So much of the discourse about those mid-century settler Earthworks artists touts their desire to circumvent, or reject in some cases, the highly commoditized gallery system that was gaining power in postwar America.[6] Some scholarship exists that critiques the ways that

[6] See, for example Anne Raine, "Embodied Geographies: Subjectivity and Materiality in the Work of Ana Mendieta," in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings* (London: Routledge, 2005): 228-248. Raine posits that artists associated with the Earthworks generation "abandoned the art gallery for outdoor sites in the late 1960s and 1970s… Like the 'dematerialization of the object' in conceptual and

those artists *did* function within a capitalist system. But not enough has been made in existing dialogue, for example about how dependent the Earthworks artists were on donors like Virginia Dwan (heiress to the 3M corporation) for the purchase of land. Scholarship that critiques the settler colonial and capitalist nature inherent to settler land art is badly needed.[7] As Tuck argues, "it is the *structure* of settler colonialism that has reduced human relationships to land to relationships to property, making property ownership the primary vehicle to civil rights in most settler colonial nation states."[8] Under this system, proprietary relationships to land happen *regardless* of individual feelings for place. Focusing on the out-of-gallery "radical" characteristic the Earthworks generation of land artists' works ignores their necessary engagement with capitalism, the proprietary relationship of human to land under a settler state, and the inherent dispossession of Indigenous peoples that made Land Art possible in the dominant art historical sense.

Current discourse and thinking about Land Art in the common sense is where my argument intervenes. The conversations and scholarship that address Land Art do not exist in a vacuum, rather they are also part of the structure of settler colonialism. Analyses of the historical land acquisitions by the North American settler states throughout the 244 years of their existence here has shown this assertion to be true.

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performance art, earthworks were a way of resisting the gallery system and the commodification of the art object." p.232.

[7] It may be claimed that much has been written about the ethics of land art, but the Land Art movement in the United States in the middle of the 20th century is often presented as existing independently of the structure of capitalism and settler nationhood. Analysis of the function of the settler state should lay a foundation for critique of such works, which rely so wholly upon Indigenous dispossession from place, for and through the mechanism of capitalism.

[8] Eve Tuck, and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015): 65

Regardless of the individual attachments and emotions that settlers have experienced in regard to the lands of North America; this land is still Indigenous homeland, the root of our past, present, and future existence.

Furthermore, the 'revolutionary' or 'radical' character of the works made by the generation of postwar settler land artists such as Smithson and others noted above, is actually a small portion of a millennia long tradition of creating place-based structures and site-specific interventions in the land. Indigenous peoples have made visually innovative in-situ constructions on the land from time immemorial. One finds an abundance of ancestral examples of ceremonial complexes and cairns, architectural enclosures, cartographic depictions, inscriptions on stone and memorializing monuments. Though many of the earliest examples have either been destroyed, lost to settler migration and colonial conquest, remain "undiscovered," or have decayed in nature, such constructions have long been, and continue to be, essential elements of the Indigenous cultures in the Americas. Others are on the precipice of destruction to date, so the urgent need for an enabling discourse about these works remains pressing.

Ancestor Sites

The long history of Indigenous site-specific construction did not end with ancestral creations or those made prior to European settlement in the Americas. More recent artworks and monuments made by living artists will be my focus for the bulk of this dissertation. Nevertheless, I foreground this dissertation with a brief introduction to a selection of ancestral works that living Indigenous land artists inherit. Land Art has long-

standing precedent in the Americas. Such incursions in the land, ranging from Inuksuit rock figures across Inuit homelands in Nunavut (ca. 2400BCE- Present Day), to the Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde (ca. 1190 CE), to pictographic complexes like Cueva de las Manos (ca. 7300 BCE) in Patagonia are diverse, diffuse examples of the millennia of Indigenous permanent, place-based visual forms.[9]

Many ancestrally created places and formations continue to be used by living members of some Indigenous communities. A primary example is that of the medicine wheels that dot the northern Great Plains. Such sites direct attention to other known sacred sites and function as text that details the locations and functions of other sites of cultural signification. Medicine wheels are complex arrangements of stones which usually include a central cairn. Stone lines form "spokes" that radiate outward from such central cairns, that partition the circular area into sections. Six additional cairns surround the structure at regular intervals- each is suited to surround a seated person with stones. With its visible diameter spanning 80ft, the Bighorn Medicine Wheel (Fig. 1) in the Bighorn National Forest in what is now known as Wyoming is the largest known example of such sites.[10] While the original impetus for the site remains known only within traditional societies and hidden from public and academic purview, it is commonly accepted that the structure was constructed ceremonially. The form of the medicine

[9] Each of these places still holds significance for living Native *and* non-Native communities, and have commanded reverence internationally. An Inuksuk (singular form of Inuksuit) is found of the flag of the Province of Nunavut, Mesa Verde is a US National Park, and Cueva de las Manos is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For more information on Inuksuit, see Norman Hallendy, *Inuksuit: Silent Messengers of the Arctic*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2009).

[10] The title "Bighorn Medicine Wheel" is an imposition on the structure, which has a variety of names used by those communities that use(d) and built it. However, for the purposes of this text I will use this term as an intermediary of those other titles.

wheel is echoed in the lodges and structures used in other Native ceremonial practices, and so it is easy to understand the sacred significance of this site, in harmony with other architectural forms within a matrix of Indigenous spiritual practices.

It is important to note that this, like many places in North America, remains an active site for ritual fasting, prayer, singing, offering and gifting for spiritual fulfillment for a variety of Indigenous peoples.[11] The Bighorn Medicine Wheel offers a phenomenological sanctuary for personal and communal contemplation. As a supplicant enters into each stone-demarcated area perched high on the stone precipice on which the wheel was built, their view is directed to the surrounding environment, entirely encased in the places and views that ancestors have wrapped themselves in for centuries. Upon entering this place, living people become intimately enmeshed with the experiences of hundreds of generations before, and are filled with hope and prayer for coming and passed generations. Such sites provide a platform onto which time collapses onto itself through meditative spiritual performances.

Some archeological research suggests that the site was constructed over a period of several thousand years, with the most recent major changes occurring around 1100 CE.[12] Though each medicine wheel differs in its history and associated narrative, many Plains communities use these sites to maintain cultural continuity and remind progressing

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[11] See Andres Cowell, and Andrew Moss Sr. eds., *Hinóno'éínoo3ítoono: Arapaho Historical Traditions Told by Paul Moss* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005) for an Arapaho account of the use and creation of this site. Of particular interest is Text #8, "Hìì3einóónotii/ The Buffalo Wheel," 251- 287.

[12] See Ray A. Williamson, *Living the Sky: The Cosmos of the American Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984) for a discussion on the complexity of dating Bighorn and other sites.

generations of Indigenous society about the histories and knowledge of ancestral peoples in their specific, various territories.[13]

As an Assiniboine woman, I honor the traditions of my own ancestors, and belief in the Medicine Wheel structure holds value as a model for my own work. This dissertation functions similarly to those forms that my ancestors created and used in Nakòda makoče (Assiniboine territory) since time immemorial. For us, in addition to their ceremonial purpose, stone ring "medicine wheels" direct attention and memory to sacred sites and places in which important events take place. The works that I have selected are located primarily in the United States and Canada, with minor attention to Mexico and Cuba.[14] The selection of works in this study are nowhere near exhaustive.

I chose works specifically for their relevance to, and clear expression of, the complex themes that themes that I have identified. They are also intentionally selected to reflect the complexity and diversity of Indigenous place relations across North America. The themes I analyze should be understood as outgrowth from the works themselves: they reflect the diversity of function that such works take on, and are categorizations that can change over time. The thematic groupings of the works I have selected are due to my own analyses of them, as evident in the text. So rather than focusing on a singular region, tradition, or territory, this text is an exploration of a broad range of ideas and places, with

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[13] See Joshua B. Horowitz, "Nakóna Wasnónya Yuhàbi/Assiniboine Knowledge Keepers: Indigenous Archiving From the 19th Into the 21st Centuries." PhD dissertation, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2014). Horowitz specifically discusses Assiniboine usage and understanding of Medicine Wheel function at Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation in Saskatchewan, but many similar sites exist.

[14] Indigeneity functions in Mexico under a paradigm that is radically different from the United States and Canada. Racialization and indigeneity in Mexico are complex and informed by a history of colonialism and settler colonialism that are beyond the scope of this text. I hope to consider some of the nuances, implications, and representations of Mexican Indigeneity and emplacement more directly in future work.

attention to the specific ontologies and epistemologies of Indigenous place, and the overlapping histories of contested relationships with land. Formally, the round structure of medicine wheels suggest a pattern of engagement with both time and place. Use of medicine wheel sites within a ceremonial complex promotes a cyclical chronological interaction with the universe and those sites to which medicine wheels direct attention. So, while the *location* of selected sites is diverse, the functioning of *time* at each site is also important. The work that I have chosen to emphasize in this dissertation link living communities and their land/place relations across time and participate in extending the long histories of place— through political and social upheavals, nationalist impositions, and intimate incursions on the body.[15]

Nowhere is the concept of the ongoing, yet troubled symbolic power of specific locations as a place of cultural emergence clearer than in the Mound Builder cultures throughout the Americas. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, for example refer to the site of ancestral Choctaw emergence, Nanih Waiya, as their "Mother Mound." Nanih Waiya is said to be *Chahta Aleha Itchokash* (the heart of the Choctaw people).[16] The mound itself remains a protected site standing 25 feet tall, and 218 feet long. This site, located in what is now known as Winston County, Mississippi plays a central role in Choctaw peoples' spiritual practice and belief in their origin story. The Choctaw history of connection with the ancient Mississippian mound builder cultures is especially pertinent, because this relationship and history have been deeply troubled by colonial

[15] See Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) for a full discussion on Indigenous and Western temporal orientations, and the implications of those differences.
[16] *Nanih Waiya: Heart of the Choctaw People, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*, http://www.choctaw.org/culture/mound.html.

policies and the resulting cultural degradation generated by disconnection from one's homelands.

The Choctaw were exiled from their homelands under Federal extermination policies in September 1830.[17] Throughout the nineteenth and well-into the twentieth century, scholars and hobbyists of Native history and archeology espoused and promoted the "Lost Race Theory," which supposed that the race of people who built such sites as Nanih Waiya could not have been related to the contemporary Indigenous communities in the region, conjecturing instead that a "lost race" was the only reasonable explanation for the great mounds.

Anthropologist Thomas Garlinghouse addressed the "Lost Race Theory" which posited that living Indigenous people do not reflect a contiguous occupation of or relationship to the land in North America. Rather, according to the theory, the Mound Builder cultures were a separate race of peoples than living Indian people. Evidence for this theory was based on racist observations and assumptions about modern Indian communities, relative to the colonial and Victorian paradigms of American explorers and settlers, who sought new claims to the place. In rejection of this theory, Garlinghouse argued of the once popular "lost race theory," in which

> the implications of this broadly-held view were significant. Implicit was the racist belief that the Native Americans had neither the intellectual capacity, nor the technological know-how to erect monumental structures. This in turn was a justification for the repressive policies toward the Indians. It was much easier to advocate a policy of genocide is the Indians could be viewed as savages incapable of significant cultural achievement. More pointedly, many people

[17] Choctaws were removed from their traditional homelands in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, 1830. For more, see James Taylor Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

> asked: It the Native Americans had somehow participated in the extermination of this lost race, then what right did they have to the land?[18]

In the well-known histories of Indigenous movement across the face of North America, both at will and under various states of traumatic and violent provocation, Indigenous relationships with place have come under considerable strain. Theories like the "lost race theory" justify the dispossession of Indian communities, and call into question the validity of those which *do* maintain relationships to place to date. Five centuries of European settlement on the lands in North America have pressured those relationships closer and closer toward erasure.

The construction of new settlements (and the destruction of old ones), the construction of new Western institutions, and the Western concept of legal property ownership under capitalism combined to press Indigenous place-based cultures toward assimilation into the dominant cultures of The United States, Canada and Mexico.[19] Nevertheless, Indigenous communities' relationships with land remain critically important. The various attempts to harm or diminish these relationships also inform many Indigenous communities, a paradigm evident in the various movements that advocate Indigenous recognition, legal language, and cultural forms.[20] In short, Indigenous culture

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[18] Thomas Garlinghouse, "Revisiting The Mound- Builder Controversy," *History Today*, 51, No. 9 (September, 2009): 38.

[19] It is worth noting that the legal structures and processes of land ownership and the concepts that govern this principle differ greatly between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Further, variety of structural and psychic differences relative to definitions of Indigenous communities exist between these three settler states. My intention is not to examine the quagmire of legal definitions of land ownership, but to reflect on Indigenous response and creative enterprises that counter, challenge, or question such impositions.

[20] Natchee Blu Barnd, *Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017). Barnd Examines the

and artistic practices exist today in a settler-colonial pattern which engage both Indigenous tradition *and* the existence of settler infrastructure.[21]

Reframing the Land Art Narrative

In dominant Western art historical parlance, Land Art usually refers to the narrowly established group of white male (and a handful of notable women) artists based on the east coast of the United States in the 1960s and 70s. The so-called Earthworks Generation of artists rose in the context of an activist society, which aided in the canonical Land Artists objectives to push beyond the staid definitions of art, artist, and past the strictures of the art world at the time. Brian Wallis suggests three guiding strategies that

> governed many of the works of the early 70s: feminist-inspired ritual activity that regarded the earth as an intimate extension of the human body; simpler gestural works that involved walking, pointing or the gently and temporary displacements of some natural elements; and finally what might be called organizational projects that utilized or

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constructive ways Native communities forge and maintain "spaces." Particularly focused on "mundane" spaces, grounded in Indigenous epistemologies and cosmologies. These are animated to reclaim Indigenous conceptions of place, geography, and the persistence of Native histories. For Barnd, space and place are wrapped up in the dynamics of power and the narratives of history of a settler state.

[21] For this reason, "post-colonial" theories are inappropriate for analyses of Indigenous North American art and history. North America remains colonized today. Or, as Aimee Carrillo Rowe states, "while postcolonial critics have attended to settler colonialism in their theorizations of nation-state and imperial formations, the "post" remains a vexed term in Native studies, where any move to place colonialism in the past risks reifying the myth of the disappearing Indian and the naturalized settler." Aimee Carrillo Rowe, and Eve Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies: Ongoing Settlement, Cultural Production and Resistance," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 1, p. 7.

> studied large social groups or political formations while creating works that emphasized the land or environmentally conscious actions.[22]

The theories and ideas that nourished and promoted Land Art have, until very recently, largely ignored the interests of communities of color, whose identity formation and very survival have been profoundly impacted by their relationships to place. This holds true even when the land upon which this art focuses involves the interests of those communities of color. This is especially problematic in the United States, in which histories of land occupation are remarkably fraught for Black and Indigenous peoples.[23] The exclusion of the interests of Indigenous communities' interest in the land upon which the Land Art Movement was performed is especially egregious because "beginning in the late 1960s mainstream artists found themselves delving into a near fetishistic fascination

[22] Brian Wallis, "Survey," Jeffrey Kastner Ed., *Land and Environmental Art*, Revised (London: Phaidon Press, 2011), 34.

[23] This is not to suggest that Black artists weren't also making Land Art. The work of Beverly Buchanan for example, is a conspicuous example of the specific Black aesthetic attention to place, which draws upon the unique histories of Black Americans' relationship with the land. Buchanan's sculptures, photographs and installations explore the histories of land relative to the histories of African diaspora in the American southeast, especially drawing attention to histories of slavery and land tenure. The lives of Black North Americans are deeply linked to histories of land occupation and colonialism, as well as neo-colonialism, the "pioneering spirit," and place-based relationality. The history of African slavery in North America is coincident to and often intersects with the histories of Indigenous Americans' displacement from their homelands. Despite this significant history and its profoundly political implications, Buchanan's oeuvre is regularly omitted from the discourse on Land Art. I hope to see this addressed in forthcoming scholarship, because critique of the structures of the settler state are incomplete without analysis of the racialized relationships between settlers, Indigenous, and chattel slaves. Such analysis is compatible with the work of Buchanan, and further strengthens a critique of settler ascendancy and the normalization of settler colonialism. For more on the settler state triad of Native : Black : settler, see Tuck and Yang, *Decolonization is Not A Metaphor* (2012).

with the Indigenous."[24] At the same time that Indigenous culture was used as a fetish for those "mainstream artists," the work they were making was on land that is Indigenous homeland, and the work was being made without Indigenous input or respect to the specifics of those communities' relationships there.

Though dominant cultural "fetishistic fascination" with Indigenous narratives, aesthetics, and perspective is not isolated to non-Native artists in the late 1960s, Indigenous cosmology and epistemologies were deeply influential in the work of the Earthworks generation. In an essay that directs attention to Native artists whose work functions as both "contemporary/Postminimal" and "Indigenous," and with acknowledgement that those categories were once considered to be distinct, Larry M. Taylor demonstrates that mainstream non-Native artists were using Indigenous ideas *and* acutely Native sites in their work. As historical background to his argument, Taylor posits that "postminimalist artists diverse as Nancy Holt, Alice Aycock, and Hamish Fulton," who

> actively cultivated Native American cosmology and symbolism in grappling with new paradigms for art. For these artists Indigenous spirituality was a strategy for escaping minimal art's tight strictures. Minimalism's coronation in the late sixties had been quickly followed by a counter-revolution.[25]

This, therefore, is the art historical context into which the Earthworks artists were functioning in regard to Indigeneity. But even this analysis lacks the bite that is needed for a fuller critique of those works within a settler colonial paradigm.

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[24] Larry Taylor, "Indigenous Minimalism: Native Interventions," *Double Desire: Transculturation and Indigenous Contemporary Art*, Ian McLean Ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 140.
[25] Ibid.

Taylor goes on to analyze the British "walking artist" Hamish Fulton's phenomenological 1969 *Little Bighorn Battlefield* (Fig. 2), in which he followed Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake (Sitting Bull)'s famous path through the Greasy Grass (Little Big Horn) Battlefield site. Taylor demonstrates the problems inherent to Fulton's work, showing how it overwrites the importance of the site to Native American communities at the service of Fulton's art. Taylor's point could be taken even further, with additional analysis of Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake's actual historical involvement at the battle site.

The real credit that Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake should have in the historical record of the Lakota victory at Greasy Grass is the creation of a spiritual force. By the time of the battle, Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake was a spiritual itánča (leader) who led the largest Sun Dance gathering of allied Lakota, Dakota, Nakota and allied Cheyenne and Arapaho to date.[26] It is dubious whether Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake even fought in the battle against Custer. Rather the mythic stature of Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake was spread wildly by settlers and through Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake's accounts of legendary performances as he toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows. Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake was a charismatic prayer leader whose visions provided a relief to the increasingly dire situations of those various bands of followers who met to

[26] By some accounts, the gathering of allied Indigenous peoples at the Dakota Access Pipeline prayer/protest camps in 2016-17 at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation (the reservation that Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake's Húŋkpapȟa relatives were settled to) echoed most closely to that of Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake's Sun Dance in June of 1876. According to Brulé Lakota scholar Nick Estes, the 2016 prayer camp nearest the Cannonball River, "at its peak… was North Dakota's tenth largest city. Its population surpassed 10,000 people, possibly reaching 15,000." See Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future*, (London: Verso, 2018) p.3. Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake's encampment has been estimated at around 8,000 people; labeled as dissident "hostiles" who refused settlement on reservation lands. See Joseph M. Marshall III, *The Day the World Ended at Little Bighorn: A Lakota History* (New York: Viking, 2007), particularly Chapter 3, "The Greatest Gathering Ever," 24-34, which details the rationale for and composition of the Sun Dance gathering in June, 1876 led by Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake.

pray and sacrifice with him near the Ash Creek – approximately 200 miles northeast of the Little Bighorn Battle site.

Taylor underscores the Earthworks artists' topical interest in Indigenous cosmology by drawing further attention to Nancy Holt's canonical work, *Sun Tunnels* (1972-76), which "sit deep within the American desert in Utah (Fig. 3). The austere geometric forms and four large concrete tunnels owe a small debt to minimalism. However, they are oriented not to conventional art settings, such as a white wall or gallery corner, but rather to the solstices—calendrical phenomena central to many Indigenous religious."[27]

That such overt and minimizing use of Indigenous spiritual traditions and specific sites of important Indigenous histories used by Land Artists makes the omission of Indigenous perspectives on the movement particularly glaring. Holt reiterated a settler perception of the lands in the American West as empty, abandoned, and unwanted in her 1977 essay in *Art Forum*.[28] Holt goes so far as to use a "Navajo Indian Poem" among other lyrical interludes, as a romantic accompaniment to the details of her process in creating *Sun Tunnels*. The insertion of "Navajo" perspective is troubling because the Navajo Nation is around 600 miles southeast of Box Elder County, Utah where the artwork was installed.[29] Rather the county is part of the traditional homeland the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. Shoshone remain unacknowledged in Holt's writing about the region, and most scholars have also omitted their ancestral presence in the region. Holt entrenches herself in the settler paradigm, citing her attraction to land

[27] Ibid, p. 141.
[28] Nancy Holt, "Sun Tunnels," *Art Forum* (April 1977): 32-37.
[29] Ibid, p. 36.

that was "both for sale and easy to get to by car," effectively erasing Indigenous claims to the place, and actively ignoring the long and ongoing tradition of presence there. Instead she refers to the local peoples as cave dwellers (Shoshone traditionally made hide tíbi or small conical wood dwellings).[30] Astoundingly, the treaty that recognizes the Northwestern Band of Shoshone Nation (The Box Elder Treaty, ratified by Congress in 1865) had only been partially honored only six years prior to Holt's acquisition of the land, by a payment to the tribe at a rate of $.50/acre in 1968.[31] The promise of Shoshone control of land that the Box Elder Treaty outlines was never realized. Today the Northwestern Band of Shoshone comprise a major portion of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation near Pocatello, Idaho.

Rather than engaging the living communities whose cultures remain animate in their homelands, Earthworks generation artists instead misappropriated, misplaced, and co-opted Indigenous cosmologies and place-based relationships. Casual erasures of Indigenous presences and history are not anomalous to the arts, but rather exemplify a working mechanism of settler colonialism. Holt's erasure of still-fresh Indigenous concerns over the land (*Sun Tunnels* was installed on Shoshone land only 8 years after treaty payments were finally made), while replacing real peoples' relationships with the land with a more recognizable "Navajo Indian poem." This, and Fulton's inaccurate memorialization of Indigenous presence in place are but a few examples of the *mode* of settler misappropriation, as the Earthworks generation practiced it. Indigenous cultures

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[30] Ibid, p.34.
[31] United States Code, 2010 Edition, Title 25-INDIANS, Chapter 14, Subchapter XV, *Shoshone Tribe Distribution of Judgment Fund* June 19, 1968. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2010-title25/html/USCODE-2010-title25-chap14-subchapXV.htm.

were flattened by the Earthworks artists, as Indigenous history and relationships to place became fodder for a series of thought experiments at the service settler artists' rejection of the contemporary gallery and museum systems that define the mainstream art world in the mid-20th century. Earthworks land artists muted the richly storied lands' indigeneity, animacy, and kinships as the price for a political and ontological statement about the contemporary art market. They worked within a settler colonial milieu of erasure, which the established canon of Land Art discourse perpetuates, and which future art historical analyses will normalize if our discipline remains unwilling to acknowledge accurate Indigenous histories and erasures on this land. Such discourse forms but one branch of the structural oppression of Indigeneity in North America.

The motivation for art that addresses land issues becomes a central concern for artists whose interest in the environmental crisis is inextricable from a larger context of structural oppression. A significant critical voice in contemporary art that has consistently drawn attention to the correspondence between colonization and environmental exploitation comes from First Nations artists.[32] As Indigenous scholar Laura Hall (Anishinaabekwe) posits,

> the divide between humans and the "natural" world cannot be understood in the Americas without contextualizing its origins in the Eurocentric project of genocide, ecocide, and control over Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Lands. Well-being diminishes in relation to environmental destruction, as "diminishing biodiversity augers against the continued capacity to know how to think with everything.[33]

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[32] See Amanda Boetzkes, *The Ethics of Earth Art* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[33] Laura Hall, "My Mother's Garden: Aesthetics, Indigenous Renewal, and Creativity," *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*, Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin, Eds., (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), 288.

In contrast to the pioneering frontier conquest embodied by Land Artists and their Earthworks, Native place-based relationality is more than a phenomenological experience that is an end unto itself. Rather, it has spiritual, cosmological, historical, and political components, the realities of which bear responsibilities for Indigenous communities.[34] Such responsibilities are owed to the various elements of *place*: water, wind, dirt, other people, flora and fauna are all understood as kin. Kinship relationships provide a basic structure for Indigenous cultures.[35] The dismissal of those considerations from discourse on land art creates a thundering silence.

The Earthworks Movement coincides with many social activisms of the 1960s and 70s throughout the United States, including

> student strikes and campus takeovers to protest the war in Vietnam, urban riots to protest racial inequality, non-violent marches to highlight poverty and unemployment, factory shutdowns to fight poor working conditions, site occupations to inhibit destruction of the land. Many artists collectives were, as Smithson suggests devoured by politics, particularly imperialism and the bourgeois institutions including museums that supported it.[36]

In contrast to the political actions happening around their work, Earthworks artists seem to have been less directly engaged with political concerns and actions. Nevertheless, land

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[34] See Chief Oren Lyons, "Listening to Natural Law," *Original Instructions*, Melissa K. Nelson, Eds., (Rochester: Bear & Company, 2008), 22-26.
[35] See Enrique Salmón, "Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous Perceptions of the Human-Nature Relationship," *Ecological Applications* Vol. 10, No. 5 (October 2000): 1327-1332 for a more full analysis of the kinship relationships that are common to Indigenous communities.
[36] Brian Wallis, "Survey," Jeffrey Kastner Ed., *Land and Environmental Art*, Revised (London: Phaidon Press, 2011), 32.

artists' careers trace an ecological consciousness, and concerns with reclamation and healing sites of industrial damage.[37]

Other contemporary postwar movements took a more direct route toward politicizing land and peoples' relationship to place. Activism in the Environmental Movement, the Black Power Movement, Second Wave Feminism, and the American Indian Movement (AIM) all brought land into political discourse, where previously it had been viewed singularly as resource.[38] The American Indian Movement (AIM) and Red

[37] For example, Robert Smithson submitted plans for reclamation projects to several mining companies in the American West. See for example, "Proposal, 1972" in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Jack Flam, ed., (Berkley: University of California Press, 1996), 379.

[38] This is not to say that settler nations did not previously have an ethic concerning "nature," or "the environment." However, the perspectives and policies put forward by previously dominant "eco" forces must be critiqued in context of the settler nationhood, and its inherent dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their homelands. Namely, the primary system of American and Canadian conservation through the establishment of of establishing National Parks, Crown Lands, Provincial Parks, State Parks, and reservation lands were premised on a belief in "fortress conservation," under which Indigenous peoples were actively excluded from the lands which they were perceived to "spoil" and placed instead on lands that were otherwise undesirable by settlers (until they were). In art, American and Canadian "environmental" and landscape artists have a long history of depicting empty, depeopled lands in the American West, effectively either erasing Indigenous emplacement or reducing Native people and culture to "nature" in the public perception and public memory. Such imagery was almost always at the service of nation building. The power dynamics upheld the optics (or lack thereof) of Indigenous dispossession helped entice settlers along the path of Manifest Destiny, toward the sacred and beautiful vistas that had been central to Indigenous cultural practice for centuries. It is a well- documented historical fact that many of the United States and Canada's preeminent "nature" preservation areas were built upon the direct dispossession of Indigenous communities that were living there at the time of their establishment as National Parks. For more on this topic, see: Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred Year Conflict Between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009), Andrew Menard, *Sight Unseen: How Frémont's First Expedition Changed the American Landscape* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 2012), W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (2nd Edition) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), Miles A. Powell, *Vanishing America: Species Extinction, Racial Peril, and the Origins of Conservation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), or Mark David

Power movements made particular inroads in showing that the loss of land and the endangerment of Indian peoples' relationships to their traditional homelands was also an endangerment to Indigenous identity.[39]

That these political movements centered on issues of land occupation and the radical histories of such occupation makes a stark contrast to the relatively de-political works made under the Earthwork generation, created during the same decades. Art historical discourse that ignores the relationships of Indigenous peoples with land and the dispossession and histories of structural oppression reifies the erasure of indigeneity. In short, the "de-political" earthworks were in fact heavily steeped in settler- colonial justifications of place-taking at the high cost of Indigenous erasure. This is not to say that Land Art is exclusively responsible for creating monuments to settler colonial impositions on the land, but rather that those artists of the Earthworks era functioned within the system of

> settler colonialism [as] a structure and not an event. In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage.[40]

Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of National Parks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[39] This paradigm is excellently argued in Cherokee scholar, Sean Kicummah Teuton's 2008 *Red Land, Red Power*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). It is also beautifully addressed in Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), *Yellow Woman and A Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today* New York City: Simon & Schuster, (2007). Silko demonstrates the Indigenous perception that "nature" and "natural elements" like rocks and water are kin, whose relationships to humans forms a critical aspect of our identity and responsibility in the living world.

[40] Tuck and Yang, *Decolonization is Not A Metaphor,* 5

Or as the Tonawanda Band of Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman states, "Indigenous conceptions of land are literally and figuratively the placeholder that moves through time and situates Indigenous knowledges."[41] My point echoes that of the artists in this dissertation, whose work interrupts narratives about land that largely ignore Indigeneity as it relates to place. My analysis of these artforms is situated in a perception that each work is disruptive of the hierarchical structure of settler colonialism, and that each resists normalizations of settler systems "that erase and bury Indigenous connections to place and anesthetizes settler-colonial histories."[42]

This point is striking when one considers recent Indigenous Land Artists' work, as this dissertation does.[43] For Indigenous peoples and those artists on whom this dissertation focuses, the political implications of land occupation and the aesthetics of engagement with place bear vital consequences. As Goeman argues,

> With the overlapping roles many Indigenous peoples' undertake, land is also deployed strategically. Deconstructing the discourse of property and reformulating the political vitality of a storied land means reaching back across generations, critically examining our use of the word land in the present and reaching forward to create a healthier relationship for future generations.[44]

One of the most important examples of the kind of work that directly addresses a pivotal moment in the 20th century history of Indigenous North America, is Anishinaabe artist

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[41] Mishuana Goeman, "From Place to Territories and Back Again: Centering Storied Land in the Discussion of Indigenous Nation-Building," *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008): 24.
[42] Ibid.
[43] For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the term "recent" to refer to works made since 1980. My intention is to challenge the chronological perspectives accepted in dominant art historical discourse through the language choices I make. The accepted term for this period is "contemporary," but I aim to decenter the Western timeline in writing about Indigenous art and history.
[44] Goeman,"From Place to Territories," 24.

Rebecca Belmore's 1990 piece, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their Mother* (Fig. 4). The work is physically comprised of a large wooden megaphone, but the performance and phenomenological experience of engaging with the work give it life. Belmore invited individuals along the work's tour route to come and speak directly to the land, envisioned as a mother, nurturer, and longed-for relative. Memorable documentary photographs showed the megaphone positioned in scenic, pictorial landscapes in a variety of climates, from sprawling prairie lands, craggy mountain ranges, dense forests, and pointed toward the ocean and other bodies of water.

Through those images, the public remembers the phenomenological, sensual value of this work, as individual Indigenous people are shown raising the speaking device attached to the artwork to their mouth, often with a small crowd gathered around. What was said might not have been recorded, but the experiential quality of this work is communicated through documentary images. The physical elements in the work were only a small portion of the value of that work.[45] Other examples abound, but the pertinence, ongoing profundity, and substantial body of art historical text surrounding *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their Mother* makes it a rich exemplar.

The megaphone, created to address the land herself, toured various sites throughout Canada in the first half of the 1990s, beginning in 1992- the quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in North America. The work was created as Belmore's

> response to what is now referred to in Canadian history as the "Oka Crisis." During the summer of 1990, many protests were mounted in support of the Mohawk Nation of Kanesatake in their struggle to maintain their territory. This object was taken into many First Nations

[45] The megaphone of *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their Mother* is now held in the collection of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

> communities - reservation, rural, and urban. [Belmore] was particularly interested in locating the Aboriginal voice on the land.[46]

The political impetus and rationale for Indigenous land art (and perhaps *all* Indigenous art, just as art from any cultural group) must be elevated and represented in literature that considers it in its context to provide a fuller understanding of its impact and value. *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their* Mother has been discussed by art historians, but routinely the actual crisis to which the work responds is often minimized or omitted from discourse about the object and the performance(s) that went with it. The most prominent art historian who has addressed non-white practitioners of land art is Amanda Boetzkes. And while Boetzkes' work is generally excellent, she obfuscates the political issue to which Belmore responds, stating,

> For her performance of *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their Mother*, the Ojibwa artist Rebecca Belmore invited a gathering of leaders, writers, poets, and social workers to speak to the land trough a giant wooden megaphone. Among the more interesting and politically charged locations where the artwork was toured was a spot near the Canadian Prime Minister's private residence. The protest affirms the primacy of the earth to the discursive site that the artwork formulates, namely, the assembly of First Nations activists. Its weaving of land to cultural heritage and to the fraught history of imperialism thus allows the performance to double as a critique of government policy.[47]

Boetzkes never names the specific "government policy" Belmore is addressing, nor the *reason* that bringing *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* to the Prime Minister's

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[46]For more information on the Oka Crisis, see Harry Swain, *Oka: A Political Crisis and Its Legacy*, (Vancouver: D & M Publishers, 2010), Alex K. Paterson, "The Oka Crisis," *My Life at the Bar and Beyond*, (Québec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 122-137, or Catherine Corrigall-Brown and Rima Wilkes, "Picturing Protest: The Visual Framing of Collective Action by First Nations in Canada," *American Behavioral Scientist* Vol. 56, No. 2 (2012): 223-243.

[47] Boetzkes, *The Ethics of Earth Art* p. 44

private residence is so politically charged. In other words, the logic of the work is undermined through too-close attention to the physical material and sensual experience that the work represents. Through such discourse the work becomes a meme of itself, as the sharpness of its bite is dulled.

The contested site to which Belmore's work responds, near the municipality of Oka, bears a long history of Kanien'kehà:ka (Mohawk) occupation. A Roman Catholic seminary built near the site in 1676 began the colonial work of conquest, which came to a boiling point in 1990. A three centuries-long occupation and normalization of Indian land dispossession is represented by the words "Oka Crisis." Still this language suggests that the "crisis" has ended, and obscures the long entanglement of colonial, settler and Indigenous peoples at this place. To illustrate that this site, like many, bears a centuries-long archive of systemic Indigenous oppression, I will elucidate some highlights that took place since 1676. Movements against the Indigenous community near the site now known as Oka include: the selling of land that was agreed to be held in trust for the Kanien'kehà:ka (Mohawk); removal of Kanien'kehà:ka from their traditional homeland; renaming of place; desecration of burial sites; provoked erosion of the ground; refusal of Indian Act protections; the importation of an inappropriate leadership system; reduction of Kanien'kehà:ka land to 6 km (down from 165 km); the construction of a municipal golf course on Kanien'kehà:ka land without consent; and the extinguishing of Kanien'kehà:ka title to the land along the St. Lawrence River.[48]

[48] See CBC Firsthand, *Oka Timeline: An Unresolved Land Claim Hundreds of Years in The Making*, September 23, 2017 https://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/features/oka-timeline-an-unresolved-land-claim-hundreds-of-years-in-the-making, and Geoffrey York, *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: McArthur, 1999).

This long history of this land claim dispute erupted in 1989 when an Oka municipal golf club announced plans to expand the golf course over a Kanien'kehà:ka burial site. The Prime Minister of Canada at the time of the Crisis, Brian Mulroney, activated the Canadian Armed Forces against Kanien'kehà:ka in their sovereign and unceded homeland: Oka. This history, centered on place, foregrounds the work that Belmore created, and her work is a response to the centuries of official state policy against the Mohawk in their homeland.

Boetzke's omission of the political and historical logic of Belmore's objectives ignores the political implication of her work at large and blurs the goals of her project. Without a long view of the specific Indigenous history of the site on which Belmore's work was imagined and enacted, the impact of her performance and creation was muted. Lack of analyses of Indigenous peoples' political concerns is a consistent problem in discourse on Indigenous "land art," and on Native North American art in general.[49]

By contrast, the Native focused art and museum world has given some attention to the political and cultural relationships of Indigenous peoples to the land. In 1992, two exhibits in Canada's premiere arts institutions— The National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Civilization (both in the traditional homelands of the Algonquin,

[49] Recent mainstream art historical attention to this issue has been addressed to varying degrees in some texts including: Amanda Boetzkes, *The Ethics of Earth Art* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2010); T. J. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016); Lucy Lippard, *Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, and Art in the Changing West* (New York City: The New Press, 2014); Ian McLean, Ed., *Double Desire: Transculturation and Indigenous Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014); and Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson, *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek)— turned their attention to their own engagement and position within the history of North American settler colonialism.[50]

At The National Gallery, *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery* presented land as an abstraction or signifier for Indigenous identity, rather than engaging deeply with the political and historical complexity of Indigenous land claims. By contrast *Indigena*, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, was a project borne out of a concern

> that indigenous peoples would be the recipient of a 500-year hangover without ever having attended Western Civilization's party. The objective of the exhibit was, therefore, to engage Canadian visual, literary, and performing artists to address issues such as discovery, colonization, cultural critique, and tenacity, from each of their perspectives. [51]

Importantly, *Indigena* was also curated entirely by Indigenous peoples (Gerald McMaster is Plains Cree and Lee Ann Martin is Mohawk) and the attendant catalogue contains essays written entirely by Indigenous writers. The artists included in this exhibition were exclusively from Canada, which could be considered a detriment to the realities of North American indigeneity, which is not traditionally defined by international settler state borders.

1992 was a flagship year in the history of Native North American art scholarship and practice, in part due to the symbolic anniversaries of the Columbian quincentenary

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[50] The long Indigenous history of Hull has been recognized. See W. Jackson Rushing who says, "Like Aboriginal culture, the design of the Canadian Museum of Culture—where artifacts of civilization are gathered—is an expression of a specific place in "nature." That place, the banks of the Ottawa, was the traditional locus of Algonquin Indian culture, and the site of an important Aboriginal trade center." Rushing, "Contingent Histories, Aesthetic Politics," *New Art Examiner* (March, 1993), 14

[51] Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin eds., *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives* ex. cat., (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992), 15.

and the 125th anniversary of Canada's founding. Arts institutions were suddenly brought to an awareness of their own complicity in silencing or ignoring Indigenous presences and perspectives. Since that year, a number of other arts institutions in the United States and Canada have looked critically at their own situation, with varying degrees of success.

Increasingly in the nearly-two decades that have passed since those landmark exhibitions, attention has increased to land-based creation and place-interventions, including those made by Indigenous peoples. This trend is due in part to the rising popular awareness (and increasing intensity) of global climate change of which people of color and especially Indigenous communities bear the brunt of primary impact, in part to the increasing visibility of Indigenous political and artistic movements, and in part due to arts institutions actively making space for Indigenous presences. This includes the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C and the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City among others.

For example in 1997, Tsimshian-Haida art historian, Marcia Crosby curated *Nations in Urban Landscapes* at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver (Cost-Salish Nations: Tseil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish Territory). The objective of this show was to complicate discourse about Native relationships to land, and to share the experiences and perspective of Native artists in urban contexts. The exhibition catalogue includes two essays by Crosby in which she reveals the complexities of land relationships and histories of place as definitions of indigeneity. Crosby states that

> *Nations in Urban Landscapes* is an exhibition that represents a strategy to locate First Nations outside the demarcated space of Indian reserves, traditional territories, and the land and resource disputes between First Nations and Canadian governments, that is, outside the place where aboriginal people are recognized "officially" as having authority, and

> where the signposts of clearly defined "difference" are still determined by the conventions of authenticity, origins and tradition.[52]

In short, Crosby was interested in challenging notions of authenticity for Indigenous peoples, one facet of which is the delimiting notion that we are inherently tied to our homelands and cannot be clearly demarcated in urban contexts. As Crosby explains, limiting the definition of authenticity diminishes the "complexity of aboriginal subjectivity, cultures and histories."[53]

Throughout her essay and in the works of the three artists included in the show, Crosby leads an exploration of the ways that cultural institutions, especially museums and galleries, reify legal and political definitions of indigeneity that is delimited by belonging to geopolitical and economic boundaries, which are impositions in Indian Country. This does not mean that Crosby or any of the artists in this exhibit deny that Indigenous peoples have cultural relationships to the world around them, but that the strict boundaries of place-based definitions of authenticity need to be contested in this era.

Faye Heavyshield (Kainai-Blood), Eric Robertson (Gitksan), and Shelley Niro (Mohawk) were the only artists in this small but potent exhibit. Their works range from the conceptual and materials-based, to the illustrative and challenging. Heavyshield's installation, *tightrope walker* (1995), for example, focuses on minimalist form and references abstractions of topography and personal history, while also revealing the

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[52] Marcia Crosby, "Nations in Urban Landscapes," *Nations in Urban Landscapes*, ex. cat., (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery 1997), 11.
[53] Ibid.

hybridity that is inherent in Indigenous identity formation.[54] In contrast, Niro's photographs, including *The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society* (1992) directly challenges romanticizing stereotypes about Native peoples as linked inexorably to savage or wild landscapes, through subversion of expectation.

In her second essay in the catalogue, "Lines, Lineage and Lies, or Borders, Boundaries, and Bullshit," Crosby extends her analysis from the first essay, showing the ways that persistent and isolated affiliation with imposed land-boundaries affect *identity* of Indian peoples. She expertly argues that

> the various forms of practice which focus on binary opposition (separating Self from Other) as a means of constituting ourselves, not only confines us to the "authenticity" of our origins as a means of confirming our difference to the Western Other, but also creates hierarchy within and between First Nations peoples.[55]

She goes on to demonstrate the ways that legal history and demarcation of "Indian Land" was a means of stranding Indigenous peoples in their remote locations, but argues that perpetuation of this paradigm is incompatible with the realities of Indigeneity today.

The 2007 exhibit *Off The Map: Landscape in the Native Imagination* at the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC campus was another success. In *Off the Map*, Diné curator Kathleen Ash-Milby encouraged direct engagement with the histories of representation of landscape in art history, ultimately flipping customary conventions in the genre toward abstraction and Indigenous aesthetic sensibilities. This exhibition marks an indigenization of the category "landscape painting," opting to focus

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[54] Cynthia Fowler, "Hybridity as a Strategy for Self-Determination in Contemporary American Indian Art," *Social Justice* Vol. 34, No. 1 (2007), 66 https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768422

[55] Marcia Crosby, "Lines, Lineage and Lies, or Borders, Boundaries, and Bullshit," *Nations in Urban Landscapes* ex. cat., (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery 1997), 24.

on the interior landscapes of five artists from distinct Indigenous communities, rather than a direct and representational depiction customary in the field. Artists James Lavadour (Walla Walla/ Assiniboine/ Chinook), Emmi Whitehorse (Diné), Carlos Jacanamijoy (Inga), Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians/ Cherokee), and Erica Lord (Inupiaq/Athabaskan) represent an immense diversity in Indigenous hemispheric, transnational understandings of, and relationships to place. All of the works in *Off the Map* are abstractions that deviate from the American sublime or pictorial representational landscape tradition.[56] Rather the works in this show are about relationships, personal histories, and cultural teachings.

This exhibition was an intervention in an art historical genre, demonstrating the ways Indigenous approaches to representing the land differ from those representations made in dominant society. In the history of landscape painting in North America, the land is too-frequently depicted as a resource, empty Edenic place, or virgin territory ripe for penetration. As Ash-Milby says in her critical essay in the catalogue for *Off The Map*, "depictions of landscape, historically, have been used to influence public opinion, to support political or spiritual ideas, or to (re)write history."[57] Western representations of American wilderness are layered representations of imagined and real locations, but which convey meanings that promote settler colonial objectives and views. Ash-Milby

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[56] See Mitchell, *Landscape and Power, 2nd Edition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Mitchell demonstrates the function of landscape and cartographic representation of place as an instrument of cultural force. Mitchell argues that landscapes and maps have a function in creating and normalizing social and national identities, as well as points to the way representation places emphasis on certain things at the expense of others (namely, indigeneity).

[57] Kathleen Ash-Milby, "The Imaginary Landscape," *Off the Map: Landscape in the Native Imagination* ex. cat., National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (Washington D.C.: 2007), 18.

goes on to demonstrate the ways landscape painters in the United States used images to envision Manifest Destiny, justify the objectives and results of westward settlement, and claim a new place-based identity. Her conclusion of this genre's history is that "the act of capturing and defining the North American landscape can therefore be read as another act of colonization."[58]

Ash-Milby's intervention is to shift this accepted history of landscape painting toward the land-based Native imaginary. The works in this exhibition focus on the physical, spiritual, and metaphysical relationships that Indigenous artists have with their homelands. As a curatorial concept, this has successfully allowed artists to show their specific relationships to place, with all of their attendant complexity and nuance. Interestingly, the artists included are strategically from very different communities, including Inga artist Carlos Jacanamijoy from Columbia. This curatorial choice allows for an exhibition that puts the various and diverse histories and realities of indigeneity on display. Works throughout the exhibition counter romantic notions of inherent Indigenous spirituality and noble savagery and contradict the trope of "Native body as landscape" the dominant landscape genre has made *de rigueur*.

Despite whatever success might be measured in these isolated exhibitions, many Indigenous artists remain largely relegated to exhibiting in artistic "ghettoes" such as natural history museums and Native-only spaces. This is alarming for Indigenous land artists, whose work addresses the place that both Native and non-Natives inhabit, and their messages have remarkable import for everyone living on Earth.

[58] Ibid, p.21

Finally, the focus of recent group exhibitions and biennales has turned to themes of Indigeneity as metonym for place, which has prompted conversations surrounding site-specific interventions, including political and historical issues, Indigeneity, and injustice. Of particular importance, SITE Santa Fe has shifted its biennale programming into a series entitled *SITElines: New Perspectives on Art of the Americas*. The series' focus since 2016 is directed at recent site-specific art of the Americas, from Nunavut to Tierra del Fuego.[59] Such programs and initiatives deserve to be contextualized and processed in the greater canons of Land Art and art history at large.

Beyond the fields of art history and curatorial practice other scholars have addressed the way depictions of land function for Indigenous communities. Of particular interest to my project is an emerging consideration of "Indigenous cartography" within the field of cultural geography. Attention to this field has been intensifying since the mid- 1980's. Building on the early works of G. Malcolm Lewis, the field of cultural geography has shifted to accommodate and consider Indigenous peoples' depiction of, and relationships to, land, which are often in conflict with that of the dominant society.[60] A rising body of scholarship addresses these conflicts, as well as the ways Indigenous peoples use cartography to make meaningful representations of place.

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[59] SITE Santa Fe, "History." https://sitesantafe.org/history/.

[60] See for example, G. Malcolm Lewis, "Indian Maps Their Place in the History of Plains Cartography," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (Spring, 1984): 91-108, and his editorial oversight *The History of Cartography: Traditional African, American, Arctic, Australian and Pacific Societies*, Vol. 2, Book 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Representation

While most writing about land art emphasizes those works that are in situ, this dissertation also considers representations of land and place through other means. This means includes painted maps, drawings of homeland, sculptural installations in galleries, and photographs of emplaced work, in addition to those works that are specific to their location and surrounding environment. I acknowledge and honor the fact that there are other, non-visual means of representing land and home, including songs, dances, and stories. Nevertheless, this dissertation is focused on visual form, and so I will not address those other topics here. I hope that future scholarship will find a means to integrate visual and non-visual expression in art history.

The luxuries of immense funding, access to resources, and entrée to land that were afforded to the Earthworks generation of artists through financiers like Virginia Dwan are not comparable to access afforded to Indigenous peoples. Unequal access to, and sovereignty resulting in determination over land is the root of Indigenous protest since 1492. This disparity includes those lands in the Western United States that the federal government deemed "excess," and which allowed the Earthworks artists to scar the surface of the earth. It includes the borderlands that are imposed at the lines imagined by treaty, but which bifurcate homelands. It includes the hills of Georgia where gold justified the expulsion of entire nations. With reverence for the limitations that settler states have imposed upon Indigenous peoples, this dissertation also considers works that are representations of place.

Further, representation of place has an ancient and ongoing history in Indigenous North America. The implications of representations of place echo beyond the immediate

function of "useable objects." Though examples of objects that blur the useful/beautiful binary, cultural geographer Robert Rundstrom has efficiently demonstrated one instance. Focusing on small handheld wood carved maps made by Tunumiit artist Kunit, Rundstrom shows how sensual mimesis of the land is simultaneously a useful navigational tool and also cultural teacher. In his analysis, Rundstrom considers the conditions of one of a series of carved wooden maps from the east coast of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), made by Kunit (Fig. 5) from a cartographic perspective.

The map is a small, handheld object that accurately depicts the Greenlandic coastline from Sermiligak to Kangerdlugsuatsiak, including the peninsula between Sermiligak and Kangerdluarsikajik. Carved carefully from a piece of driftwood, the inventiveness and precision of Kunit cannot be overstated. But moreover, the map set demonstrates the careful attention to accuracy and suggests an intimacy of knowledge about the land, expressed through a map that carefully details that knowledge for any other person that holds it in their hand. The buoyant materials were perfectly suited to their immediate use as maps that could be "read" in the dark on an Arctic voyage: perfectly miniature and remarkably portable replicas of major landforms, made of material that would float if dropped from a boat and dark enough to stand out in a snowdrift.

Though Rundstrum minimizes the cultural value and function of "mere art," he nevertheless demonstrates the aesthetic *and* functional value of place-based representations. Rundstrom speaks to the culturally invested production of such forms, stating that

> The historical persistence and flourishing of traditional Inuit culture in the Arctic environment were assisted by the development of

> extraordinary abilities to mime specific aspects of that environment. Mimicry was institutionalized not merely as an artistic ability; it was a practical tool in everyday life and was manifest in myriad pan-Inuit cultural institutions, including mapping. Inuit ability to memorize extensive tracts of seemingly indistinguishable territory with a high degree of accuracy and then to communicate that image cross-culturally with unfamiliar tools was an act of mimicry performed similarly in other daily enterprises.[61]

Rundstrom goes on to explain the way that mimicry and representation function in Indigenous society as a means of survival and also as a culture producer. Most importantly, Rundstrom states, "as an imitation of the physical world, mapping was an important form of environmental mimicry for the Inuit. Drawing the land reified their attachment to it."[62] Cheyenne cartographer, Annita Hetoevèhotohke'e Lucchesi furthers this analysis beyond the merely representational to remind us of the value of narrative in place, stating that, "on a fundamental level, all maps are storytelling devices… In essence, maps are images designed to represent spatial relationships, connecting land to other beings in one way or another."[63] Hence, representation, storytelling, mapping, and intimate knowledge of place are not only traditional forms of expression but are foundational to Inuit culture.

Examples of maps abound throughout the Indigenous world, as do other imitations of place. For example, many ceremonial structures are built to create

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[61] Robert A. Rundstrom, "A Cultural Interpretation of Inuit Map Accuracy." *Geographical Review* 80, No. 2 (1990): 163.
[62] Ibid, 166
[63] Annita Hetoevėhotohke'e Lucchesi, "Indians Don't Make Maps: Indigenous Cartographic Traditions and Innovations," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 42, no. 3 (2018): 14-16.

phenomenological experiences that "map" relationships with the universe.[64] Others are constructed to direct attention to important natural features, sacred directions, or as a means to engage with spiritual presences. Such constructions delimit non-essential sensory information through the use of materials who share a kinship to the site, ultimately culminating in a spiritual phenomenological engagement with place, through the experience of specific Indigenous culture.

Methodology

This dissertation privileges Indigenous knowledge and approaches to the world. The methodology that I use is rooted in what Unangax̂ scholar of critical race theory, Dr. Eve Tuck and co-author Marcia McKenzie call "critical place inquiry." This approach is detailed in their book, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology and Methods*. While the emphasis of *Place in Research* is focused on research interests and concerns held by social scientists, rather than art historians or those in the humanities, it nevertheless outlines a powerful framework for consideration of place-based culture, knowledge, and expression. I propose this as a component of a new art historical methodology, which provides an analytical framework that is appropriate for Indigenous created artworks that are essentially emplaced, and which foundationally grapple with the tenets and structures of settler colonialism. This methodology can be seen throughout my analyses to be a productive means of centering Indigenous relationships to place while still functioning

[64] My intent is not to dissect or expose sacred sites, and this dissertation contains only passing reference to the existence of such sites. I respect the wish for privacy and the protocols of Indigenous communities surrounding this topic.

under a settler colonial paradigm. Throughout, Critical Place Inquiry, as proposed by Tuck and McKenzie, is coupled with specifically art historical attention to aesthetic forms *and* contextual realities which combine to create each artwork analyzed herein.

Tuck and McKenzie outline the essential features of the methodological underpinnings of Critical Place Inquiry (CPI henceforth). While it is not a static formula for analysis, the essential elements that frame CPI include:

- Understandings of places as themselves mobile, shifting over time and space and through interactions with flows of people, other species, and social practices
- Understandings of places as both influencing social practices as well as being performed and (re)shaped through practices and movements of individuals and collectives at a localized level
- Conceptualizes place as interactive and dynamic due to these time-space characteristics
- Recognizes that disparate realities determine not only how place is experienced but also how it is understood and practiced in turn (e.g. in relation to culture, geography, gender, race, sexuality, age, or other identifications and experiences)
- Addresses spatialized and place-based processes of colonization and settler colonization, and works against their further erasure or neutralization
- Extends beyond considerations of the social to more deeply consider land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place
- Aims to further generative and critical politics of places through such conceptualizations/practices and via a relational ethics of accountability to people and place.[65]

This framework provides many opportunities to analyze and understand the production and impact of the selected recent Indigenous land arts that I examine in this dissertation. Emphasis on Indigenous beliefs, histories, and traditions surrounding place are definitive of those cultures. Those features, as they are assembled and given aesthetic form, comprise the bulk of my analysis. I will make room for a consideration of the

[65] Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 19 for the full list of the tenets of CPI.

relationships that have long defined *place* as the artists I analyze have understood or been taught through their practices of culture. In this text, the land is regarded as kin, archive, and active participant in the construction of the aesthetic form. This is in contrast to those analyses that have heretofore dominated art historical writing about land art and practitioners of the Earthworks generation, for many of whom the land was perceived as either a neutral or hostile party.

Artists were carefully selected for this study, as each one uniquely re-animates and re-stores conceptions of land as kin. I attend to issues of public memory, and the contested historical and phenomenological experience of place, as each artist offers insights into an Indigenous perspective on the land. Such perspectives are often at odds with prevailing narratives and official histories. Others remind us that the land is our home, our mother, our keeper. The conceptual and historical approaches of each artist is honored, as the works I analyze are distillations of long continua of materials, practices, and spirits at work.

A Map

My dissertation consists of four chapters, which I will now introduce as a form of "map" to how I have approached my thesis and objective. The first chapter is this one: "Įkná˙otą˙į." This is the Nakón i'abi[66] word for "introduction." This chapter foregrounds the ideas that underscore the remainder of my writing on this subject. In this chapter I have emphasized the ancestral forms that inform those earthworks and art that will be the

[66] Nakón i'abi is the language spoken by the Assiniboine people.

subjects of the following chapters. In addition to this contextual foreground, this dissertation consists of three thematic chapters, in which I analyze a variety of artworks. Each artwork was selected because of its excellence in its presentation of the concept I emphasize in each theme. There are many artworks that exist that are made by Native artists throughout the world, hemisphere, continent, and individual settler nation states. My task has been to select from these works to identify sites and structures that best demonstrate the elements of Indigenous Land Art I wanted to focus on.

The first thematic chapter, *Makoče* will look specifically at recent works that are site-specific and cannot exist in their original form inside a gallery or museum. Makoče is the Nakón i'abi word for "land." I selected this as the first theme that I will address in my dissertation because it is at the heart of my consideration of this body of work as well as at the heart of my own identity as an Indigenous person. Our relationships and responsibilities are emplaced, just as these works are. These works' function and meaning are inextricably fixed to their sites and will require a contextualization culture from, and the land on, which they are constructed.

Under this guideline, I first consider works that challenge the dominant narratives of places where "history" has occurred. I will include an examination of Métis artist Edward Poitras' foundational contribution to the history of Indigenous land art, *Offensive/Defensive* from 1989, which memorializes and troubles public memory surrounding the Battle of Batoche.[67] Next I examine Lakota artist Colleen Cutschall's *Spirit Warriors: Monument at Little Bighorn National Monument* (1999). *Spirit Warriors* is a memorial for the allied Native warriors who fought at the Battle of Greasy Grass in

[67] Site Santa Fe, *Unsettled Landscapes* exhibition website, https://sitesantafe.org/unsettled-landscapes/edward-poitras/.

1876. Cutschall counters public memorialization of the United States 7th Calvary Regiment led by Gen. George Armstrong Custer.

The second theme I address in *Makoče* is that of the borderlands between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Complexities of land and place are made ever more dramatic and contested through the creation and maintenance of North American settler nations' international borders. Native artists have considered the borders that separate Indigenous communities through site-specific installations. The three works in this section counter settler/nationalist ideologies and public memory of the permanence of international borders.

In this section, I analyze the temporary installation *Repellent Fence* (2015) by the Indigenous arts collective Postcommodity. This work provides unique insights surrounding public thinking and reception of critiques centering on the United States/Mexico border, and is a critical intervention in the borderland region. I also include an analysis of one work that considers the United States border with Canada. Alan Michelson's *Third Bank of the River* (2009), installed at the U.S. Port of Entry at Massena, New York. *Third Bank of the River* engages with the ideas expressed in the other works in this section, contesting dominant and nationalist narratives at the borders of North America.[68] These two works, and my analysis of them, elevate Indigenous perspectives on land and memory in contested borderlands. My analysis expands on discourse focused on international borders as a "specific site" of meaning for Indigenous peoples.

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[68] Kate Morris, "Art on the River: Alan Michelson Highlights Border-Crossing Issues," *National Museum of the American Indian Magazine* (Winter, 2009): 35-40; "Running the Medicine Line: Images of the Border in Contemporary Native American Art," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Fall, 2011)549-578.

The second thematic chapter is *Makoče Wa'ówabi*, which means a representation or picture of land. This chapter focuses on representations of place, rather than emplaced works or the land itself, as is emphasized in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, the *representation* of place still holds a vital function, and is a distillation of those places and histories that are represented therein (or which are strategically muted). This chapter includes an overview of some Indigenous cartography, which is sometimes contrasted to Western paradigms and other times is analyzed on Indigenous terms exclusively.

In *Makoče Wa'ówabi*, I first explore a brief history of "mapping" in North America. I demonstrate ways that Indigneous mapping, rooted in kinship and experiential relationships with place differs from non-Native mapping forms. This section also focuses on a series of maps created by Salish-Kootenai artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Taken together, Quick-to-See Smith's works, created over the last decade of the 20th and first decades of the 21st century form a mediation on the emplaced history of North America. Each map contains a different narrative about the history of this place, while slyly paying homage to those relationships and kinships that define it.

The second section in *Makoče Wa'ówabi* focuses on the land as a metaphor for the body. In dominant land art discourse, attention is often given to the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta, who was active during the time of Minimalist and Earthworks generations of artists. Using established discourse that analyzes and contextualizes Mendieta's land-body connections in *Silueta* (1973-1980) and the *Rupestrian Sculptures* (1980-1983), I show ways that Indigenous female artists aesthetically suggest the kinship of the body and the land in painting and installation work. In this section, I consider Kainai artist Faye Heavyshield's installation, *Body of Land* (2002) Both of these artists take into

consideration the ways that the female Indigenous body is metaphor, and also metonym for the land, and both explore ways the land and body are interconnected through discourses about meaning, belonging, family and dispossession.

Finally, an installation by Faye Heavyshield rounds out this chapter. In the 2002 installation, *Body of Land*, Heavyshield makes explicit and overt connections between the Indigenous body and the land. Constructed of hundreds of close-up photographs of her family's skin, the installation directly ties the relationship of the land and the body. Each photograph is formed into a cone and the hundreds of cones are arranged into a form reminiscent of the homeland of the Kainai people.

The last chapter of this dissertation is titled *Įdóheya*. This term in Nakón i'abi connotes a turning toward home and is intentionally placed as the final chapter. Discourse in dominant art history about the lands on which the Earthworks generation worked spare no attempt to characterize the land as terra nullius: unknown, unpeopled, and without story. Western epistemologies characterize land as "nature" separate from civilization, and as a place on which the human history is enacted. This is a violence to the richness of Indigenous homelands on which those works were created. Therefore, my final analyses are dedicated to re-peopling those lands, and to honoring the *place* of Indigenous *home*. For this, I consider the works of Bonnie Devine (Anishinaabe, Serpent River First Nation), for whom concepts of land, history and kin are wound into aesthetic form. I also include a brief commentary on one part of Oklahoma Native artist Richard Ray Whitman's (Yuchee and Mvskogee/Creek) series, *Street Chiefs*. The series resists the romanticizing potential in considering Indigneous homeland and provides grounding to my consideration of Devine's work.

Finally, I end my dissertation with the 2008 installation *Writing Home* by Devine. In this installation, Devine asserts her community's millennia-long relationship to their homelands. I examine her carefully constructed and thoughtful forms that attest to both the spirit and the longevity of the Canadian Shield, as one of the oldest landforms in North America and a place of origin for the Anishinaabe. This work directly addresses issues of emplaced memory, change across time, and the stability of Indigenous homeland connections, while also provoking thought about the human condition, even within states of decay.

Figures

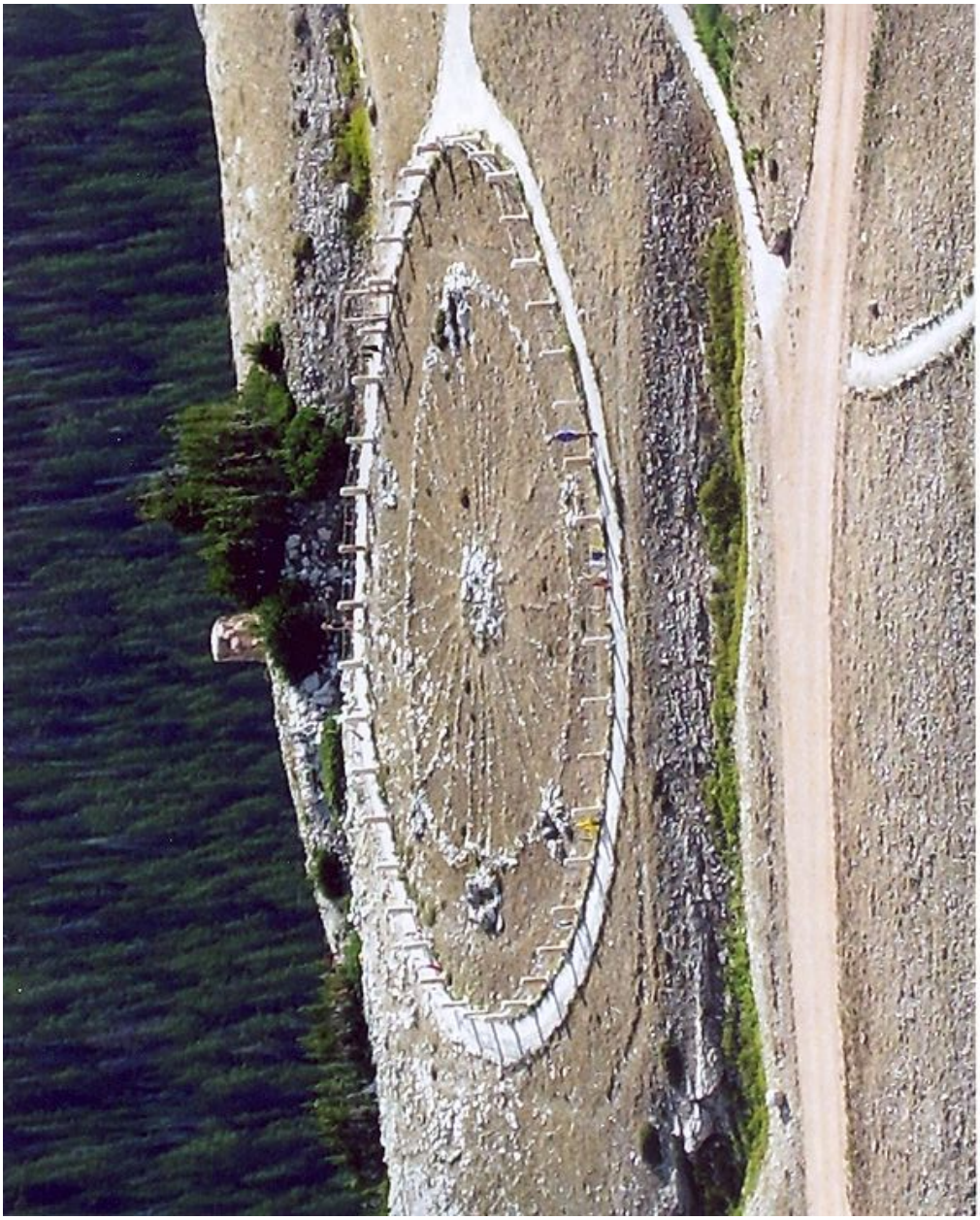


Figure 1
Bighorn Medicine Wheel
Bighorn National Forest, Wyoming
Last Altered ca. 1100 AD



Figure 2
Little Bighorn Battlefield, Montana Summer 1969
Hamish Fulton
1969



Figure 3
Sun Tunnels
Nancy Holt
1973-76



Figure 4
Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother
Rebecca Belmore
1991



Figure 5
Ammassalik Map of the East Greenland Coast
Kunit (Tunumiit)
Greenland National Museum and Archives
ca. 1885

Nakón I’abi Glossary for Chapter I

Įkná’otą’į	Introduction
Nakón i’abi	Nakota language/ the language spoken by Assiniboines
Nakón wicoȟ’ąge	Assiniboine traditions
Nakòda makoče	Assiniboine land/territory
Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake	Sitting Bull, Húŋkpapȟa Lakota Spiritual Leader
itánča	A leader or war chief
tíbi	A dwelling or lodge
Makoče	Land or territory
Makoče Wa’ówabi	Picture of land
Įdóheya	Turning toward home

II. Makoče

Robust amounts of knowledge about Indigenous people's relationships to the land has been lost or obscured by dominant historical narratives. The variety of reasons for this fact and its troubling implications have been detailed in other scholarship. However, the discipline of art history has yet to deeply attend to trajectories that result in blurring and erasures of Indigenous emplaced kinships. In attempt to steady the course of our discipline, I focus this chapter on artists who remain interested in the cultural damage of Indigenous erasure, as well as the inherent value of our relationships to land. In this chapter, I examine four artworks: *Spirit Warriors: Indian Monument at Little Bighorn National Monument* (2003) by Oglala Lakȟóta artist Colleen Cutschall; *Offensive/Defensive* (1989) an installation by Métis/Néhiaw artist Edward Poitras; *Third Bank of the River* (2009) by Kanien'kehá:ka artist Alan Michelson; and finally *Repellent Fence* (2015) by the Indigenous arts collective Postcommodity.

In one of his most influential texts, *God Is Red*, Vine Deloria sought to define what is unique about Indigenous religious and cultural life. By thoughtfully comparing spiritual practices of Native and Western peoples, he concluded that the core difference is that Indigenous cultural and spiritual life are centered in *place*, while Western religion and culture take the form of linear *time*. Deloria argued that the structure of Indigenous "religious traditions (are) taken directly from the world around them, from their

relationships with other forms of life. Context is therefore all-important for both the practice and understanding of reality. The places where revelations were experienced were remembered and set aside as locations where, through rituals and ceremonials, the people could once again communicate with the spirits."[69] This place-based tenet has been the basis of Indigenous existence for millennia, and is the guiding principle at work in Indigenous communities today.

Works in this chapter have at their cores, a logic of interruption. Each installation I focus on here intentionally forms a rupture in dominant nationalistic, political, or historical thought about the specific places in which they exist(ed). These are not "revisions" to the historical record, so much as they are attempts to point to memories that have been willfully relegated to the margins of, or actively erased from, dominant historical narratives. For this chapter, I have chosen a focus on two types of place that are important in national settler colonial thinking, identity, and meaning: border lands and battle grounds. The artworks I selected for this chapter each uniquely direct attention to borderlands and battlegrounds as sites of *acute tension* in the ways history is remembered in North America. These installations disrupt dominant narratives that are emplaced at their specific locations. Further still, each is effective in creating space for the activation of *Indigenous memory* in places of pointed tension about memory. Each work directs sensual experiential consideration toward a fuller view of the history at a particular site. Viewers are forced to experience place attuned to Native perspectives and historical presence.

[69] Vine Deloria, Jr. *God Is Red*, 3rd Edition (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003), 65-66.

I selected works that are installed at these two types of places—borders and battlegrounds—for four reasons. First, borders and battlegrounds are sites that are at (or very near) the heart of the structures of the settler state; targeting these destabilizes settler narratives as it de-normalizes the memorialization of settler structures. Second, these are two types of places that have embedded memory of key events that define both settler and tribal identity and nationhood. As battles and the strict definition of international boundaries are commemorated and enforced, narratives about the "imagined community" of each settler state (and tribal nation) are reinforced.[70] The art under analysis here suspends the monolithic memorialization and normalization of settler history and remembrance, as each directs the experience of a site toward Native recollections and experiences of place, while asserting claims to the Indigenous perceptions as valid in place. Third, the implications of the narratives that are vested in these sites have real political impact and directly affect the lived reality of Indigenous people. Therefore, disrupting narratives which normalize violence and the erasure of Indigenous histories is an interruption of those larger settler systems that encourage violence and erasure. Finally, as sites of violence, borders and battlegrounds are particularly charged with *spiritual* energy.

Each artwork I analyze in this chapter uniquely directs attention to Indigenous memory traditions that all hold "alternate" versions of historical fact, which are facts regardless of their inclusion in dominant historical narratives. Much more could be –and

[70] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006) for more about the concept of the imagined community, which is at the core of nationalism, and made visible through visual culture, law, and historical memorialization of commonly accepted narratives.

has been—said about these sites, and many others could easily be counted in discourse about reclaiming place and memory. There are many examples of art that functions in ways that have the same intended outcome as those in this chapter, and surely there are other non- art ways to remember indigeneity in place. Nevertheless, each artwork in this chapter has been carefully selected for the clarity of vision and impact of the phenomenological experience that each promotes in the place they have chosen to address.

Thematically, the works in this chapter differ from those in the following chapters, because the meaning and impact of these works are inextricably tied to the places in which they exist(ed). They are not topographical or pictorial references to, or representations of place, rather they are phenomenological installations that draw meaning from the historical and cultural features of their installed locales, and which communicate meaning through the sensual experience therein. Their existence depends on both the location and the time of their existence, and each uniquely directs attention to larger narratives of emplaced history and meaning. These works are therefore unique relative to the other pieces I analyze throughout this dissertation because they are in situ.

Each work also uniquely honors the characteristic of the land on which they exist(ed) as archival unto itself. In other words, each work honors the autonomy of place, and of the communities and kinships that have both historically existed there, and which have formed the place itself.[71] I have grouped my analysis of these works into sections

[71] Madeline Katt Theriault, *Moose to Moccasins: The Story of Ka Kita Wa Po No Kwe* (Toronto: Dundurn Publishers, 2006); My assumption here is a familiarity with, and acceptance of, the basic concepts of kinship structures that Indigenous peoples have historically held with the various elements that make "place" as such- water, land,

that consider two tools used by the settler state to define, delimit, and control Indigenous peoples: battle sites and borderlands. The first two artworks, Cutschall's *Spirit Warriors* and Poitras' *Offensive/Defensive* function as interruptions to the dominant narratives that surround battle sites that have been pivotal to the construction of public memory and national narratives, one in Canada and one in the United States. The final two, *Third Bank of the River* and *Repellent Fence* each interrupt narratives and structures at specific border sites that define Canada, the United States, and México. All four artworks exist in open defiance of the neutralization of the settler state, its structures and its narratives.

Throughout my analysis, I use Critical Place Inquiry (CPI) as proposed by Marcia McKenzie and Unangax scholar Eve Tuck, which urges engagement with the multitudes of overlapping realities that simultaneously occur in place.[72] In efforts to use what these four artists taught me through their work, my objective is not to normalize the social structures of settler colonialism, but to demonstrate that those social structures have been tied to place at the expense of Indigenous tradition. My analysis is meant to demonstrate how these artists resist settler structures through their work. This follows the structure of a CPI, which "recognizes that disparate realities determine not only how place is experienced, but also how it is understood and practiced in turn."[73]

Furthermore, CPI applies critique and resistance to the normalization of settler colonial structures as a motivating force. The narratives to which these works stand in opposition (specifically the settler state and its borders, and national battlefield

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animals, and plants that both shape, and are shaped by human beings in a reciprocal relationship.

[72] Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 19

[73] Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, No. 1 (2012): 19.

narratives) are both extremely complicated, and the works selected for this chapter engage profoundly with that complexity as they point to "alternate" versions of history. Through aesthetic form and installation, each artwork uniquely redirects memory toward things that actually historically happened or is happening, but which have been strategically erased from memorialization in the public sphere. More importantly perhaps, these artists also all uniquely demonstrate the troubling ways that erasures of Indigenous memory comprise a foundational characteristic of settler colonialism at large through the choices made about the locations of their work.[74] As Aimee Carrillo Rowe argues, the

> precarious quality of settler colonialism requires the continuously renewed erasure of Indigenous people as temporally coeval, modern subjects. If Indian removal, genocide, and land theft were activities neatly located in the past, we might say they were important "events" in U.S history. Indeed, the notion that settler colonialism is a structure underscores its ongoing, organizing force within U.S. and global power relations.[75]

Following the primacy that the artists in this section give to the land itself, I center my arguments first on the history of each place and then address the aesthetic forms made to create a conceptual rupture in the fabric of dominantly accepted history therein. Finally, I show the way that each artists' work uniquely makes a reclamation of their specific site as integral to Indigenous culture, belonging, history, and identity.

As my dissertation's first thematic chapter, *Makoče* specifically examines recent works that are site-specific; they cannot exist in their original form inside a gallery or museum, but rather rely on the land itself for their function and their message to be

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[74]Mark Watson "Unsettled Borders and Memories: A "Local" Indigenous Perspective on Contemporary Globalization," *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* 7, No. 1 (2015): 9.
[75] Aimee Carrillo Rowe and Eve Tuck, "Settler Colonialism and Cultural Studies: Ongoing Settlement, Cultural Production and Resistance," *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* 17, No. 1 (2017): 6.

whole. *Makoče* is the Nakón i'abi word for "land" or "territory." I selected this as the first theme that I address in my dissertation because it is at the heart of my consideration of "land art." Necessarily, I delve first into works that are site specific with the intent to communicate the *in situ* character of land art. Such structuring is also illustrative of the lack of emplacement in latter chapters, which might be due in part to a lack of access to land itself.

Restriction of Indigenous access to land is characteristic of a settler state, which my dissertation examines and considers carefully. Though Indigenous relationships to place exist independently and did so prior to the arrival of settlers in North America, the history of Indigenous restrictions and the unique engagement of each community with settler and colonial structures and power dynamics have created a rich field in which these artists' works find meaning. Access to land is a theme that I return to in depth in the latter chapters of this dissertation where emplacement is more pointedly absent. Importantly, this structuring of emplaced work is at the heart of my own identity as Nakón wíya. I have been instructed that my relationships and responsibilities are emplaced, that I owe a debt to land as my kin, and that my attention must be urgently turned toward it.[76] This is the function of the art forms in this chapter; their meaning and

[76] For me, this has meant returning to the land where my ancestors practiced our ceremonies, to engage with those practices and *places* myself. It has also meant taking political, financial, and personal stances that are in defense of our homelands against incursions that would damage our ability to practice our ceremonies and culture. It has also meant making immense sacrifices to personally practice a tradition of return—sometimes from immense physical distances. Mitúgaš (my grandfather) was born on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Northeastern Montana, where I have tribal associate enrollment, but I was born in Eastern Shoshone, Goshute, and Ute makoče(Utah), raised in Kumeyaay makoče (Southern California), and attended universities in Southern Paiute, Ute, and Goshute makoče (Utah), Pawnee, Oto, and Omaha Makoče (Nebraska), and in Caddo, Wichita, and Chickasaw makoče (Oklahoma)- none of these are very close to our

impact are inextricably fixed to their sites and require a contextualization within the history of place for their breadth, depth, and impact to be complete.

Giksúya

In North America, public memory is interminably caught in what Mark Watson calls an "amnesiac condition" of partiality and eternal incompleteness that is embodied in a central conflict. Namely, settler identity formation and narratives are presented as historical fact, perpetually existing and reimagined against Indigenous erasure and dispossession.[77] The inherent tension, ineluctably built into the structure of the settler state, in which dominant narratives of conquest and destiny press against unforgotten "alternative" memories of that which existed before is the locus at which these artists' work gains meaning.[78]

Each artist I consider here has created work that defies the normalization of dominant narratives of the land, including the political implications of specific sites, and relationships to "resources" contained within the land. These works point to the complexity and diversity of public memory, as they resist accepted claims about place and provide a counter narrative about battles fought at specific sites.

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reservation or our homeland. So travel "home" has necessarily been expensive, time-consuming, and always is intentional. I see this as one of my responsibilities as an Assiniboine wíya, and in fact as a defining characteristic of my identity.

[77] It is also true that in the United States of America, this erasure is also active against the memories of slavery, under which American capitalism is always overshadowed.

[78] Watson, "Unsettled Borders and Memories: A "Local" Indigenous Perspective on Contemporary Globalization," 9-11.

More pointedly, each of the four works analyzed in this chapter point to the ways that Indigenous erasure is *essential* to the character of the settler colonial state. This is accomplished in different ways for each artist, but ultimately each artwork in this chapter reclaims *place* and creates *space* for Indigenous memorialization specific to its location. Each artwork is in some way illustrative of the inherent conditions of living Indigeneity in North America today. The message of these works is tied invariably to place, to contests about who controls land, and to disputes about the value and verity of narrative—in which the elimination of Indigeneity and Indigenous memory were (and are) essential for the domination of non-Native in North America.

Racialized power dynamics are integral to the settler state. The system and processes of settler colonialism are founded on principles of white supremacy, in which Indigenous dispossession and African chattel slavery combine to produce settler capital. Both conditions are constantly reproduced, normalized, and justified through: locating both slavery and indigeneity in the historical past of public memory; the erasure of Indigenous presence and relationships to land; and through the constant creation (and maintenance) of dehumanizing barriers to Native and Black wealth accumulation.[79] Conditions of dispossession are compounded and normalized by the mechanisms that reinforce assumptions that public memory and public spaces are inherently created and maintained for the use of white settlers.[80]

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[79] Ann Bonds and Joshua Inwood, "Beyond White Privilege: Geographies of White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism," *Progress in Human Geography* 40, No. 6 (2015): 715-733.

[80] There are many examples of this sort of normalization, ranging from the erasure and replacement of Indigenous place names and the destruction of Indigenous structures, to state historical markers and the narratives enshrined in State and National Parks throughout the country. Other examples include the rigidity of international, state, and

As it is characteristically settler colonial in nature, American memory and "learning" about national history are deeply conditioned toward nationalistic rhetoric under that paradigm (settler colonialism). As Marianne Hirsch puts it, memorialization "emerge(s) out of a complex dynamic between past and present, individual and collective, public and private, recall and forgetting, power and powerlessness, history and myth, trauma and nostalgia, conscious and unconscious fears and desires."[81] Hirsch goes on to argue that "acts of memory are thus acts of performance, representation, and interpretation."[82] In North America, "memory" is routinely performed toward acceptance of nationalistic discourses that normalize the settler state. This has consistently been at the expense of Indigenous memory. Of particular note, discourse surrounding Land Art in North America contributes to the settler colonial structure through the erasure of Indigenous presence and relationships to the land. Such discourse perpetually normalizes of violence done to Indigenous place-base kinships, and through the 20th century Land Art movement. Through careful consideration of the various elements of each installation, I show how the artists in this chapter profoundly disturb the normalization of

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provincial borders (and the assumption of both their permanence and the belief in their necessity), the desecration of Indigenous sacred sites. Highway signs created and maintained by state and provincial historical societies, which make attempts to remember history in place but which often only tell settler narratives and often criminalize of dehumanize Indigenous people, public art that praises violent settler "heroes," and the inaccurate and inappropriate use of Indigenous language in places where it either doesn't belong, or as memorial to perceived dead Indians are all examples of this type of normalizing processes. Education curriculum in the United States and Canada in K-12 schools stabilize public belief in settler innocence and ascendancy, meanwhile reaffirming the inevitability of Indigenous and Black dispossession and death.

[81] Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction," *Signs* 28, No. 1 (Gender and Cultural Memory Special Issue, Autumn 2002): 5.

[82] Ibid.

Indigenous erasure as they *reclaim* relationships to place and *interrupt* dominant memories in place.

And in each instance, these artists also direct attention to the ways that Indigenous people have not forgotten those histories and memories that have also existed here, even when under situational distress from the loud dominance of settler ascendancy and claims to innocence. In other words, each *creates* space through artistic aesthetic and conceptual intervention to remember Indigeneity as it is linked to a specific location. The works in this chapter create place for memories that are coded as *Indigenous* in character, at sites that have been made into symbols for the settler state. Indigenous installations become insurgencies to the dominance and violence of the settler state, because they defy the power that settler narratives link inextricably to specific sites. This is important because as Hirsch has demonstrated, "what a culture remembers and what it chooses to forget are intricately bound up with issues of power and hegemony."[83] The works in this chapter were selected because they are reminders of the histories of violence, erasure, resilience, and endurance of Native people that have relationship to the land. In each instance, a community's historical presence (and continuation) in place is immediately indexed in the location of the works' installation. Each artwork creates place where the memory traditions that were intentionally erased or obscured by dominant narratives are restored and centered upon.

[83] Ibid, 6

Battle Grounds

Indigenous emplaced memory remains alive in our languages, stories, kinships, our ceremonies, and our memories of movement across the land. Sites of battles are especially important locations where memory is strongly felt, and often emotionally palpable. Lakota artist Colleen Cutschall's installation *Spirit Warriors* is perhaps the most pointed example of this kind of space creation. *Spirit Warriors* (Fig. 1) forms the centerpiece of the memorial monument, *Indian Monument at Little Bighorn National Monument*, which was dedicated in 2003[84]. This installation and sculpture literally create space in which Indigenous memory is activated and in which place is practiced from an Indigenous perspective.

Much has been written, depicted, imagined, and speculated about the events that took place on the grassy plains on the hot June afternoons of June 25 and 26, 1876. The events of those afternoons have in many ways defined an aspect of the character of the United States of America through actual historical fact. But maybe more importantly, the American story has been shaped through the imagined and inherited memory of what happened. The land on which the events of those days unfolded was an area that a number of Northern Plains and Plateau region tribes had historically traversed for centuries. Land that the Greasy Grass/ Little Bighorn battle was fought on was near the geographic center of the northern mixed grasslands where herds of American Bison

[84] Susan Olp, "Ceremony Marks Completion of Indian Memorial on Anniversary of the Little Bighorn Battle," *Billings Gazette*, June 25, 2014, https://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/ceremony-marks-completion-of-indian-memorial-on-anniversary-of-little/article_fbe0c5ec-0639-5df2-9ccc-ed7ab209f3a8.html); The monument was rededicated on June 25, 2014, after final etchings on the panels were installed. Chevo Studios of Denver completed the etchings in November 2013.

ranged.[85] Being closely culturally tied to migratory bison herds, tribes frequented the area as a way of life. By the 1870s, the decade in which the Greasy Grass battle occurred, Lakȟóta had asserted their dominance (and created enmity) throughout the region, and had been legally assigned lands under the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie.[86] Imposed settler structures of confinement were widely resisted by the Lakȟóta and other communities, who were dissatisfied at the restrictions away from traditional practices. In the weeks leading up to the Greasy Grass battle, Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake led a massive Sundance gathering off of the reservation lands that the United States had "given" to tribal communities, onto those fertile bison-ranging grasslands. The region was able to sustain a village of tens of thousands of individuals, families, and diverse bands of people, who came together to offer sacrifice and prayer as a continuation of Native culture. It's probable that the site was selected precisely because of its ability to sustain the large gathering. Armed with spiritual protection of recent ceremonial practice, the assembled warriors who defeated Custer and the 7th Calvary that day participated in a battle that marks an important pivot point in the human relationships with the land in North America.

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[85] Northern herds of American Bison ranged throughout the Northern Plains region all the way to Alaska and Nunavut. The historic territory of these important animals covers most of the continental United States and Canada and were especially important to tribes on the Plains who followed their seasonal migratory paths through grasslands. See Eric W. Sanderson, et. al, "The Ecological Future of the North American Bison: Conceiving Long-Term, Large-Scale Conservation of Wildlife," *Conservation Biology* 22, No. 2 (April 2008): 252-266. Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms "Greasy Grass" and "Little Bighorn" interchangeably, because they both refer to features of the land, and are culturally interchangeable in referring to the 1876 battle. The term "Greasy Grass" is an interpretation of Lakȟótiyapi words that refer directly to the grass in the region, which looks "greasy" at certain times, and which might also refer to bison tallow coating the grass as a result of traditional harvesting practices in the area.

[86] National Archives and Records Administration Record Group 11, National Archives Identifier 299803.

Accounts of the battle vary and are debated widely to this day by Custer-philes and -phobes alike. Less prominently (and sometimes intentionally quietly), Native people have also focused on that battle—the most famous instance of Indian victory over the immense encroaching armed force of American settler colonialism. However much Little Bighorn occupies dominant memory narratives, it is immensely greater as a symbol of Indigenous resistance in the memory of Native communities. Accounts about prominent characters at the battle range widely and compete for attention at nearly the same pace as accounts about what actually happened, resulting in ahistorical mythologization, heroification of prominent individuals believed to have been affiliated with the battle, and an overwhelming wave of romantic thinking today about the 1876 Battle.[87]

The battle marks a moment of Indigenous insurrection against impinging forces that sought to dramatically and profoundly alter the ways that people used and related to land. The Little Bighorn battle was meant to finally settle Lakȟóta people onto the land bases that the US government had established, and marks a pivotal battle in the Plains Indian Wars.[88] The objectives of the Plains Indian Wars (1854-1890) were at their heart, wars about land. Settlers coming into the American West were hungry for access to the land and resources that had given birth to, and sustained, Indigenous communities for millennia. Settlers, feeling entitled to increasing access to these things, called upon the United States military for "protection" against the autochthonous peoples that were

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[87] See Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 1-26.

[88] The Wounded Knee Massacre (December 29, 1980) is widely regarded as the final blow to Natives that were resistant to the reservation system. Between 200-350 noncombatant Mnikȟówožu Lakȟóta were slaughtered by the United States Army in the Wounded Knee Massacre. Mnikȟówožu Lakȟóta were not participants in the Greasy Grass battle.

already there, who viewed the intrusion of settlers as an immense threat to their lives, customs, and kinships.

An 1851 act by Congress, *The Indian Appropriations Act* preceded the Wars, but was ineffective in moving and keeping people on the Northern Plains on the land areas that were established for their occupation, and to the lands that the Federal government allotted to them. Reservations and allotment marked a major disjuncture in the ways of life that many Native communities were accustomed, and the permanence of the reservation system was foreign and hostile. Many people left the land bases that they were confined to under that system, including those who came to attend the Sun Dance led by Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake (Sitting Bull), and would later defeat the US Army at Little Bighorn.

The Plains Indian Wars was a campaign that was fundamentally concerned with containing people who had kinships with immense swaths of territory, and who routinely moved around in large areas of land. At the time of this writing, there are 24 Indian reservations (both state and federally designated) in the BIA- defined Northern Plains states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska, including the tribes of all of the Native combatants at the Greasy Grass Battle.[89] Indian reservations in

[89] The reservations in these states are:
Montana: Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation, Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, Crow Tribe, Crow Agency, Fort Belknap Tribes (Aanih and Assiniboine), Fort Peck Tribes (Assiniboine, Dakȟóta, Lakȟóta), Little Shell Chippewa (State recognized only), and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation
North Dakota: Mandan, Hidatsa, & Arikara Nation (Three Affiliated Tribes), Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, and the Trenton Indian Service Area.

this region are the symbolic and literal result of the Plains Indian Wars and the treaties signed into law (and then immediately broken by the United States), that supported white settlement and procurement of landed resources.

I start my analysis of the *Spirit Warriors* installation with these comments to foreground that the battle occurred on the same land where this work is installed, and to share that the land historically did and continues to hold immense importance to the psyche of American Indian people. The fight was handily "won" by the Native forces that were allied there, and who had just concluded their Sun Dance. As a victory, the Battle of the Greasy Grass marked an immensely hopeful moment in the larger contest to save Native lifeways and remains a fundamentally charged psychological moment for living Indigenous peoples who face similar threats today. These comments also come before my analysis of the artwork to focus attention to the longstanding importance and centrality of contests about control of land to the relationships between settler and Indian people. Land is essential to Indigeneity, just as claims to stolen land are at the heart of settler colonialism.

South Dakota: Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Tribe, Crow Creek Agency, Flandreau Santee Sioux Nation, Kul Wičasa Oyate (Lower Brule Sioux Tribe), Síčháŋgu Lakȟóta Oyate (Rosebud Sioux Tribe), Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and the Yankton Sioux Tribe
Wyoming: Wind River Indian Reservation (Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone)
Nebraska: Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Santee Sioux (Isáŋyathi Dakȟóta) Nation, and the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
Referenced:
Montana Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, https://tribalnations.mt.gov/tribalnations;
North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, http://indianaffairs.nd.gov/tribal-nations/:
South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations, https://sdtribalrelations.sd.gov/tribes.aspx;
Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, http://indianaffairs.state.ne.us/resources/tribes-of-nebraska/;
U.S. Department of the Interior, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Wind River Agency, https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/rocky-mountain/wind-river-agency.

Native communities have protested the one-sided militaristic orientation of memorialization at the Little Bighorn National Monument since the 1920s, when descendants of those at the battle petitioned the War Department for a memorial to their ancestors.[90] Most notably, American Indian Movement (AIM) activists visited the site in 1988, on the 112th anniversary of the battle. Led by American Indian Movement activist Russell Means (Oglala Lakȟóta), a contingency of Native activists interrupted the National Parks Service events meant to commemorate the day.[91] The activists dug a small depression in the ground near the granite memorial, where they poured cement and installed a steel plaque inscribed with words from Timothy *Night Bear* Lame Woman (Tsėhéstáno), which was welded by George Magpie (Tsėhéstáno):

> In honor of our Indian patriots who fought and defeated the U.S. Cavalry in order to save our women and children from mass murder. In doing so, preserving our rights to our homelands, treaties and sovereignty. 6-25-1988 G. Magpie, Cheyenne.[92]

Ultimately the actions of AIM and Indian activists captured the attention of national authorities. In 1990, Democratic Colorado Representative Ben

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[90] Tony Perrottet, "Little Bighorn Reborn," *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 2005, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/little-bighorn-reborn-79240914/ and James Brooke, "Controversy Over Memorial to Winners at Little Bighorn," *The New York Times*, August 24, 1997, https://www.nytimes.com/1997/08/24/us/controversy-over-memorial-to-winners-at-little-bighorn.html.

[91] Means also led AIM activists in an action at the battlefield on its centennial anniversary, 1976. See Robert M. Utley, "Custer and Me," *True West Magazine* 48, no. 4 (May/ June 2001): 58-64 for a first-hand account of the events surrounding the centennial, including AIM and the National Parks Service event. Utley was the chief historian for the National Parks Service at the time of the 1976 AIM demonstration. Utley's writing is reflective of the acrimonious feelings held by many who felt threatened by Indigenous presence at the site, and specifically by those who advocated for memorialization of the Indian victors at the battlefield.

[92] James Hagengruber, "Built Out of Protest: Memorial to Warriors Had Passionate Beginning," *Billings Gazette*, June 24, 2003, https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/built-out-of-protest-memorial-to-warriors-had-passionate-beginning/article_9f958377-37b8-5941-8445-4bac267911a2.html

Nighthorse Campbell (Tsėhéstáno) authored a bill that would eventually rename the site of the national monument from The *Custer Battlefield National Monument* to *The Little Bighorn National Monument*, and also authorized the construction of the *Indian Memorial*.[93] Funds wouldn't be appropriated from this new legislation until 2002, but good faith movement toward the creation of the monument were made by the National Park Service and the hobbyist groups associated with the storied battlefield.

After a nationwide contest in 1996, Philadelphia designers John Collins and Alison Towers beat 550 entries to win the bid to design the *Indian Monument* at Little Bighorn National Monument.[94] The call for designs stated the objective was in part, to create

> A living memorial and monument, which honors, celebrates, and interprets truth, dignity, beauty, and the principles of the Native worldview is what we wish to share with all people. Perhaps if others can learn anew about us they will begin to respect us and together we can bring about peace through unity, peace through understanding …. We wish for a place where one can contemplate, reflect upon, and learn about Native people, past and present, a place where one can experience the land as close to its original condition as can be retained and maintained. We want a place where the Native descendants can feel welcome, look about and feel good for at least a moment and believe

[93] 1990 House Bill H. R. 4660; the bill was approved by President George H. W. Bush on December 10, 1991 and became Public Law 102-201. See *The New York Times*, "Custer Falls again as Site is Renamed," November 27, 1991, Section B, Page 9, https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/27/us/custer-falls-again-as-site-is-renamed.html#.

[94] Associated Press, "Design Chosen For Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield," *The Spokesman Review*, February 18, 1997, https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1997/feb/18/design-chosen-for-memorial-at-little-bighorn/ It should be noted that some people were unhappy that the designers selected were not Native people themselves, and many people disproved the final design plan.

> that he or she and one's people had done a courageous and good thing that the people may live.[95]

The resulting monument by Collins and Towers is comprised of a round depression carved into the hillside north and slightly west of the Seventh Calvary Memorial, near the top of Last Stand Hill (Fig. 2). The hollow has two walkways that lead to it from the National Park Service access road: one entry from the east and one entry from the west. Without knowing what those walkways lead to, it is easy to miss the space entirely; looking toward the monument from the rest of the National Park, it appears only as a gently swelling portion of Last Stand Hill. Its covert hiddenness preserves the quiet spiritual aspect of the monument. Within, walls of cream-colored fieldstone rise about 8 feet from the ground, creating a hypostyle temple-like reprieve from the rest of the battlefield. The walls of the cairn surround 270° of the enclosure, interspersed by walkway entrance points at the east and west axis. A circle of red gravel fills the center of the enclosure, while a ring of red and brown stones forms a walkway around the outer area. Small rounded river rocks fill the space between the stone walkway and the fieldstone walls.

The wall holds black granite panels inscribed with information about each of the tribes that participated in the battle that took place on the site in 1876. From east to west, the panels hold information from Apsaalooké (Crow), Tsėhéstáno (Cheyenne), Hinono'eino (Arapaho), allied Thítȟuŋwaŋ Lakȟóta and individual Nakóda, and Sahanish

[95] U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Design for an Indian Memorial: Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument* Washington D.C., 1996; Preamble written by Lakota Artist Arthur Amiotte, 2.

(Arikara).[96] There are four panels that list the names of the identified fallen warriors from Tsėhéstáno, Hinono'eino, Thítȟuŋwaŋ Lakȟóta, and Sahanish communities, and two panels that give context to the Apsaalooké and Sahanish involvement in the battle as Army scouts. Thirteen modified ledger drawings from individuals in each group, a graphic representing Tsėhéstáno gamímeya tíbi (Cheyenne camp circle), and representations of dog paw prints are also included in the composition of the panels. Importantly, the tribes themselves compiled the language and identification of fallen warriors that are on each panel. That the tribes were responsible for these aspects of the memorial contributes to the overall reclamation of the space as a place where Indian memory is honored, respected, and central in importance within the monument.

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[96] Overwhelmingly, the word *Sioux* has been used to reference some of the Native communities involved in the battle at Little Bighorn. Common parlance uses the term *Sioux* to refer to Lakȟóta, Dakȟóta, and Nakóda. This is a term that is derogatory and minimizes the immense diversity within these communities. *Sioux* is a French revision of the Anishinaabemowin word *natowessiwak,* which means "big snake." Anishinaabe are traditional enemies of the various bands of Lakȟóta, Dakȟóta, and Nakóda, and this word was used with a negative connotation. French trappers and fur traders adopted the word from Anishinaabe neighbors, because Lakȟóta, Dakȟóta, and Nakóda autonyms translate to "ally people," which was a descriptor perceived to be insufficient to distinguish these bands from one another and from neighboring communities. Linguistically, the Lakȟóta, Dakȟóta, and Nakóda dialects were similar enough to be barely distinguishable by settlers at the time of contact with French (and other) colonists, though our cultural features are distinctive. Tribal historians have long attempted to stress that Lakȟóta, Dakȟóta, and Nakóda do not share origin stories or history, and that while our cultures overlap, they are distinctive. There are seven discrete bands of Lakȟóta, two distinct groups of Dakȟóta, and at least thirty-six bands of Nakóda are located today in the United States and Canada. These groups are spread across a range of reservations and reserves throughout the United States and Canada, as well as off-reservation communities. Most of the scholarship that exists about the Greasy Grass/ Little Bighorn battle uses the word *Sioux* because, in part, there has been immense confusion about the correct names of our communities, and in part because *Sioux* has been codified legal language used in treaties and in the formation of tribal governments and reservations. This historical blunder stands to be corrected, and as a Nakóda person, I do not use the word *Sioux* because it is reductive of my culture, history, and the lived experiences of my ancestors and relatives. All of the other names in this sentence are autonyms for the tribes that were at the Greasy Grass Battle in 1876.

Between the panel about the Só'taeo'o and Hinono'eino and the panel about Thítȟuŋwaŋ Lakȟóta, the round wall gaps apart. Its arms reach upward, and eventually merge into the hill. This gap is called the *Weeping Wall* (Fig. 3), which has a constant flow of tricking water descending into a small pool. Standing directly in front of this gap, one's attention is unavoidably directed to the Seventh Calvary Monument that stands prominently at the crest of the hill.

Symbolically, the *Weeping Wall* was intended to create a link between the groups who clashed on the battlefield that bloody June day. The water is meant to act as a purifying stream, to evoke the tears shed for the many people who died on that plain, for the impact of the conflict and its ongoing implications. The flowing water creates a peaceful, cool, shaded environment that is calming – not dissimilar from water features commonly found in cathedrals and other houses of worship. The opening of the cairn toward the cemetery filled with the American soldiers and their monument suggests an invitation to reflect on the historical event holistically, as well as an invitation for the spirits of the soldiers to more fully humanize the fallen Native warriors. This is an aspect of the memorial that some Native individuals have decried as insensitive or even offensive, because it perpetually re-centers the tragedy of white, rather than Indigenous death.

Directly across from the *Weeping Wall*, the sculpture *Spirit Warriors* culminates the composition of the enclosure. Being arranged opposite the place where American soldiers are so potently (and perpetually) honored, the installation of *Spirit Warriors* is an evocative reminder of the often-untold half of the story contained in this place.

Indigenous connection to the place is made ever more compelling in the formal qualities of the sculpture.

The bronze sculpture is formed of outlined relief images of three figures on horseback, and one standing figure. Stylistically, *Spirit Warriors* alludes to the ledger art tradition of representing figural forms and narrative art.[97] In fact it has been suggested that the forms are actually recurrent images that Cutschall pieced together from images, including the pictograph drawings of the young Tsitsistas (Cheyenne) warrior White Bird, who was a battle participant at the young age of 15.[98] In an interview with the Rapid City Journal, Cutschall called the 35- by 12- foot sculpture "the antithesis of bronze," because "rather than being heavy and solid, *Spirit* Warriors is like a line drawing in the sky… the elevated outlines of horses and riders are cast in bronze, but the viewer can see through those outlines to the battlefield and sky beyond."[99] Three horses appear to race onto the undulating prairie grass that is visible behind them through their bodies, with one woman standing near the rear horse.

The figure at the front of the group (at right) wears a long war bonnet, with feathers streaming out behind his back. He appears to wear a chest plate and a breechcloth over pants and carries a bow. The bow arcs back toward him as the string is pulled taught against the arrow in his extended right arm, ready for attack. The pony he is

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[97] Richard Pearce, *Women and Ledger Art: Four Contemporary Native American Artists* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013): 81.
[98] Tony Perrottet, "Little Bighorn Reborn," *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 2005, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/little-bighorn-reborn-79240914/ See also Janet Catherine Berlo, "Portraits of Dispossession in Plains Indian and Inuit Graphic Arts," *Art Journal* 49, No. 2 (1990): 133-141.
[99] Heidi Bell Gease, "Former Hills Woman Helps Build Battle of Little Bighorn Memorial," *Rapid City Journal*, May 17, 2003, https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/former-hills-woman-helps-build-battle-of-little-bighorn-memorial/article_71995bec-d65d-56b2-af40-1a60377f9bf6.html.

mounted on has paint around his visible eye and down his hind leg. A small round medallion is affixed to the front leg. His tail is bound and tied in a neat knot, intended as a form of protection for both the horse and rider on the field in battle. The knotted tail juts out above outstretched hindquarters that suggest the motion of a quick gallop.

The hind legs of the first horse interlace with the front legs of the horse in the middle of the sculpture, which are also outstretched as if running onto the bloody field. Painted designs adorn the horse's chest and hindquarters, arching from her back down to the front leg and nearing the hind leg respectively. An animal hide— possibly a fox or dog—lay stretched across the sloping hollow of the horse's back. The middle horse turns her head to engage the audience into the action, as she looks toward the person standing within the interior of the *Indian Monument* area described above. The rider on the second horse is only visible by synecdoche: his right arm reaches around the top of horse's neck, and half of his face peers over the rounded neck.[100] This style of riding is still seen today in Indian Relay races that take place throughout the United States and Canada. His right leg arcs up over the horse's rump, as the left foot dangles below the animal's belly. The figure carries a staff that reaches forward from behind the horse's head. A feather and a strand of bound hair whip out from behind his head, as a strap of fringed leather flows

[100] George Catlin wrote about seeing Comanche men riding horses in a fashion similar to the way this rider is depicted and painted a scene of similar horse handling skills in *Comanche Feats of Horsemanship* (1833-1835). The painting, which shows two riders riding astride their ponies and two riders fully on the backs of theirs was made during Catlin's time in Indian Territory with the United States Dragoons (ca. 1834). *Comanche Feats of Horsemanship* is in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, a gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison Jr. (1985.66.487). See George Catlin, *Letters and Notes of the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians,* Vol. II, 3rd edition (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844): 65-67, and Plate 167.

from behind his back, all to suggest rapid motion into the battlefield. This horse's tail is unbound and flows behind, connecting her to the final horse in the composition.

Trailing behind the other horses and riders by only a pace, the final horse bears a zigzagging stripe from behind its ear, stretching down to the right front hoof. A feather hangs from the bridle bit near the horse's mouth. The rider on this horse carries a riffle, pointed upward in this left hand, and has a red-tailed hawk headdress affixed to the back of his head, topping long locks of flowing hair. The figure wears a vest, breechcloth, and pants. Compositionally, this figure compliments the other riders in creating a dynamic engagement with space as each figure focuses their attention to a different direction. Where the first rider gazes onto the battlefield ahead, the middle rider gazes toward viewers, the final rider turns his torso and looks backward and down. A round shield that is partitioned into four quadrants by wavy lines, and which has a circle in its center obscures his right hand. Of that shield, Cutschall said,

> The emblem on the shield is representative of the plains worldview that reflects the quartered earth and cosmos. The circle in the center of the shield represents both the nation's hoop and the source of life and renewal from the sun. In summary, the shield represents both the people and a worldview that is being defended.[101]

Across the shield, the rider's gaze lingers on that of a female figure on the ground. Her legs appear in motion, as though she runs astride the horse and rider who are leaving for battle. Her dress is styled after a traditional Lakȟóta woman's two-hide dress, including the yoke that is decorated across her chest/back and sleeves, and with the customary tab from the prepared hide dangling near her ankles. She wears a concho belt that has thirteen round discs affixed to it, evocative of the thirteen moons in a Lakȟóta

[101]Pearce, *Women and Ledger Art: Four Contemporary Native American Artists*, 82.

calendar year, and which memorializes the importance of women as life givers and cultural guardians in Plains Indians' matriarchal societies.[102]

The figure of the woman exists in the composition at Cutschall's insistence and is a crucially important aspect of the meaning and function of the work. The woman runs astride the horse, handing the shield up to the male rider, representing their familial tie and unanimity in effort to defend their life ways and the land in which they are depicted in the installation. It's known that women accompanied their husbands, brothers, and fathers into battle, both at Greasy Grass and in countless other battles. Specific women, such as Buffalo Calf Road Woman (Tsėhéstáno), Tȟašína Máni/ Moving Robe Woman (Húŋkpapȟa Lakȟóta) and Tašina Sápewín/Black Shawl (Oglala Lakȟóta) for example, have been honored and remembered within their communities for their prominent roles at Greasy Grass and in other important battles (Fig. 4).[103] The inclusion of a woman in the composition was important for Cutschall, as a representation of the effects of the United States' policy of aggression against Native people on the Plains during the Indian Wars. This aggression of course, had impacts on entire nations of Indigenous people and continues to shape our lives in important ways today. The woman represents the entire

[102] Oral tradition holds that Lakȟóta and other Northern Plains women began incorporating concho belts in ceremonial and powwow regalia after 1876. It is said that Lakȟóta and other Northern Plains women honor the Tsėhéstáno women (who are recognized as the persons who gave the final blow to Custer during the battle) wear these belts today to signal their ongoing debt of gratitude and solidarity.

[103]Rosemary Agonito and Joseph Agonito, "Resurrecting History's Forgotten Women: A Case Study from the Cheyenne Indians," *Frontiers: Journal of Women's Studies* 6, No. 3 (Autumn, 1981): 8-16; Warrior women were depicted in the ledger art of those who witnessed the battle as well—prominently Yellow Nose, ca. 1889, depicted Buffalo Calf Road Woman in the battle Cheyennes named for her (*The Battle Where the Girl Saved Her Brother)* in a ledger drawing. See National Anthropological Archives, Manuscript 166,032, numbered page 39/NAA INV 08704700.

community, the entire life way and culture of the people that went to battle for their defense.

Various elements of the installation combine to make the *Indian Memorial* a space consecrated for Indian peoples' memory. Inclusion of language selected by tribal communities centers the textual representation of the space on tribal recollection and accounting of the events that took place there. It allows for Indigenous voices to tell about the spiritual and psychological importance of battle site for tribal communities. The design of the monument evokes the round structures oriented to the cosmos, hallmarks of Northern Plains ceremonies and the ways we traditionally structured our camps. The memorial and sculpture are both actively used today by Indigenous visitors as sites for conveying honor and respect for those warriors who were victorious there. The monument and sculpture are adorned with tobacco ties and braids of sweetgrass bedeck the walls around the interior of the structure. These are common mementos left at sites that are important to Native Americans, they are meant as votive offerings and prayers in honor of fallen ancestors, and for continued protection and futurity. [104]

Spirit Warriors culminates the reclaiming character of the monument, fully transforming it into a space meant for Indigenous remembrance. That the style of the installed sculpture *Spirit Warriors* echoes the ledger drawings that captured the details of the battle from the view of the Natives who fought there represents the zenith of artistic reclamation of the narrative emplaced at Greasy Grass. The figures, drawn directly from first-hand witnesses of the violence, immerse present- day visitors into the events of June

[104] On a trip to the site in 2016, my mother and I left braids of sweetgrass, and saw other Native families using sage and cedar for prayer and protection within the interior of the structure. Others were affixing tobacco ties to *Spirit Warriors*.

26, 1876— Cutschall's riders rush boldly onto the battlefield just as they did then. Installed on the actual land that gave rise to the cultures depicted in the sculpture, the work is an embodiment of the sophistication of Native cultures and the logic of warfare on the Plains from the vantage that had been silenced there for over a century. *Spirit Warriors* signifies the individuality of the riders, their unique identities, their bravery, and their fear. It is a spiritual reminder of Native humanity. And finally, the transparent structure of the sculpture always redirects attention back onto the land—the heart of the reasoning for the Greasy Grass battle, and the heart of Native cultures and identity. The land becomes a formal characteristic indexical of the history and logic of the warfare, as well as the culture of Indigenous peoples that are autochthonous to it. The land undulates beyond and through the empty bodies of the horses and riders, drawing viewers' attention (consciously or not) eternally into the place that created us as Native peoples.

Focus on the land is even more obvious in the 1988 work by Métis-Cree artist Edward Poitras, *Offensive/Defensive* (Fig. 5). The work is most frequently displayed in two black and white photographs, but the work was also a gallery installation, and an *in situ* earthwork—a transposition of land itself. *Offensive/Defensive* was created as a part of Poitras' solo exhibition, *Indian Territory* at the (now defunct) Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, one of the first instances when the gallery showed the work of Indigenous Saskatchewan artists.[105] Inside the gallery, Poitras stacked pyramids of lead rectangles, cast with the words "OFFENSIVE" and "DEFENSIVE" next to one another (Fig. 6).

The photographs show patches of sod—in one a dark rectangle stretches away from the photographer toward the upper left of the picture plane. The dark patch is

[105] Helen "Bubs" Coleman, *Dreaming A Gallery: Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery in History and Memory* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 2015): 116.

surrounded by masses of taller grasses that look matted and wild, and appear relatively light in tone. In the companion photograph, a narrow stretch of sod streaks across the plane from the lower left to the upper right quadrant. The rectangle is surrounded by shortly mowed grass in a darker tone. These images record Poitras' performance of *Offensive/Defensive*, in which a part of the land itself was transposed and transplanted. In the first, the dark rectangular patch of sod was taken from the lawn of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and replanted in the prairie at the Gordon Indian Reserve, where Poitras is from.[106] The other shows the inversion of the transposition, in which prairie grass was transplanted into the place of the manicured lawn at Mendel. The images are what remain visible of the installation and performance of *Offensive/ Defensive*.

In the work, Poitras focused attention directly and unavoidably to the land, positioning the earth itself as the archive and receptacle of memory. And while the images index Poitras' actions for *Offensive/Defensive*, they don't display the archive he contributed to under the sod in the images. Poitras buried cast lead sculptures like those installed in the gallery—the words "Offensive," and "Defensive"—in the ground beneath his transplanted sod. The words planted in two sites (the Gordon Indian Reserve and the lawn of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon) conjure the complexity of identity and history that are both rooted in place. Moreover, the work is a memorial for the Battle of Batoche, which was fundamentally a battle in defensive of Indigenous claim to land against a settler state offensive.

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[106] The George Gordon Indian Reserve 86 is located about 150 miles southeast of Saskatoon. Néhiaw/Cree of the George Gordon First Nation primarily populate the reserve.

The land, both referenced through, and occupied by *Offensive/Defensive*, is that of the Qu'Appelle Valley in the province now known as Saskatchewan. The 1885 Battle of Batoche is a well- known moment in Canadian western history, and shares distinction with the Battle of the Little Bighorn discussed previously, as the final major Indian resistance to encroaching white settlement and state control of Western tribal land. The Batoche Battle occurred in the then-capitol of the Métis established Provisional Government of Saskatchewan.

Métis formed in the early 1700s, along trade routes owned by the Hudson's Bay Company in what was then named Rupert's Land. They are a distinctive people, formed from the social and sexual union of European trappers and fur traders and Indigenous women. Rupert's Land comprised the Hudson's Bay drainage basin in the area where the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and a large expanse of Nunavut are now demarcated. The Hudson's Bay Company held Rupert's Land as a colonial outpost for 200 years (1670-1870).[107] Métis homelands cover all parts of the Rupert's Land footprint, but were originally settled *en mass* in the region now known as Ontario.

Métis resisted encroachment of European settlement, persisted in kinship traditions and cultural practices of their Indigenous relatives throughout their history, into today. In 1867, the Canadian Confederation was formed, and purchased the land that is now known as the province of Ontario (and also the Métis homeland) from Hudson's Bay

[107] Full text and images of the HBC Royal Charter are available at http://www.hbcheritage.ca/things/artifacts/the-charter-and-text.

Company, effectively destabilizing traditional Métis culture, economy, and history.[108] Anxiety about land holdings changing hands under the new government led to the Red River Resistance in 1869, led by Louis Riel. The Resistance ended with Métis groups pressing westward into the prairies, and with the 1870 establishment of the province of Manitoba. The Métis- led Provisional Government was established, and Métis moved into Saskatchewan, seeking land and a place to assert their sovereignty.

Meanwhile Treaty 4 was signed on a hill overlooking the Qu'Appelle River Valley in the fall of 1874.[109] Treaty 4 would prove delimiting and disastrous for the many Plains communities that were signatory to it.[110] Tribes were promised allotment of lands, provisions, and health care, in exchange for "ceded" lands along the bottom portion of present-day Saskatchewan. Treaty obligations were not honored, and ethnocide became

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[108] Adam Gaudry, "Métis," *The Canadian Encyclopedia,* January 7, 2009, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis.

[109] Nakóda (Assiniboine), Néhiaw (Cree), and Nakawē (Salteaux) bands signed Treaty 4 in 1874. Later, additional bands of each community agreed to adhesions of the Treaty. Nakóda (Assiniboine) bands at Fort Walsh signed the final adhesion on September 25, 1877. I am descended from one of the Assiniboine communities that was signatory to this adhesion, as well as one of the NWMP officer for whom Fort Walsh is named. Métis are not signatory to any numbered treaty.

[110]Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream is that Our Peoples will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000); This text contains a contemporary understanding of the impact of the Saskatchewan treaties on tribes in the area. On page 50, for example, Cardinal writes, "The Elders have taken the position that treaty rights, obligations, duties, and relationships cannot be determined solely by reference to the written articles of treaty. The Elders observed that those written terms do not adequately reflect the spirit and intent of the treaties, nor the outcomes off the original treaties. They further point out that some of the written terms distort or misrepresent the understandings arrived at treaty and that the so-called official documents include written terms that were not discussed with First Nations at the time that treaties were concluded." There are no agreed upon written records that accurately reflect the terms agreed to by both First Nations and the Crown under Treaty 4, but under the *Canada Evidence Act* (Section 20), the official copies of the Treaty 4 manuscript are held in the National Archives of Canada. Reliance singularly on the articles of treaty held in this repository obstructs Indigenous interpretation and intent from the signatories (both Native and white).

state policy. By 1885, allied communities of Nakóda, Néhiaw (Cree), and Nakawē (Salteaux) at Fort Qu'Appelle, Forth Walsh, and other Plains groups suffered starvation conditions, limiting their ability to assist Métis relatives in the impending violence, and utterly devastating those communities.[111]

Offensive/Defensive represents a triangulation of emplaced memory about Indigeneity in southern Saskatchewan. The Batoche battlefield is located on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River, 100 miles upstream from the parking lot and front lawn of the Mendel Art Gallery where Poitras located one portion of *Offensive/Defensive*. The gallery, located in Saskatoon was built on a plot that is also connected to the George Gordon Indian Reserve 86 where Poitras was raised, and where the second installation of *Offensive/Defensive* rests. Mendel Art Gallery is also upriver from Lebret, Saskatchewan where Treaty 4 was signed, along the ancestral riverbed of the Qu'Appelle River.[112][113]

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[111] See James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013) for more detailed information about how Canada's policy of starvation affected Prairie communities in Canada.

[112] Matthew Teitelbaum, *Edward Poitras: Indian Territory* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1989): 25; In the exhibition catalogue for *Indian Territory*, Poitras wrote, "As an adolescent I had without knowing slept at the site where Treaty Number 4 was signed. Not just once, but a number of times. It came as a big surprise when I was told of its historical significance. Its location is on top of the hill behind the cross at Lebret, Saskatchewan." Treaty 4 was the treaty that has been interpreted as a cessation of 121,168 miles of land in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba to the crown. See *Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia*, "Treaty 4," https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/treaty_4.php for more information about the treaty, its history and implications. It should be noted that a cessation of land title is *not* how First Nations communities interpreted Treaty 4. See Cardinal and Hildebrandt, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan,* p.62-67 for more detailed information about how Nakóda (Assiniboine), Néhiaw (Cree), and Nakawē (Salteaux) interpreted Treaty 4, and its implications today.

[113] The Indian Act of 1876 created eight First Nations reserves within the Qu'Appelle River valley: Piapot, Pasqua, Muscowpetung, Standing Buffalo, Cosessess, Kahkistaw, Sakimay, and Ochopowace.

The Qu'Appelle River, carved by glaciers 14,000 ago, has been obscured from its original meandering path and connections to larger rivers— including the South Saskatchewan River— by the creation of a series of dams and small lakes throughout the 20th century.[114] The sites to which Poitras directs attention in his installation and writings about *Offensive/Defensive* are locations that are integral to the Indigenous history, identity, and memory in the Canadian Prairie Provinces, and even more specifically to Métis history and memory in the region. Literature about these sites now mostly focuses on the rivers and lakes as sites for fishing and recreation, but Poitras' work links them together to direct attention to a much larger historical archive. Moreover *Offensive/Defensive* interrupts normalization of the settler violence in the region, by reminding us of it.

In the installation and performance of *Offensive/Defensive*, Poitras directs attention to specific sites in the land to show just as Cutschall did, that the land itself is an archive. Further, Poitras actively adds to the land's ability to contain caches of memory, adding archival material in the form of the cast lead text that he buried in the ground, in addition to the indexical photographs he made of the work and the gallery installation. Buried text raises questions about positionality relative to the history of the land herself- who is to be characterized as "offensive," and who is defensive? Whatever the answer, the work is a reminder that the land carries the narrative of offensive action and defensive resistance at the same time. The words, "offensive," and "defensive" can describe either side that was involved in the Battle of Batoche- the Métis who had entered the region of lower Saskatchewan, and the Canadian forces that came to quell their claim to

[114] Buffalo Pound Dam (1939), The Gardiner Dam (1959), and The Qu'Appelle River Dam (1967).

sovereignty, and more importantly, their claims to *land*. Use of these words is contingent on one's perspective, and on which memory is elevated in one's mind. Poitras asks us—and the land—to carry both at once.

The land on which Poitras was raised, lived, and worked and on which *Offensive/Defensive* was performed and installed is believed by dominant culture (and settler historical accounts) to have been ceded to the Canadian government under Treaty 4 (1874). The region forms part of the traditional homelands of Lakȟóta, Dakȟóta, and Nakóda, Néhiaw (Cree), and Nakawē (Salteaux) who were signatory communities in the 1874 treaty. Métis, who fought in the Battle of Batoche, had settled in Saskatchewan in large numbers in the years following the Red River Rebellion (1869).[115] Poitras, whose father is Métis- Néhiaw, is a descendant of those communities. His mother, a Nakawē woman from near Fort Qu'Appelle has ancestors that were allied with the Métis who were at the Battle of Batoche. For Poitras the, the work is a personal requiem for his own ancestors and for himself as he is implicated in their history. On page 4 of the catalogue, beneath the two most commonly displayed images of the *Offensive/Defensive*, Poitras wrote,

> The process of assimilation
> And genocide in nature,
> displacement and survival.

[115] Métis had been in Saskatchewan for at least a century before mass settlement in the region, however. Métis were important figures in the fur trade era of Canadian history, and as such they traversed what is now known as Saskatchewan and Alberta frequently. Furthermore, Métis are descended from European fur trappers and Indigenous women (predominantly Néhiaw and Ojibwe), and as such had established communities along the trade routes owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. HBC had 32 trade posts in southern Saskatchewan. See Yvonne Vizina, *Métis Culture Our Legacy,* accessed October 17, 2019, http://scaa.usask.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_metisculture for more information about Métis culture and history.

> The juxtaposition of urban
> and rural material. Symbolic
> of myself. The rural location
> of this project is on a reserve
> alongside the summer
> trail to Batoche. My mother's
> people in defense of my
> father's people. A lead cache
> of words for bullets.[116]

Poitras wrote that the artwork was meant as both a confrontation and as a memorial for those First Nations connected with the battle, tangled into the complexity of history as it unfolded. The confrontation was comprised of the leaden pyramids in the gallery, which confronted the Saskatoon audience, and which demanded space for Indigenous memory there. Of the textual pyramids, Poitras wrote,

> They are caches of lead (read bullets) left as offerings for the Indians and Métis people unable to resist the advance of General Middleton and the 90th Battalion travelling from Winnipeg to Batoche in 1885 to quell the Riel Rebellion.[117]

In likening the cast lead to bullets in his writing, Poitras evoked the history of violence required for the establishment of the settler state, as gallery audiences were unavoidably confronted with the reality of their own history. In other words, *Offensive/Defensive* is a mirror held up to the settler gaze, as a reminder of the violence necessary for its own existence.

Offensive/Defensive activates Indigenous memory about the complexity of belonging to place and the history of specific sites. By installing the work in three locations—inside the Mendel Gallery, in the lawn of the gallery (on the bank of the South

[116]Teitelbaum, *Edward Poitras: Indian Territory,* 4
[117] Ibid, 8

Saskatchewan River), and on the Gordon Indian Reserve—Poitras directs attention to the complex network of emplaced meaning that is characteristic of Indigeneity. His belonging to community and upbringing near the Gordon Indian Reserve and his professional work in the Saskatchewan gallery combine to create a work that invites widely-known historical incidents into conversation with the personal, even intimate realities of Poitras' own history and heritage. Many scholars have focused on the work as a symbol of Indigenous identity, existing and thriving in urban spaces, focusing on the action of the transplanted sod.[118] Photographs of the work show that the prairie sod transplanted in the Saskatoon lawn thrived, flourishing. In contrast, the city sod died in the rural Reserve setting. This has been read as symbolic of Indigenous identity—the implication being that Natives can (and do) survive anywhere, while the conditions we have been forced into are not suitable for city-dwellers and those comforted by settler institutions.

But focusing on this work as primarily being about identity omits Poitras' focus on the land itself in *Offensive/Defensive*. The work should not be read singularly as being about the complexities of identity, but rather should be viewed as Poitras' effort to contextualize himself within the memory of the land, to link himself to the place, and to honor and memorialize his ancestors that fought at the Battle of Batoche to save their land from settler violence.[119] In installing one portion of the work at his mother's reserve

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[118] See for example, Gerald McMaster, "The New Tribe: Critical Perspectives and Practices in Aboriginal Contemporary Art" (doctoral dissertation, Amsterdam School for Cultural Humanities, 1999), 156-159 (https://dare.uva.nl/search?identifier=ea5cd0ae-e86a-41df-afd7-a816eb18fb64) or Mindy N. Besaw et. al, *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now* (Bentonville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018), 126.

[119] Personally, this work has been affective to me because I also inherit the stories of the land and specific sites Poitras' work directs attention to. My Nakóda ancestors were

(Gordon Indian Reserve) Poitras creates an intimacy with his own personal history and the land from which he was formed. In bringing a different section of the work directly to the viewer's feet on the lawn of the gallery, Poitras positions his audience directly 100 miles downstream from the Batoche battlefield. This phenomenologically connects the viewer to these sites, through a direct line to the history and emplacement that the work is about. *Place* becomes an important factor in one's understanding, and the meaning of the work, as audiences are *in situ*, and in relation with the historic sites and with the installation.

This work is conceptually dense, as is common for Poitras' oeuvre. Perhaps it is its conceptual complexity and subtleties that have led some to read the work to mean something more graspable—identity politics as they pertain to emplacement. This is not at all to suggest that Indigenous identity, as it relates to relationships to place is something "basic" or easy to understand. Rather it is meant to reaffirm that the conceptual quality of the work has a multivalent meaning, that is directly implicated in emplacement and phenomenological complicity with historical facts as they eternally relate to the land. Identity, location, the existence of the gallery, the ability to visit the gallery, the work, its concepts and conceptual implications, and Poitras' own life are all hosted by the land—the specific site. Histories of violence and networks of kinship on the land shape these things culminating, for Poitras, in the experience of *Offensive/Defensive*.

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signatory to Treaty 4. One white ancestor was complicit in the violence done in the region—James Morrow Walsh (for whom Fort Walsh was named) led the Northwest Mounted Police. Walsh—who failed to administer Treaty rations to Néhiaw, Niitsitapi, Dakȟóta and Nakóda communities (leading to starvation conditions and ethnocide)—is my great- great- great- grandfather. While I urge consideration of *Offensive/Defensive* to be focused on land and to include the history of violence, I do not intend to omit the logic that land and the history of violence *form* identity, because I know this personally to be true of the work.

We are reminded through *Offensive/Defensive* that relationships are defining and that the land does not forget. In *Offensive/Defensive*, we are called to remember that land forms identity, community, and values, and that we as Indigenous people continue to hold responsibilities to the land. We are tasked with seeing memory and history as emplaced (with all of its complexity and conflicting perspective). Poitras honors the land's ability to contain history as an archive of conflict. *Offensive/Defensive* both creates an archive of, and activates space for, Indigenous memory.

In appealing directly to the land as an archive, and as an entity with histories and kinships unto itself, both *Spirit Warriors* and *Offensive/Defensive* shift discourse about the histories of both the United States and Canada toward emplaced memory. In redirecting attention thus, both works are fundamentally interruptive of settler colonialism, and those mechanisms of Indigenous erasure that would otherwise normalize settler narratives and settler claims to the land. Each work, positioned on land that was so important in battles upon which North American history hinges are stark reminders of the violence that is central to the narratives that define the west.

Borderlands

Border territories are places where contests over land and memory are obvious, and reinforced through infrastructure and violence. The boundaries of the United States were set centuries after the first European settlers arrived on the banks of the east coast. The people living along the border regions before the arrival of settlers would necessarily be subject to the contestation over "belonging" in the states that would define themselves by bifurcation of Indian lands. This is a foundational structure of the settler state, though

"belonging" in each instance is contested, and unique to each of the North American settler nations.

At the time of this writing, there are 119 legal land border crossings between the United States and Canada, within 13 states and 8 provinces.[120] The United States' border with México comprises 4 states, and in México the United States border touches 6 states.[121] The combined borders between these three major settler states, as established and upheld by the settler states comprise a vast land and water mass of 7,479 miles. International North American borders encroach the traditional homelands of hundreds of tribal communities in Canada, the United States, and México. Altogether, the existence and enforcement of the international North American borders between Canada, the United States, and México enforces an uneven power dynamic in which Indigeneity is always positioned as inferior, and in which ancestral claims to land an place are always subject to the decisions of settler governments.[122]

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[120]States with Canadian border crossings: Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, and the Canadian Provinces with United States Border Crossings: Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New and Brunswick.

[121] California, Arizona, New México, and Texas, Baja California Norte, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila de Zaragoza, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas.

[122] Native Americans and First Nations have made claims to lands as specific political activisms throughout the 20th century. See Christopher Wetzel, "Theorizing Native American Land Seizure: An Analysis of Tactical Changes in the Late Twentieth Century," *Social Movement Studies* 8, no. 1 (January 2009), 17-34. More could be added to this discussion, including land occupations at the Standing Rock protest/prayer camps against the Dakota Access Pipeline (2016-17), prayer camps at Wet'suwet'en against a liquefied natural gas pipeline (2018-19), the Wiyot reclamation of "Indian Island" near Eureka California (2019), and the ongoing annual return trips to Alcatraz Island. At the time of this writing, the United States Supreme Court has a case before it (Carpenter v. Murphy), which would assert the territorial claims of land assigned to the Creek Nation. Ultimately this decision could set precedent about tribal sovereignty and Indigenous claims to place throughout the United States.

The border with México was established over the course of several decades, beginning with the Adams-Onis Treaty in 1819, including the 1828 Treaty of Limits and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, and culminating with the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. At the time of this writing, the shape of the US/México border was finalized on December 30, 1853. The US/México border disrupts dozens of Indigenous kinship communities, and hundreds of non-human kinship systems throughout the region.[123]

The United States border with Canada was also formed over a succession of events and years, starting with the 1783 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War and removed British troops from northern forts in the Great Lakes region. The Jay Treaty of 1795 finalized the vacation of British forts and established the US' northern border, and guaranteed Indigenous Americans "free pass and repass" between the US and Canada for First Nations individuals who can prove 50% blood quantum.[124] Settler westward expansion in the first two decades of the 19th century warranted two treaties in the 1810s (The Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817 and The London Convention of 1818), which helped ease tensions left from the War of 1812, and ultimately established the boundary of the two settler sates along the 49th parallel. The 49th parallel boundary line was reaffirmed in the Oregon Treaty of 1846, and surveyed and made official in the International Boundary Survey between 1872 and 1876. By 1903, a tribunal of the United

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[123] See Rachel Rose Starks, *Native Nations and U.S. Borders: Challenges to Indigenous Culture, Citizenship, and Security* (Tucson: The Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, The University of Arizona, 2011), 32-49.

[124] See Karl S. Hele, *Lines Drawn Upon the Water: First Nations and the Great Lakes Borders and Borderlands* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008); appealing to blood quantum to determine treaty rights is a huge burden on Indigenous people, and contrary to our traditional ways of identifying ourselves. This system has been destructive to Indigenous communities in the US and Canada, as has been the similar "casta" system in México.

States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (to whom Canada still belonged as a part of the Commonwealth) arbitrated the *Alaska Boundary Dispute*, which settled questions raised from the US' purchase of Alaska territory from the Russian Empire in 1867.[125]

The US/Canada border upsets hundreds of tribal communities and thousands of kinship networks (including my own). The US/Canada border is sometimes referred to as the world's longest "undefended" border, due to the lack of military presence there, but since the United States Bureau of Customs and Border Protection was created in 2003, this claim is dubious.[126] Borderlands are hotly contested regions of violent enforcement, as Indigenous movement across homeland becomes criminalized. Audra Simpson documents some of the troubled history and repercussions of the US/Canada border in her 2014 book, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States.* Pointedly, Simpson demonstrates the ways that in Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehà:ka territory, the US/Canada border "cuts through (Ahkwesáhsne) historical and contemporary territory and is, simply, in their space and in their way." [127]

It is the intersection of violence under the assumption of peaceability at which Kanien'kehà:ka artist Alan Michelson's 2009 installation *Third Bank of the River* (Fig. 7)

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[125] Starks, *Native Nations and U.S. Borders: Challenges to Indigenous Culture, Citizenship, and Security*, 50- 85.

[126] The US Customs and Border Protection Agency (CBP) was formed in 2003 after the US Customs Service (which collected tariffs at US ports of entry since 1789) was split to form the US Department of Homeland Security and the US CBP. The CBP is not a branch of the military, but does act as a violent arm of the state as the United States' largest federal law enforcement agency. CBP violence has become increasingly heated in the second decade of the 21st century, as Indigenous activist groups demanded treaty rights associated with the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipeline projects, as well as in mass incarceration and separation of asylum-seeking families at the US/México border. CBP has a documented record of violating civil liberties throughout the United States.

[127] Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 115.

gains traction. The work, installed at the United States Port of Entry in Massena, New York is comprised of a 40-foot-long photographic installation throughout the concourse. Photographs printed on 6' tall tempered glass in the installation depict the banks of Kaniatarowanenneh (the St. Lawrence River), overlaid with designs that suggest the Two Row wampum treaty between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch. Photographic images draw on the historical panoramic photography tradition of the 19th century westward exploration. *Third Bank of the River* depicts, in a stacked and mirrored arrangement, pairs of opposing shorelines at the Three Nations Crossing/Seaway international bridge. Bottom row includes the Cornwall, Ontario mainland and the north shore of Kawehno:ke (Cornwall Island), which is part of Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Territory. Upper register panoramic photographs depict the south shore of Kawehno:ke and the Massena, New York, mainland.[128] The river forms a 100-mile section of the United States-Canada border, delineating northern New York from southern Ontario and Quebec before it empties into Lake Ontario. In this installation Michelson has reminded visitors to the border of the ancestral Indigenous claims to the region as a homeland.

Christopher Green argues that "Michelson approaches geographical sites as if they were archives to be surveyed. In effect, he uncovers strata of North American histories and landscapes through multimedia installations and site-specific projects that take on national myths and troubling colonial legacies."[129] In other words, for Michelson, *place* is and *archive* of history and culture, and his work is to give the memories visual

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[128] Alan Michelson, Artist Statement on *Third Bank of the River*, General Services Administration, 2008, https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/49_Alan_Michelson.pdf
[129] Christopher Green, "In The Studio: Alan Michelson," *Art In America*, December 1, 2018, https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazines/studio-alan-michelson/.

form, as he directs attention to specific moments in time and in place (because such memorialization is also profoundly embedded in a temporal measurement, regardless of the structure of that measure). This is contiguous with Michelson's oeuvre: places are always "reinscribed as Native territory" through the forms he creates, and his works are irascible reminders of Indian presence in this place.[130] Green goes on to say that his works are meant to visualize places and Indigenous people as hosts rather than victims, which is aligned with Indigenous ancestral knowledge and respect for places as animate, thinking, and characterized by their own agency.

The land *Third Bank of the River* is installed on is the homeland of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, specifically on the land of Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), and ancestral site of the so-called St. Lawrence Iroquoian nations.[131] The St. Regis Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehá:ka have been in the area for centuries, and settled there en mass starting in the mid 1700s.[132] Kanien'kehá:ka broadly are referred to as "keepers of the eastern door" in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, due to their traditional easternmost homeland location, and their long history of contact with European settlers in North America.[133] The reservation footprint of the St. Regis Mohawk Indian Tribe is

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[130] Ibid.
[131] See Droulers-Tsiionhiakwatha Archeological Site Interpretation Center, "The St. Lawrence Iroquoians," *Virtual Museum of Canada*, 2012, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/iroquoiens-iroquoians/introduction-eng.html for more detailed information about this culture. The St. Lawrence Iroquoians are a Paleo-Indian ancestral group of Indigenous peoples who lived in the St. Lawrence River basin as the glacial shield retreated around 12,000 years ago.
[132] Oral history accounts state that French Jesuits established a mission church over the top of Ahkwesáhsne traditional ceremonial grounds in St. Regis.
[133] Morgan Kahentonni Philips, Stéphanie Dandeneau, and Lawrence J. Kirmayer, *Community Report— Roots of Resilience: Stories of Resilience, Healing, and Transformation in Kahnawake* (Montreal: Canadian Institutes of Health Research 2012), 11; "The Kanien'kehà:ka are known as the Keepers of the Eastern Door because of the

located less than 4,000 feet from where the US Port of Entry (in which *Third Bank of the River* is installed) in the state of New York. On the other side of the border, the Ahkwesáhsne Reserve No. 15 is 4 miles from the building in the province of Quebec, and the Ahkwesáhsne Reserve No. 59 is located in part, on Kawehno:ke in the middle of Kaniatarowanenneh, its boundary standing less than 4,000 feet from Michelson's installation (Fig. 8). The island reserve is in the province of Ontario. Ahkwesáhsne territory and land holdings present a contentious and complicated geopolitical context, which has been in contention for centuries. While communities each fall under jurisdiction of distinctive, sometimes competing local municipalities, they are all Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehà:ka, and consider themselves one community.[134] Each of these Ahkwesáhsne groups have land disputes ongoing with the federal governments in the United States and Canada, because their treaties and relationships to those contested lands precede the existence of either settler state.

Both the area and the US port of entry there are referred to as the Three Nations Crossing, due to the three distinctive nations (Ahkwesáhsne, the United States of America, and Canada) convergence there. Traditionally, and according to treaties signed by the tribal communities with the United Kingdom the land is Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehà:ka (Mohawk) territory. Land in the region has been in serious contention over the last century. Since the mid-20th century, this area comprises one of the busiest

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geographical location of our traditional homelands in the east. We are also known as the first of the Confederacy to maintain continued contacts with European society and have had to withstand the most pressure of directed culture change among the Six Nations."

[134] Ian Kalman, "Framing Borders: Indigenous Difference at the Canada/US Border," (doctoral dissertation, McGill University, 2016), 56- 59

international ports of entry in North America.[135] Settler structures impose on, and make attempts to oppress Ahkwesáhsne sovereignty in the region.

Politically, the United States Port of Entry at Massena controls 38 miles of International border, including 33 miles of the Kaniatarowanenneh and the first 5 miles of land east of the Great Lakes.[136] Kawehno:ke is considered a political exclave because it is surrounded by Canada, but access to any other place in Canada by land requires travel through New York state. Travel to the island by land is only possible via the Seaway International Bridge, which was completed in 1962. The bridge is visible in *Third Bank of the River* on the extreme left of the composition (Fig. 9). The Akwesasro:non who remain in their home territory routinely protest against impositions caused by border traffic and the existence of the border-created binary. Specifically, the bridge imposed on Ahkwesáhsne land claim on the island, and community members have repeatedly protested the burden the bridge brings to their land. In 1969, Akwesasro:non demonstrated against the bridge, because Canadian authorities began imposing an entry tax on personal purchases that Kanien'kehà:ka brought to the island, in violation of Jay Treaty protections.

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[135] The Three Nations Crossing was the 26th most frequent entrance point into the United States nationally, 8th along the US/Canada border. United States Transportation Department, *The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) Border Crossing/Entry Data*, accessed November 2, 2019, https://data.transportation.gov/Research-and-Statistics/Top-Inbound-Crossings-by-State-and-Port/vhan-mn7t; Statistical measures included: Trucks, Personal Vehicles, Pedestrians, Bus Passengers, and Train Passengers. These statistics only represent the legal and recorded border crossings *into* the United States of America, but the number of crossings outside the legal framework currently in place is likely *much* higher.

[136] United States Customs and Border Protection, *Massena Station*, March 14, 2011, https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/along-us-borders/border-patrol-sectors/swanton-sector-vermont/massena-station.

The Indigenous resistance to this imposition is immortalized in the short documentary film, *You Are On Indian Land*. (Fig. 10) The 36-minute-long film was created entirely by a First Nations crew, the Indian Film Crew of the National Film Board of Canada. Protests on the road that blocked entry onto Kawehno:ke via the Seaway International Bridge (the only road onto the island from the US) and community meetings of the Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehà:ka tribal governments. *You Are On Indian Land* is an influential moment in Indigenous filmmaking history, as it was produced entirely by a First Nations crew, and it was screened across the continent. Prominently, the film was shown at the 1970 occupation of Alcatraz Island, linking the issues of land occupation and treaty obligations in the northeast with those activisms AIM was undertaking on the west coast.

Forty years later, in 2009—only a few weeks after *Third Bank of the River* was installed—Kawehno:ke was the site of Indigenous resistance to settler imposition. In that year, Canada Border Services Agency was rolling out plans made legal in 2006 to arm all border agents.[137] Arming guards would be a direct violation of Ahkwesáhsne sovereignty, and would increase enmity between Canada and the Indigenous community.[138] The First Nations community successfully protested, resulting in the closure of the bridge for entrance (people could still leave the island, but nobody was allowed to enter) and forced

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[137] *Government of Canada News Release*, "Prime Minister Harper Announces Initiatives to Improve Canada's Border Security," August 31, 2006, https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2006/08/prime-minister-harper-announces-initiatives-improve-canada-border-security.html.

[138] See Kalman, "Framing Borders: Indigenous Difference at the Canada/US Border," Chapter 4, and especially p. 146- 153 for in depth analysis of the 2009 conflict, its precedents and its affects on the character of region.

the immediate closure of the border check station on the island.[139] The station was ultimately abandoned, because border agents ironically claimed they were afraid for their lives. The station stands empty on the island today (Fig. 11).

Given this contentious history, Michelson's use of imagery meant to evoke the Two Row Wampum Treaty can be read as either critique or a call to remembrance. Gusweñta (as the Two Row Wampum Treaty is known in Onondaga) is the original treaty made between Indigenous peoples and European colonists. Created in 1613, the treaty consists of a belt made from carved purple and white clamshells called wampum. Two rows of vibrant purple run parallel across a white background of the belt, with fringe streaming from either horizontal edge (Fig. 12). Gusweñta embodies political theories of brotherhood and peaceful co-operation that had allowed the formations and persistence of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in the region for centuries.[140] Jolene Rickard views the Two Row Wampum as "a moment in Iroquois history when there was a synthesis between the political, spiritual, and aesthetic."[141] Formally, the treaty belt conveys the idea of peaceable co- habitation and noninterference of *equals*, as the objective for the political, spiritual, and material relationships between the Haudenosaunee and Dutch colonists who were entering into their territory in the 17th century

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[139] *CBC News*, "Border Authorities Shut Down Akwesasne Crossing," June 1, 2009 https://web.archive.org/web/20090620091121/http://www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2009/06/01/akwesasne-guards-border-guns001.html.

[140] See James W. Ransom and Kreg T. Ettenger, "'Polishing the Kaswentha': a Haudenosaunee View of Environmental Cooperation," *Environmental Science & Policy* Vol. 4 (2001), 219-228.

[141] Jolene Rickard, "Indigenous and Iroquoian Art As Knowledge: In The Shadow of the Eagle," (doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, 1996), 8.

It is especially pertinent that Gusweñta is formally alluded to in *Third Bank of the River*, since it alludes to the two rivers flowing alongside one another.[142] The artwork stands as a reminder and an index of the material reality of the lands on which it is installed, perpetually redirecting attention back to the land that exists beyond the doors of the building it is in. Kaniatarowanenneh has a long and storied history in relation to both the settlers that were arriving in North America, and a longer, and culturally important relationship with the Indigenous communities whose cultures are formed around the waterway.

Though Gusweñta may have been intended, and has been read, as a document admonishing peace, the reality of Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehà:ka (Mohawk) territorial history has proven that this, like all other treaties agreed to in North America between settlers and Indigenous peoples, was not honored. Haudenosaunee still view the agreement and relationship represented in Gusweñta as an active model for political discourse, or as Michelson says, "The belt continues to function as a meaningful symbol to the Akwesasne Mohawk, whose land predates and straddles the complex

[142] Complicating the use of the Gusweñta graphic imagery in contemporary artwork about the settler state borderlands (without consulting the Haudenosaunee Confederacy), Rickard goes on, "The structure of "indigenous" knowledge is as cloaked as the rhetoric of wisdom. Indigenous people claim that same significant space today but with less clarity than our ancestors who dramatically illustrated their conceptual and physical space in the Two Row Wampum. This is in no way meant as a degradation to those that continue to fight for our physical borders, the assertion of our sovereign status within the geo/political map and the right to self determination or to the representation of our way in artistic practice: but to all of us for falling into the trap of colonizing categories. The "structure" Indigenous people must select begins as an awareness of "original teachings" in combination with the practice, or "art" making to continue to construct the platform of Indigenous survival. This is a conscious choice, as is every decision in being "Indian." Since the emphasis has shifted to the "political" its time to reconstruct the inspiration or visionary moment, the formal analysis of form, what is learned by making the object, and its purpose in Western and Indigenous cultures. It's time to unplug the "West's" holograms of Indians in both, art and politics (sic)." Ibid, p. 144-145.

border."[143] Despite the living honor that Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehá:ka continue to give to Gusweñta teachings, history has proven this to be a questionable characterization of settlers, whose perspective and objectives have been institutionalized and are embodied (in part) in the international border.

Scholars have pointed to this artwork as both a promoter of peace, and as a reminder of violence and the material and political impositions of the settler state. Kate Morris has read the work as an "evocation of the river as a metaphor for contact and coexistence," with an emphasis that "keeps the border visible but also open, unfixed, and navigable" and "reveals our shared fantasy of an intangible line that somehow holds the promise of both security at home and free passage to other realms."[144] In asserting a vision of the border that represents a "shared fantasy" of anything "intangible" ignores the very real violence embodied in the borderland and the real terror and dehumanization imposed on Indigenous peoples for centuries in that place. Further, the concept of "free passage" in this particular context is tone-deaf considering the active and ongoing hard work Ahkwesáhsne have had to uphold to ensure that the settler state does not violate their treaty obligations. This positioning minimizes the protests that have occurred to ensure that Indigenous treaty claims are respected in extremely heated and contested zones, and which have served as clarion calls to an entire continent of Indigenous peoples as they seek justice in relation to our kin, the land. The border is at once symbolic and materially very real— viewing it as *only* an icon and at the service of neoliberal ideals of

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[143] Alan Michelson, *Artist Statement*, accessed November 6, 2019, https://www.alanmichelson.com/third-bank-of-the-river/rso2rximdn6dna0eiabhsn620egyax.

[144] Kate Morris, "Running the Medicine Line: Images of the Border in Contemporary Native American Art," *American Indian Quarterly* 35, No. 4 (Fall, 2011): 555 and 574.

"openness" is as destructive to Indigenous claims to place as the actual violence that has delimited our free passage on our homelands.

By contrast, Mark Watson directs attention to the compositional use of the bridge at the left end of the installation to remind viewers that the land is the most contested place in North America. For Watson, the bridge is "a metonym of Akwesasne-settler (sic) conflict," and a symbol of the "omnipresent conflict" as a permanent condition for Ahkwesáhsne through assertions of sovereignty.[145] More convincingly than Morris, Watson looks to the composition of *Third Bank of the River* arguing,

> If the primary spatial rhetoric of the border station is characterized by a neoliberal repression of borders and locality in favor of fluidity and amnesia, Michelson's piece inscribes onto the wall the international conflict embodied in the bridge and the ambivalence generated by the larger border context. It suggests that what is most crucial for reimagining and refashioning the border is the broader ideal of cross-border justice embodied in the Two Row wampum and allied political projects.[146]

Watson's interpretation reflects more accurately the material conditions of both the border zone *and* is responsive to the artwork itself. Compositionally, the Seaway Bridge appears at the far-left corner of the photographic panorama. In interrupts, however quietly, the peaceable graphic of Gusweñta, alluding perhaps to the realities that the bridge has brought to the community at Kawehno:ke and in the borderlands broadly.

Perhaps more than any of the other works in this dissertation, *Third Bank of the River* challenges accepted memory in place as it asks viewers to *remember* the obligations that exist as a condition of their presence there. Further, the work enacts

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[145] Watson, "Unsettled Borders and Memories: A "Local" Indigenous Perspective on Contemporary Globalization," 8.
[146] Ibid, 9.

memory in place: memory of Indigenous presence in the land, of those kinships that have defined the region and the relationships, however complex they may be. It asks questions about whose memory deserves to exist and whose stories have the right to be told in places as stringently monitored as a border patrol station. The inclusion of Gusweñta suggests a traditional practice of non-interference between the distinctive Native and Euro-American communities whose histories and cultures converge on the site on which the work is installed, but also functions as a call to act toward honoring of that treaty obligation on the part of the settler state.

Ultimately, *Third Bank of the River* functions as an interruption in the normalization of the settler structure embodied in the international border, as a site of intense material, political, and spiritual conflict and also as a site of multitude overlapping histories. As a Kanien'kehà:ka person himself (Michelson is a citizen of the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation), Michelson was uniquely situated to make a claim to his ancestral homeland in the border zone and call audiences to remembrance there. Through its complications of the region, its subtle calls for peace, and as a reminder of the violence and obligations in the land, *Third Bank of the River* embodies the statement from an Ahkwesáhsne community member, "There really is no border. Ahkwesáhsne is neither the United States or Canada, but Ahkwesáhsne." [147]

By contrast, the border that divides the United States and México is an increasingly material reality, whose existence perpetuates Indigenous dispossession and is destructive to those kinship systems that have defined communities there.

[147]Kalman, "Framing Borders: Indigenous Difference at the Canada/US Border," 60.

Nevertheless, artists and activists have persisted in humanizing the binary created by the artificial border embodied in violently enforced borderland/frontera zone.

Postcommodity is an interdisciplinary arts collective comprised of Raven Chacon (Diné), Crostóbal Martínez, (Chicano), Kade Twist (*Ani-Yu^{n}wiya*/ ᎠᏂᏴᎾᏍᎩ/ Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma), and Nathan Young (Pawnee/Delaware/Kiowa).[148] As a collective group, Postcommodity engages with topics of settler colonialism and violence, issues of surveillance, militarization, and has been responsible for installations that indigenize spaces both within gallery settings and in historically important non-arts sites. The group is responsive to (and rejects) the history of the commodification of Indian identity throughout the "Modern" period of the early 20th century. Their collaborative nature undermines Modernist individualism, and Postcommodity challenges the political and social uses of space to develop a critical, Indigenous, spiritual, and non-capitalist reflection on the history of specific lands.[149] In 2015, their best known work, *Repellent Fence* (Fig. 13) was installed along a two-mile stretch near Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Sonora. The work utilizes Indigenous- rooted aesthetics and social memory to form a critical challenge to the institutions of settler colonial states, while interrupting the normalization of the settler-state border.

Moreover, *Repellent Fence* demands recognition of Indigenous kinships with land, people, and other forms of life. Lucy Lippard has demonstrated various ways that

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[148] At the time of this writing, Nathan Young is no longer a part of Postcommodity. Other former members of Postcommodity include Steven Yazzie (2007-2010), Adam Ingram-Goble (Game Remains), Andrew McCord (If History Moves at the Speed of Its Weapons, Then the Shape of the Arrow is Changing, and Promoting a More Just, Verdant and Harmonious Resolution), Annabel Wong (Dead River) and Existence AD (Dead River).
[149] Michael DiRisio, "Collective Projections and the Politics of Place," *ETC Media*, No. 106, (2015): 82.

Indigenous existence/reality/epistemology/cosmology is overshadowed and over sentimentalized by the Indigenous past, or overt attempts at erasure.[150] Ongoing habitation and kinship systems are impaired and distressed under imposed colonialism, with its erection of strictly patrolled borders and definitions of nationhood. In North America, this is especially egregious along the U.S. and Mexican border[151]. Those communities, whose traditional relationships to land are bifurcated by the border have difficulty asserting kin- centric and place-centered cultural features. Understanding these troubling themes, Postcommodity's work has continually pressed audiences to see settler institutions (in this case, embodied in the international border) as violent impositions.

Repellent Fence is a large-scale installation that might be characterized simultaneously as an earthwork, happening, and a temporary monument to indigeneity. Postcommodity describes the work as a, "2 mile long ephemeral land-art installation… comprised of 26 tethered balloons that are each 10 feet in diameter, and float 50 feet above the desert landscape. The balloons that comprise *Repellent Fence* are enlarged replicas of an ineffective bird repellent product." [152] The line of balloons splinters across the U.S./ México border in a straight line, in what Postcommodity calls a "suture that

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[150] Lucy Lippard, "Postmodern Ambush," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Vol. 39 (Summer, 2015): 17.

[151] And to a slightly lesser extent along the U.S./Canadian border. As an Assiniboine person, I have experienced this bifurcation of traditional kinship networks myself. The histories US Assiniboine (Nakóda) bands differ from the Canadian Nakóda/Stoney Sioux bands in important ways, as do our status as Indian peoples per the definitions of the various colonial governments, which have sought to define us. I'm certain that these divisions also impact other borderland peoples. This paradigm is much more dramatic in México, where the federal government has made only minimal efforts at recognizing and protecting Indigenous communities. Furthermore, as a person who grew up in Southern California and who spent a great deal of time in Baja California Norte, México, I've learned that indigeneity in México is celebrated and claimed very differently, and with different mechanisms than it is in the United States or Canada.

[152] Postcommodity Website, http://postcommodity.com/Repellent_Fence_English.html

stitches the peoples of the Americas together." The intention behind this was to "symbolically demonstra(te) the interconnectedness of the western Hemisphere by recognizing the land, Indigenous peoples, history, relationships, movement and communication."[153] In this regard, Postcommodity reclaim the lands of North America for Indigeneity, while simultaneously denaturalizing the violent institution of the imposed border.

The semi-arid steppe land climate where Douglas and Agua Prieta are located is within the Colorado River drainage basin. The twin border towns converge in a valley nestled in the northeastern tip of the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range, which forms México's west coast. Mountain ranges in the surrounding area include the Chiricahua Range to the northeast, the Dragoon Mountains to the north, and Mule Mountains to the west. Río Agua Prieta forms the western border of the Mexican City, but the riverbed is almost entirely dried up in the United States. Nevertheless, Douglas occupies a footprint that includes the Río's drainage area.

The region is the ancestral homeland of O'Odham, Jova, and Eudeve peoples. This mountain valley is part of a region known as "Ópatería," in reference to the Ópata kinship group that included the Ópata, Jova, Teguima, and Eudeve. O'Odham are a neighboring kinship group, ranging to the northwest of the valley. Presently, descendants of these communities are members of the Tohono O'Odham nation, and revival Ópata groups are reclaiming ancestral lifestyles throughout northern Sonora. These communities have ancestral kinship ties throughout the states of Sonora and Arizona, including with neighboring Indigenous communities and other life forms.

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[153] Ibid.

The international border between the United States of America and México is a massive interruption to those kinship systems, and has led to the loss of culture, language, and traditions within these communities. According to the United States Department of Transportation, the United States/México border is the most traversed international border in the world. The legal port of entry at Douglas was host to 3,999,223 individual border crossing individuals in 2018, making it the third most crossed port in Arizona, and the 15th most frequently crossed international border in North America.[154] The high frequency of crossings in a relatively small town (Douglas has a population around 16,000) marks the intense pressure on US ports of entry, and suggests that the system is poorly equipped to intake the high demand for entry into the United States.

During the three days that *Repellent Fence* was active, programming and events in Agua Prieta and Douglas served to create a transborder dialogue between the communities, especially the Indigenous communities there (Fig. 14). Postcommodity had been preparing for the installation of the artwork for several years leading up to its ephemeral existence. During that time, the group formed relationships with community collaborators, civic administrators, and consulates.[155] The artists' objectives included the

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[154] United States Transportation Department, *The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) Border Crossing/Entry Data*, https://data.transportation.gov/Research-and-Statistics/Top-Inbound-Crossings-by-State-and-Port/vhan-mn7t ; Statistical measures included: Trucks, Personal Vehicles, Pedestrians, Bus Passengers, and Train Passengers. These statistics only represent the legal and recorded border crossings *into* the United States of America, but the number of crossings outside the legal framework currently in place is likely *much* higher.

[155] Partners include the city administrations of Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Sonora, the Mexican Consulate in Douglas, La Casa de la Cultura in Agua Prieta, and Fronteras de Cristo. We would personally like to thank the following community leaders for supporting bi-national dialogues, diplomacy, and cooperation: Cónsul de México en Douglas, Jorge Ernesto Espejel Montes; Mayor of Douglas, Danny Ortega Jr.; Mayor of Agua Prieta, Héctor Rubalcava; the city administrations of Douglas and Agua Prieta with

formation of relationships that would "form local and external capacities for the recovery of transborder knowledges that have been arrested through binary discourses." These relationships were intended to support Indigenous community needs and to foster a sense of belonging throughout the temporary land reclamation process. *Repellent Fence* refuses the binary created by the border as it disrupts the normalization that such structures are inherent to the peace of North American settler nations. This disruption is achieved through the use of humor, and through the process of creating community that is *not* bifurcated by settler state structures. Importantly, this community actively includes individuals from ostracized groups (Indigenous people, ex- convicts, children, women) who have been ignored or criminalized by the state. Goals were measured through progress in conversations about border community interests, desires, concerns, and goals for creating a more safe, healthy, and culturally appropriate borderlands environment.[156]

Repellent Fence engages the optics of sovereignty, rupturing narratives of settler colonialism. Again here, artists resist the normalization of settler colonial paradigms through Indigenous reclamation of history and connectivity, and Deloria's assertion about Indigenous spiritual ties to land is enacted again. The artwork confronts perceptions about the permanence and perceived fact of institutional authority, and international boundaries while lifting the experience and internal logic of indigeneity. Much like Cutschall, Postcommodity created physical space for transformation, and claimed a restorative process for those kinships with land and community in the area.

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a special thanks to Douglas City planner, Carlos De La Torre, and Agua Prieta City Adimistrators, Laura Ríos and Lucero Salazar; Assistente del Cónsul Titular Consulado de México en Douglas, Cristóbal Lohr Castelo; Agua Prieta Architect ,Roberto Osuna Palacios; Mark Adams from Frontera de Cristo; and Douglas / Agua Prieta artists and arts advocates Jenea Sanchez, Roberto Uribe, Martína Rendón, and Enrique Barraza.

[156] Postcommodity Website, http://postcommodity.com/Repellent_Fence_English.html.

Support for Indigenous borderland communities is especially important in the present American political context. The international US/México border uniquely impacts the Tohono O'odham Nation, which lives adjacent to the site of *Repellent Fence*, and have unique historical connections to the land in the Sonoran Desert valley. Transborder kinship and spiritual networks have been especially strained in the early 2000s, as federal legislation has increased border control measures, citing issues of drug trade and illegal migrations across this border. Since 2001, several bills have been proposed to grant citizenship to those members of the Tohono O'odham nation who live in México, trapped away from family and tribal centers. None have passed.[157] Further, the proposed installation of an imposing "border wall" under the Trump administration has been remarkably aggressive, and comparably devastating to the Indigenous community in the area. The Tohono O'odham's reservation is the nearest community to Douglas- a distance of about 125 miles. Tohono O'odham reservation's southern border stretches 75 miles of the US/México border, and hosts a wide range of wildlife that has kinship connections with the Indigenous community. In October 2019, construction on the border fence devastated saguaro cacti and other entities that are protected within the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, including 23 endangered and at-risk species.[158] This artificial barrier to free access to the traditional homelands of the O'odham peoples has

[157] Raul M. Grijalva, *United States Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims.* H.R.731. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2003).
[158] John Burnett, "Border Wall Construction in Arizona Bulldozes Cactus Columns," *National Public Radio- Morning Edition*, October 11, 2019 https://www.npr.org/2019/10/11/769193107/border-wall-construction-in-arizona-bulldozes-cactus-columns.

restricted access to foods, medicines, and ceremonial sites.[159] These problems are some of the primary concerns that *Repellent Fence* sought to address.

Aesthetically, the forms of *Repellent Fence* draw from ancient traditional symbols, and in so doing enact an additional trans-indigeneity. Each helium-filled balloon floating above the desert floor is painted with concentric circles, called a "scare-eye" (Fig. 15). Concentric circles are abundant and powerful metaphysical symbols found in global Indigenous communities, ranging from medicine wheels and sipapu symbols, Sun Dance, pow-wow, and gamímeya tíbi (camp circle), and I'itoi in North America to the depictions of campsites, watering holes and emblems of religious ritual in Aboriginal Australian imagery, among others. Concentric circles, like those used by Postcommodity are emblems of power and medicine for Indigenous communities. [160] The effectiveness of this symbol of power in *Repellent Fence* is heightened by the use of medicine colors yellow, red, blue and black that symbolize the four directions for many Indigenous communities in the Americas.[161] Use of this symbol across Indian Country has a transitive quality, and presents a symbol of transformation and international unification across border and tribal lines.

In *Repellent Fence*, strict structures of national presence are critically questioned and Indigenous claims to place come into focus. Beyond claiming place as characteristic to Indigeneity, *Repellent Fence* also activates the role of memory. As with *Spirit*

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[159] Tohono O'odham Nation, *History and Culture* accessed November 26, 2016, http://www.tonation-nsn.gov/history_culture.aspx.

[160] Sipapu are Hopi small hole or indentation in the floor of a kiva or pithouse; symbolizes the portal sipapu through which ancient ancestors emerged into this world. I'itoi is the Creator god in O'odham cosmology, depicted as a figure within a circular maze.

[161] Phoebe Farris, "VISUAL PROTEST! AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE." *Cultural Survival Quarterly* (Summer, 2011), 6.

Warriors, *Offensive/Defensive*, and *Third Bank of the River*, *Repellent Fence* attends to land as a specific archive of cultural belonging and heritage. Borderlands have always been zones rife with cultural friction.[162] Recognition of authority shifts from the settler-national American/ Mexican state memory as embodied in the international border, toward Indigenous social and relational memory of long, pre-national habitations in this place. In creating an aesthetic interruption in the accepted authority symbolized by the international border, Postcommodity took aim at status of place-embodied memory in the region, as the work remembers collective communal memories of long habitation and cultural connection to place.

Each of the artworks I examined in this chapter materially and psychically interrupt accepted narratives and memory structures that exist under settle colonialism in the places in which they are installed. The effect of these acts of interruption is to force observation of Indigeneity and Indigenous connections and kinships with place. Further, these active artworks remind audiences that histories and meaning overlap in place, specifically at sites like borders and battlefields, because such sites play such an active role in defining the character of settler nations. These are also sites of intense spiritual energy and are sites of ongoing violence and obstruction of Indigenous sovereignty. Each of the works in this chapter functions to create space for insurgent memorialization, as they attend to those spiritual remainders and social histories that are embedded in the land. These works honor the histories of dispossession and violence. Simultaneously, each work creates space in which understandings of history and emplacement are whole,

[162] For more on borderlands as places of memory struggle and contests for authority, see Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 33-40.

re-shaping the future. Each is a reminder about who we are—both as citizens of settler nations and as Indigenous peoples.

Ultimately, the land itself is vital to the efficacy of *Repellent Fence*, just as it is vital to *Spirit Warriors*, *Offensive/Defensive*, and *Third Bank of the River*. In each, land is understood and underwritten as archive of cultural memory, and the epicenter of indigeneity. As Deloria wrote, the relationships to those life forms and physical forms in the regions in which Indigenous communities are found form the matrix of Indigenous cultural realities.[163] In *Repellent Fence*, Postcommodity positions the land as the primary authority and holder of memory, and creates space in which Indigenous memory and kinship are honored. In *Third Bank of the River*, Michelson interrupts the accepted settler "truth" of the border as he reminds visitors to the port of entry that they are standing on land that is hotly disputed between Indigenous and settler memory. Poitras also reminds us of the disputes and violence over land, as he connects the land of his own heritage to one of the most prominent land battles in Canadian history in *Offensive/Defensive*. By transplanting land, he enacts a physical removal and dislocation, emblematic of Indigenous dispossession, while perpetually raising questions about who has the ability to claim "innocence" in place. *Spirit Warriors* functions, similarly, enduringly reminding audiences of the violence and also of the honor implicit to the site on which the work is installed. In each of these works, Indigenous memory is given space. Indigenous kinships with land, plants, animals, and other non-human entities is raised to the status of artistic consideration. Importantly, each work makes an insurgent reclamation of the land on which they exist(ed), to remind viewers that the land is Indigenous, as it always has been.

[163] Deloria, *God Is Red*, 67.

Figures



Figure 1
Spirit Warriors: Indian Monument at Little Bighorn National Monument
Colleen Cutschall (Oglala Lakȟóta)
2003



Figure 2
Indian Monument at Little Bighorn National Monument
John Collins and Alison Towers
1997



Figure 3
Weeping Wall, Indian Monument at Little Bighorn National Monument
John Collins and Alison Towers
Panels authored by Tsėhéstáno, Hinono'eino, Thíthuŋwaŋ Lakȟóta, Apsaalooké and Sahanish communities
1997

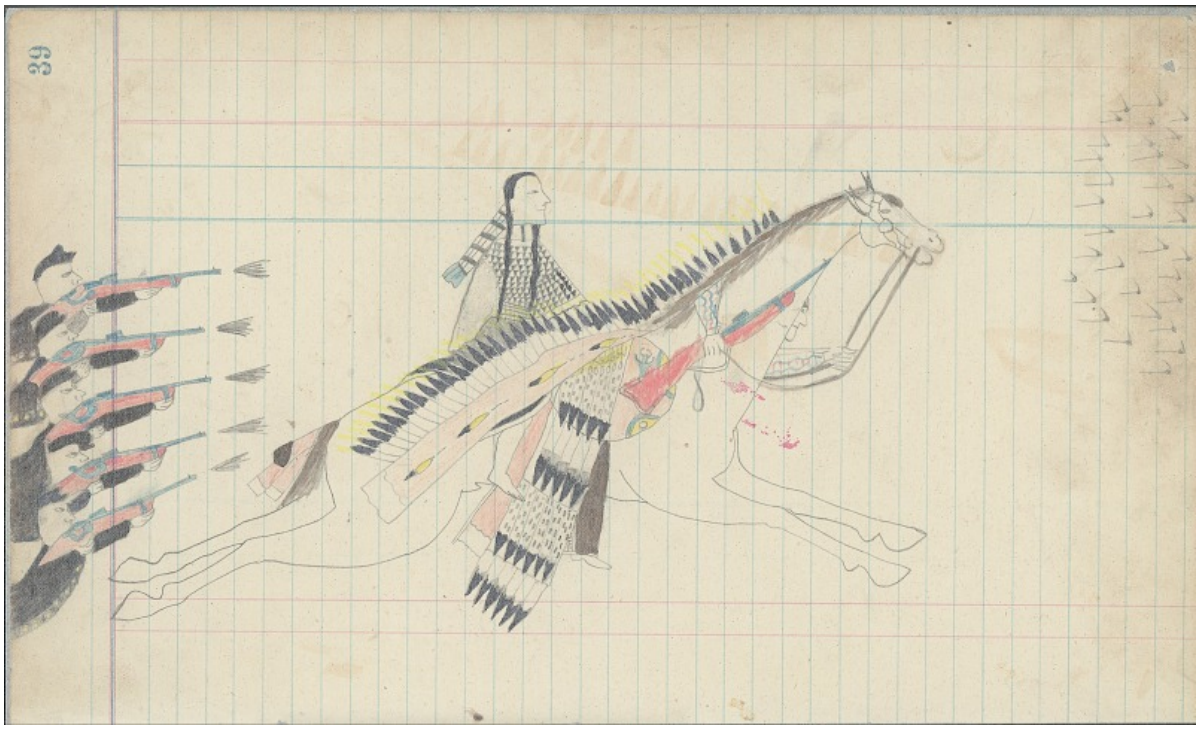


Figure 4
Buffalo Calf Road Woman
Yellow Nose (Tsėhéstáno)
Ca. 1889

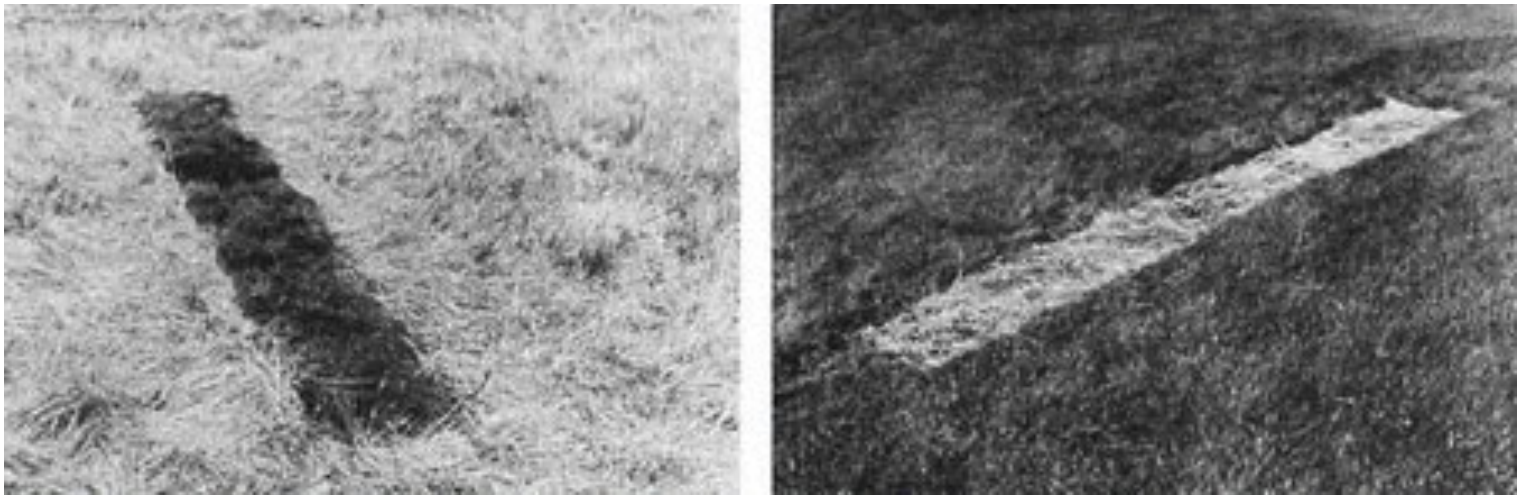


Figure 5
Offensive/Defensive
Edward Poitras (Métis Néhiaw)
Gordon First Nation and Mendell Art Gallery
Silver Print, 1988



Figure 6
Offensive/Defensive (detail)
Edward Poitras (Métis Néhiaw)
Gordon First Nation and Mendell Art Gallery
Silver Print, 1988

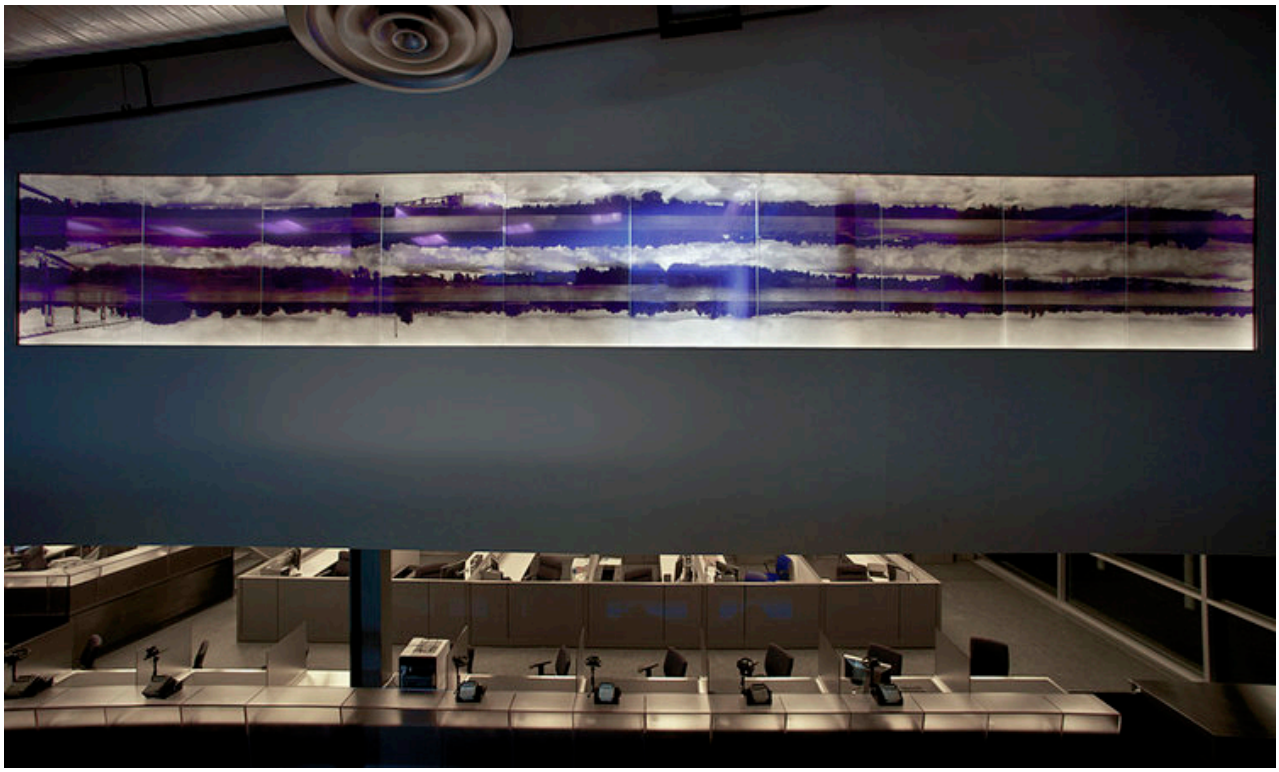


Figure 7
Third Bank of the River (installed)
Alan Michelson (Six Nations of the Grand River, Kanien'kehá:ka)
United States Port of Entry, Massena New York
2009



Figure 8
Ahkwesáhsne Homelands

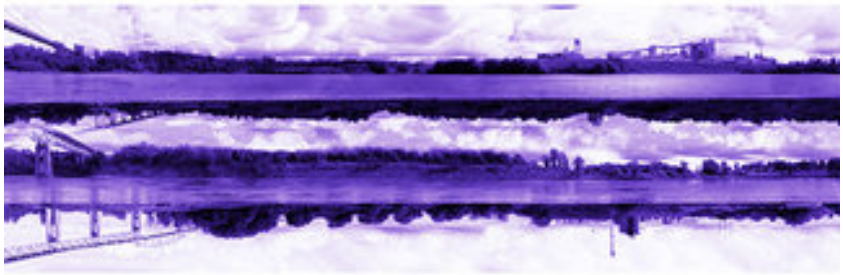


Figure 9
Third Bank of the River (design detail)
Alan Michelson (Six Nations of the Grand River, Kanien'kehá:ka)
United States Port of Entry, Massena New York
2009



Figure 10
You Are on Indian Land Film Still
Directed by Mike Mitchell (Ahkwesáhsne Kanien'kehá:ka)
National Film Board of Canada
1969



Figure 11
Cornwall Port of Entry
2019



Figure 12
Gusweñta
Two Row Wampum
Onondaga
1613



Figure 13
Repellent Fence
Postcommodity
Agua Prieta and Douglas
2015

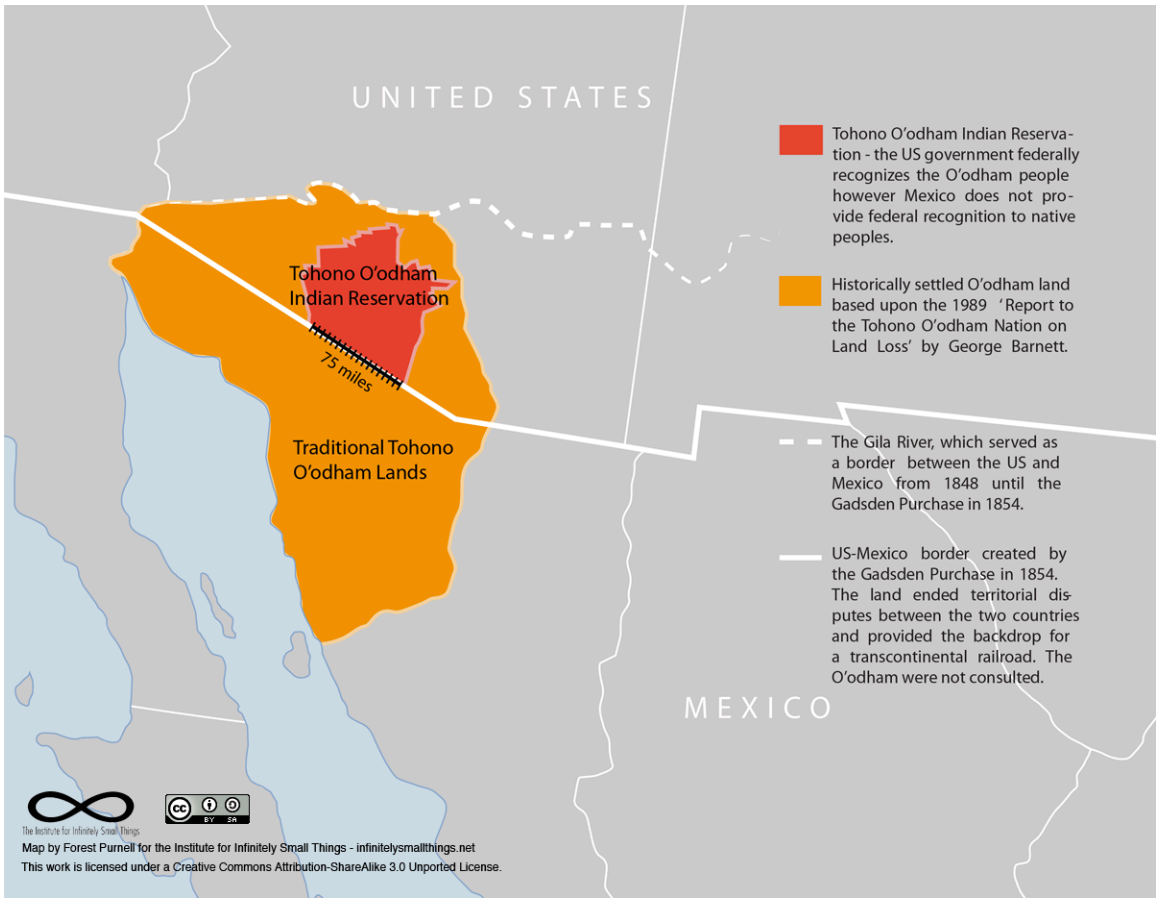


Figure 14
O'Odham Homelands



Figure 15
Repellent Fence (detail)
Postcommodity
Agua Prieta and Douglas
2015

Nakón I’abi Glossary for Chapter II

Makoče	Land/Territory
Nakón wíya	Assiniboine woman
Mitúgaš	Grandpa
Giksúya	To Remember Something
Apsaalooké	Crow (tribe)
Tsėhéstáno also spelled Tsitsistas	Cheyenne (tribe)
Hinono’eino	Arapaho (tribe)
Thíthuŋwaŋ Lakȟóta	Lakota (tribe)
Dakȟóta	Dakota (tribe)
Nakòda	Assiniboine (tribe)
Sahanish	Arikara (tribe)
gamímeya tíbi	Camp circle
Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake	Sitting Bull, Húŋkpapȟa Lakota Spiritual Leader
Tȟašína Máni	Moving Robe Woman, Húŋkpapȟa Lakȟóta warrior, claimed to have given Custer’s final fatal injury
Tašina Sápewín/	Black Shawl, Oglala Lakȟóta, wife of Tȟašúŋke Witkó/ Crazy Horse, who is known to have supplied warriors with refreshed supplies, water, horses, and weapons during the battle
Niitsitapi	Blackfoot (tribe)
Kaniatarowanenneh	The St. Lawrence River
Akwesasne Kanien'kehá:ka	Mohawk of the Land Where the Partridge Drums (tribe)

Akwesasro:non	Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk people (multiple)
Kawehno:ke	Cornwall Island, Ontario in the St. Lawrence River
sipapu	Hopi small hole or indentation in the floor of a kiva or pithouse; symbolizes the portal sipapu through which ancient ancestors emerged into this world.
I’itoi	Creator god in O’odham cosmology, depicted as a figure within a circular maze

III. Makoče Wa'owabi

In a thematic shift, this chapter moves from the *in situ* works to the representational dimension. The title of this chapter, Makoče Wa'ówabi, means a representation or picture of land in the Assiniboine language. Representation holds vital significance and function in Indigenous culture, ontology, and epistemology. Moreover, both *in situ* and representational artworks mark theoretical categories that are distinctly formative to Indigenous relationships with the land- both in real physical contact and in representational connections to place. This chapter draws on the sites of acute tension that I analyzed in the last chapter, to deeply explore the land as profoundly and fundamentally storied kin for Indigenous people. I will extend this concept in my next chapter, where the notion of land as kin turns toward ideas about land as *home*.

In this chapter, I analyze some ways land has been used to metaphorically communicate ideas about conquest and colonization, which has sometimes taken on gendered representations. The artworks I analyze here reflect distillations of the kinship relationships and historical facts of the places that each work signifies. The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first, I consider cartographic representations of land. In the second section, I turn my attention more closely to representations of the land as a metaphor for the body. The two sections are connected through an understanding that the land has been depicted and perceived to be female- gendered.

I first consider cartographic signification by comparing Indigenous cartographic milieu with the broad history of cartographic science of settler "explorers" and settler culture broadly. Here, I contrast the relational, storied kinship with land expressed in Indigenous maps to the values expressed in explorer and settler cartography, which renders the land as mute property. Later, I demonstrate the ways that non-Indigenous representations of land contain gendered information about settler views of land, which by upholding hetero-patriarchal settler systems renders violence to the land as a gendered violence. I demonstrate that such viewing of the land (as feminine) is inherent, embedded, and necessary to the objectives of the settler state in North America, and that such viewing contributes to the ongoing subjugation and violence to the land and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. This paradigm is mirrored and reaches its full potential in the real-world crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and racially motivated femicides throughout Indian Country today, especially near sites of extractive industry operation.[164]

Next, I move to an analysis of some ways that Indigenous people perceive and represent the land as storied kin, through a relational and phenomenological practice of viewing, experiencing and representing, and through representation of place beyond visual form. The shift to understanding Indigenous approaches to representing land leads to a focus on a series of maps created by Salish-Kootenai artist, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Her maps, viewed as a cartographic exercise or *process cartography*, are placed in context with ancestral cartographic forms and I argue that they comprise one example of

[164]Sarah Deer and Elizabeth Ann Kronk Warner, "Raping Indian Country," *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 38, no.1 (Fall, 2019): 31-95. Deer and Warner demonstrate the intensification of violence to the Indigenous female body as it is linked to extractive industry, especially under the Trump administration.

"Indigenous looking" at land.[165] I argue that each of her works under my consideration demonstrates the function of *story* as a container and index of history, memory, and politics of place.

In the second section of this chapter, I take forward assumptions established by a perspective of land as having female characteristics. There, I examine the work of two artists who have viewed this connection, and who raise questions about female land/body kinships by marking their own embodiment as a part of land. I start with Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta, who art historical Land Art discourse relies on in conversation about embodiment relative to land. I argue that Mendieta troubles a host of settler categorizations about identity, nationalism, and individualism, as I investigate the specific sites of two if her series. I place her S*ilueta* series (1973-1980) into discourse with the *Rupestrian Sculptures* (1980-1983). I argue that both series reflect a deep engagement with Indigenous cosmology and understanding of human kinships with land. Writing on Mendieta foregrounds the work of the next artists I discuss because many of the arguments made about her work are common in discussions about the nature of the Indigenous female body and land as metaphoric categories for one another.

Finally, I turn attention to Kainai artist Faye Heavyshield. In her 2010 installation, *Body of Land* Heavyshield makes explicit the connections between the Indigenous body and the Indigenous homeland. Constructed of hundreds of close-up photographs of the skin of her family and community, the installation ties the visual relationship of the land and the body. The work leads to a thoughtful consideration about the inherent connections of the Indigenous body to land through spiritual, biological, and cultural

[165] Denis Cosgrove, "Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century," *Imago Mundi* 57, no. 1 (2005): 51.

connections that create us as peoples. Such consideration leads to teachings that situate indigeneity inherently linked to place as its central defining element—the concept of homeland.

Throughout my dissertation, I use the methodological approach proposed by Unangax̂ scholar Dr. Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie in *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods*. In this chapter I draw on Tuck and McKenzie's tenets of Critical Place Inquiry (CPI) as they outlined them.[166] Namely, I use CPI as a framework to understand place as both influencing social practices and being performed through practices and movements of individuals and collectives. I accomplish this through framing the artworks produced by the artists under consideration within this chapter as embedded in the milieu of their respective Indigenous communities. I conceptualize land as both an interactive and dynamic relative, which is in kinship with Indigenous peoples, and which relationship changes due to time and space characteristics. Importantly, I recognize and honor the fact that disparate realities determine how a place is experienced. I also honor that each artist in this chapter *practices* their relationships with land both as part of their artistic work and as part of their cultures. The artists' experiences and work reflect their own unique paradigms and perspectives within the context of the settler state, history, and Indigenous cultural paradigms. Finally, I reject the normalization of the settler state and the racialized violence that defines it as a foundational characteristic. My analyses demonstrate ways that the artists under my consideration view these paradigms and enact rejections of the normalizations of the settler state.

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[166] Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015). See page 19 for the full list of the tenets of CPI.

Cartography

Early European explorers were aware of the sophisticated cartographic skill of Indigenous peoples with whom they came into contact. Some of these explorers and early colonists understood the utility and value of Indigenous cartographic knowledge. European colonial- era maps that expressly and indirectly cite Indigenous contributions are evidence of this awareness. Some early European explorers utilized the spatial analytical skills developed by Native people in the production of a host of early maps of the Americas. There are many examples of European explorers and colonists using Indigenous knowledge in the production of the maps exist.

One especially influential example of early colonial maps is that of Captain John Smith's 1612 map of the tidewater region of colonial Virginia and the Powhattan Confederacy territory (Fig. 1). My focus on this map is motivated by the remarkably wide dissemination of Smith's work. This map can be viewed as a model for a prevailing mode of Indigenous and settler relations since the 17th century. Smith filled a substantial role in both establishing and propagating one of the United States' founding narratives in the form of the Pocahontas allegory. Smith's fantasy about the Indigenous woman must be understood and critically examined in context of the patriarchal culture in which Smith existed and which is upheld in the structures of the United States of America. In the myth, the daughter of Wahunsenacawh (a leader of the Powhatan Confederacy), Pocahontas (whose Mattaponi Pamunkey name is Matoaka) rescued and then fell in love with Smith. She traveled with him back to England where they wed and became a symbol

for North American conquest in the European colonial imaginary.[167] For Smith and subsequent generations of settlers, the girl became an origin story that has been used to justify occupation, Indigenous oppression, and land theft. Rayna Green calls this symbolic relationship the *Pocahontas Perplex*, arguing that

> Whether or not she saved John Smith, and her actions recounted by Smith set up one kind of model for Indian- White relations that persists long after most Indians and Anglos ceased to have face-to-face relationships. Moreover, as a model for the national understanding of Indian women, her significance is undeniable.[168]

Smith's imagined narrative of the girl coincides with his personal enrichment from the map, which was widely circulated and considered the authoritative source on the region by prospective settlers, European heads of state, and other interested parties in the project of colonizing North America.[169] Taken together, the story coupled with the map, and other of Smith's projects— notably his writing from his years as the Governor of Virginia Colony and afterward—form one foundational pillar of Native and settler engagement in North America. In short, colonial and settler colonial representations of land become gendered under the guise of European hetero-patriarchal culture as it is espoused by

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[167] Historical accounts show that this story largely originated in Smith's imagination and was used for his personal financial enrichment. In reality, Matoaka never married Smith, but was held as a captive for the elites in colonial Jamestown. Some records suggest that she was raped and forced to marry John Rolfe, who then took her to England. She died on the return journey from England, possibly poisoned on the ship that was to take her home. Matoaka is the first famous missing and later murdered Indigenous woman from North America, and so the mythos surrounding her story carries immense weight both for Indigenous peoples today, and as an undercurrent for the justifications of settler colonial conquest. See Lehigh University Digital Library, *The Pocahontas Archive* for more detailed and historiographical information surrounding the myth of Pocahontas: http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/pocahontas/images.php

[168] Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," *The Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 4 (Autumn, 1975): 701.

[169] Worthington Chauncey Ford, "Capitan John Smith's Map of Virginia, 1612," *Geographical Review* 14, no. 3 (July 1923): 433-443.

Smith, evident in these discursive documents. Smith's treatment of the land and his fantastic treatment of the (imaginary) body of Pocahontas is demonstrative of a perspective in which European male dominion over the feminine and the land itself is both natural and neutral. Violence to the land then, becomes gendered violence, as both are expressions of the same worldview. This is a point I will return to in the latter section of this chapter.

Further, the map expressly cites Indigenous knowledge of the terrain beyond Smith's personal experiences. Indigenous cartographic and phenomenological knowledge is incorporated into representations of knowledge that Smith personally acquired. Areas that Smith had not personally traversed, but which were made known to him "by relation" of Indigenous informants are demarcated on the map by Maltese cross figures.[170] Use of informants is revealed in the key to the map, in its upper right corner above the drawing of the Susquehannock "giant" figure (Fig. 1.1). In later writing about his time in North America, Smith wrote specifically that the information contained in the map was not based on Smith's personal experience in those areas, but that the terrain was conveyed to him "by information of the Savages, and are set downe according to their instructions."[171] By his own accord then, Smith utilized Indigenous cartographic thinking and knowledge of the terrain to establish a mapping practice that would benefit European settlers and the eventual rise of settler colonialism in North America. The rise of settler colonialism in the region mapped by Smith and his Indigenous informants would

[170] John Smith and William Hole. *Virginia*. (London, 1624) Map, https://www.loc.gov/item/99446115/.
[171] John Smith, *Captain John Smith, of Willoughby by Alford, Lincolnshire: President of Virginia, and Admiral of New England, Works 1608-1631* Issue 16, Part 1. ed. Edward Arber (London: The Editor, 1884): 55.

ultimately lead to the downfall of the Powhattan Confederacy, as it gave rise to European settlement in Powhattan and other communities' homelands.

In Smith's production of the widely reproduced map, and the fantasy story about his eventual marriage to "Pocahontas," he presented himself as an expert on both North American land and in possession (through marriage) of the Indigenous female body.[172] His acts in these two instances suggest a pattern of engagement with Indigenous peoples, lands, and bodies that would set the tone for the coming several centuries. Namely, that European dominion and extraction from both the Indigenous body and tribally held lands was at once normal, ordained, and expected. Smith propagated a mythic and fundamental interlacing of the Indigenous female body and the land. The myths surrounding the girl—including her heroic, albeit fictional act of "saving" Smith, her romance and eventual marriage to him coupled with the increasingly widespread use of the map—which contains clearly demarcated references to emplaced Indigenous knowledge—in settling the land then held by the Powhattan Confederacy were both used to justify exploitation. The female Indigenous body and the land itself became symbolic of one another as they are subject to Smith's colonial needs. In the context of European Christian patriarchal culture, and on the heels of the rise of capitalism in Western Europe, this proved to be a dangerous pattern of engagement for Indigenous communities.[173]

Art historian Svetlana Alpers points to European map-making practice starting in the 16th century (the era in which Smith's map was produced) as a reflection of global

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[172] Ben C. McCary, *John Smith's Map of Virginia With a Brief Account of its History* (Richmond: Garrett and Maise, Inc., 1957).

[173] There are many examples of the lingering effects of this pattern of engagement, including the current climate crisis, the desecration of sacred sites, global food shortages, the rise of extractive industry that does not adequately consider environmental or spiritual impacts, and the rising crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women.

trade and expanding empires, corresponding with the European Age of Exploration.[174] Evidence for this domineering cartographic impulse appears on early maps and landscape paintings—including Smith's map of Virginia—which have in common an ascendant vantage point that floats above the depicted land. In short, viewing land from above is an assertion of man's dominance over it. White male dominance over, and possession of, land becomes mutually interchangeable with colonial male dominance over the body that is marked as Indigenous, and especially female, through narratives like, and including, the Pocahontas myth. There's an argument to be made about colonial dominance and possession of the male Indigenous body as well, which is traceable through the bodies of enslaved men brought to Europe from the Americas, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and the enslavement of Indigenous peoples throughout North America from 1492 through the current day. Nevertheless, I am focused here on Smith's role in establishing these as standard and foundational to the projects of colonialism and eventually settler colonialism. In short, John Smith's pattern of engagement both with Indigenous knowledge, land, and female bodies follows a trajectory that is extractive and exploitative, without regard to the wellness of the bodies or lands over which he claimed colonial dominion. Smith's production of both the Pocahontas story and the creation of the map established a pattern of colonial and settler behavior in North America which remains in effect to date.

By contrast to the systems of looking that Smith normalized through his work, Indigenous cartographic practices demonstrate kinships with land. Indigenous maps represent an understudied archive of information that should be relevant to art historians,

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[174] Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), xxv.

political scientists, geographers, and those studying specific Indigenous traditions more broadly. While it is not feasible to analyze all extant Native-made maps in this dissertation, a general characteristic outline of the category is possible and provides a rich context which magnifies an understanding of Indigenous place-based culture.

As a general categorization then, Native maps contain and convey knowledge about the storied and relational roles shared between land, non-human animals and human beings. Categorizing Indigenous maps as storied and inherently containing relational information across lifeforms and places is an important distinction from colonial and settler colonial maps, which generally depict relationships between human beings and land as *property* or *resource*, rather than as storied *kin*.[175]

Native-made maps are usually very specific and culturally tied to the roles and identities of their makers and those who would use them. In fact, as Dr. Mishuana Goeman asserts, the maintenance of relationships with land is one of the critical components of Indigeneity—it is at the heart of Indigenous existence. Land is "claimed" through discursive communal sharing, and human and non-human relationships to land become defining for Indigenous communities' value systems, culture, and production of identity.[176] The relational aspect of Indigenous human-land kinships forms a vital characteristic of cultural practices including spiritual perspectives, identity formation, and the day-to-day production of Indigenous society.

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[175] Louis De Vorsey Jr., *Unsettled Landscapes*, "Silent Witnesses: Native American Maps," *The Georgia Review* 46, no. 4 (Winter, 1992): 709-726.
[176] Mishuana Goeman, "From Place to Territories and Back Again: Centering Storied Land in the Discussion of Indigenous Nation-building," *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 1, no. 8 (2009): 30.

Citizen Band Potawatomi cartographer and scholar Dr. Margaret Pearce defines Indigenous cartography as a genre under the following characterization:

> 1. Indigenous maps are generally brief (limited in scope), and require the active involvement (via active listening, remembering, interpreting, and the imagination) of the listener/ map-reader. Brevity is a signifier of excellence.
> 2. Indigenous maps use repetition of names and stories as an aide to memory; stories come to life as they are experienced *in situ* and relative to the land on which they occurred. Further, these stories activate and embed the listener in the land through recommending particular vantage points available at particular places and looking in a certain direction.
> 3. Indigenous maps connote the transmutation of time to the synchronous present, and "nest" time to extend human perception beyond the present moment. In other words, Indigenous maps communicate the specific perception of time as it is constructed for each mapmaker and for each map user. In Indigenous maps, time is collapsed into place, as stories transport and activate the viewer in context of past and future events.
> 4. Indigenous maps require the listener to assemble various cartographic elements to form a useable and useful whole (which is understood within the context of individual culture) and are inherently phenomenological.[177]

Pearce's characteristics demonstrate the ways that mapping is connected to cultural practices and is linked to specific community- held value systems. Further, her analysis shows how mapping and understanding land contributes to the *experience* of place, as it might differ from community to community, time to time, and on the basis of individual engagement. It also speaks to the motivation for representing land for Indigenous communities, suggesting interactions that are "useful" contributions to specific cultural practices beyond extraction of resource.

[177]Margaret Wickens Pearce, "The Last Piece is You," *The Cartographic Journal* 51, no. 2 (2014): 107-122.

Rarely are absolutes about inherent gendering of land present in discourses about Indigenous mapping practices. Nevertheless, many tribal communities do view the land as female gendered. In an important distinction, Dr. Sarah Deer and Ann Kronk Warner demonstrate that the land *carries feminine qualities*, rather than *is female*. They go on to say, "Because many tribal cultures ascribe important feminine qualities to the land, the mistreatment of "mother earth" carries important gendered consequences."[178] Some of the "gendered characteristics" they point to are the nurturing qualities of land, and seemingly endless qualities of giving-of-self for the betterment and subsistence of others. Beyond this, many Indigenous spiritual beliefs are linked to land directly beyond their specific spatial implications as discussed in Chapter I. Next Deer and Warner argue that the behaviors, tactics, and motives of extractive industry and rapists share many parallels in their disregard for the autonomy and selfhood of other entities as a means to upset or assert power—similar to the ways I have demonstrated Smith did in his production of both the Pocahontas myth and the Virginia map. Deer and Smith demonstrate that

> understanding rape by gendering land allows us to articulate the connections between exploitation of the land and exploitations of the female body. "Rape" is more than mere metaphor in the context of tribal lives—the rape of mother earth and the rape of women and children are part of the same colonial power dynamics.[179]

Those "power dynamics" that Deer and Warner reference contribute substantially to the founding characteristics of the various projects of colonial and settler colonial occupations of the lands in North America- originally as an extractive colonial industry, later as an ongoing settlement project, and now as a defining underpinning of the concept of North American settler nationhood at large.

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[178] Deer and Warner, "Raping Indian Country," 32.
[179] Ibid, 33.

Therefore, such a perspective—that the land is both feminine, and therefore inherently susceptible to male dominion becomes essential to the opening of land for extraction and exploitation. It is a perspective that is so deeply embedded in the historical record of the United States that is was present and defining of the works that Smith produced over a century before the nation existed. Finally, this perspective, while immensely destructive and pregnant with danger for the future wellness of the world is actually *necessary* to the perpetuation of the objectives of the settler state in North America. This paradigm is embroiled in discourses about Manifest Destiny, and the values and beliefs that are inherent to the ongoing existence of the United States of America (and less directly, but certainly still by implication, Canada and Mexico). These perspectives have not ended but are deeply woven into the fabric of the North American settler nation states. Because such views are so fundamental to these national projects, the ongoing subjugation and violence to the land and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples are implicitly linked. In the remainder of this chapter I focus on living Indigenous artists who address these compounding twin ideas and their implications as they shape settler and Indigenous relationships with the land.

Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith (Salish-Kootenai/ Métis-Cree/ Shoshone) created a compelling series of maps of North America in 1992, 1996, and 2000. The largest segment of the corpus was created in 2000, comprising nine maps (Fig. 3). In each of these, Quick-To-See Smith collaged text and image onto painted maps of the United States, and segments of both Canada and Mexico. These maps form an aesthetic Indigenous re-remembering and *re-mapping* of the narratives of colonization and American expansion, constituting a memory map. Considered as a whole, this body of

work interrupts the narrative of North American settlement and provides a path to Indigenous healing through linguistic reclamation and acknowledgment of enduring Native presence. In analyzing re-mapping projects, Denis Cosgrove argues that such projects embody critical positions about colonial exploration and cartography that is premised upon and complicated by ignorance, incompetence, and fear. Such projects, Cosgrove argues, "suggest the coexistence of cognitive dissonance in unfamiliar territory and affective relations with the earth's surface."[180] Quick-to-See Smiths project of re-mapping comprises a layered sedimentary tribute to the conflicted and competing cultural memories formed in and about the American West. Her project is a critical reclamation of the cartographic tradition that has too long ignored those "affective relations" emplaced with Indigenous kinships, while it rejects the colonial impulse to control narratives of land.

Each of the nine paintings in the series contain messy, painterly reminders that history is not a tidy narrative easily contained in the right-angled borders carved out of Indian lands, or a single linguistic paradigm. Quick-to-See Smith's maps signal the leakages and contests of memory, situating colonial cartography of the North American landscape against linguistic and Indigenous memory. Considered together, Quick-To-See Smith's map series form a meditative cenotaph to North American memory by re-inscribing and asserting the prominence of Indigenous narratives on the land.

Quick-to See Smith addresses the history of European spectatorship and occupation of North American lands directly in *The Browning of America* (Fig. 4). A column on the Eastern Seaboard lists the names of those European entities that made

[180] Denis Cosgrove, "Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century" *Imago Mundi* 57, no. 1 (2005): 43.

landfall on American shores "from 1000 CE to 2001 CE." In using the word "invasion," Smith makes clear her position on the issue of settler presence. Further, she positions the present day in context within the long history of European arrival. Quick-to-See Smith privileges knowledge of land that predates modern narratives accepted in the dominant American culture, and which expand the history of this place far beyond 1776 or 1492. She links the paradigms set forward by the likes of John Smith discussed above with an ongoing foreign occupation of North American lands, especially in including the then-future (2001) in her practices of listing "invaders."

Like others in the series, this map drips with rich washes over a broad surface that seems devoid of detailed landscape formations, but on further inspection gains immense depths as geographies emerge through Quick-to-See Smith's layered painterly treatment. The landform now known as the United States of America is demarcated in deep vermilions, ochres, and oranges, represented with sedimentary layers that culminate in deep rust. This is set off against a watery blue and green background of the Pacific and Atlantic coasts on either side of the painting. Pictographic figures of animals, humans and abstract forms span the interior of the continent, reminiscent of those images found pecked into rock faces at ancient sites throughout the continent. At the far left a bison turns westward, facing a spiral-headed figure, At the center a humanoid figure dominates. A selection of fish forms seem to swim westward out of the Ohio River Valley, and other smaller animal and spirit forms circulate around the main grouping. These evoke the prominent lifeforms on the continent prior to the "invasions" listed in Quick-to-See Smith's list.

The maps in this series mark a revival and a remembrance of the cartographic traditions that predate and are evident in the likes of Smith's 1612 Virginia map. Map-making *did* exist in the Americas prior to contact with Europe, contrary to many claims to that it did not. Across many periods of time, the land has been represented, regarded, and imagined through visual form for many cultures. The art historical impulse to see maps as an art form is rooted in the specific social and cultural contexts that produced them and give those forms meaning for each community that uses them.

Beyond the extensive culture-specific and generalizing Indigenous cartography analyses by Margaret Pearce, other scholars such as Malcom Lewis have been giving a more serious consideration to Indigenous mapping practices since the late 1970s. Lewis demonstrated the diverse ways in which pre-contact North American maps present Indigenous ethics of land habitation, history, and kinship.[181] For centuries of scholarship, many non-Indigenous thinkers tended to be rather dismissive of Native mapping technologies, reducing them to "storytelling devices," rather than objective navigational tools.[182] But as Pearce and Lewis and others have shown the storytelling inherent to Indigenous mapping practices is actually revelatory of the ways in which Indigenous people regarded and related with the land. Ancestral map forms are actually abundant, definitive to Indigenous cultural practices and relations with land and other life forms. Maps have been important in the survival of Indigenous peoples across the world,

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[181] Malcolm Lewis, *The History of Cartography: Traditional African, American, Arctic, Australian and Pacific Societies*, Vol. 2, Book 3, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[182] An example of this is the treatment of the Greenlandic coastline map by Kuunit, discussed in Chapter I. See Hans Harmsen, "Greenland's Hand-Sized Wooden Maps Were Used for Storytelling, Not Navigation," *atlasobscura.com*, May 2, 2018, https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/greenland-wooden-maps-ammassalik.

including as ceremonial forms, as instances of anti-colonial resistance and as pathways for future relations with homelands.[183] Moreover Indigenous mapping can be a powerful political tool and method. Mapping can form a core aspect of place-based resistance to incursions of settler colonial violence and attempts to claim place at the expense of Indigenous peoples.[184] Mapping can be a form of remembering. The principles these scholars have outlined again can be contrasted to the tenets of speculative domination and ownership evident in European maps. I stress this point because the settler and colonial dominion model of looking at and representing land as resource is the context most generally familiar in the United States today.

In thinking about Quick-to-See Smith's cartographic practice then, Lewis' examination of the *Map Rock* (Fig. 5) in Southwestern Idaho is especially germane here, for its regional connection to Quick-to-See Smith's Shoshone heritage.[185] Lewis demonstrated that *Map Rock* was an example of Shoshone ancestral cartographic tradition that incorporates oral tradition and the practice of memory as a cultural form. The map details a section of the Snake and Salmon Rivers of Shoshone territory in what is now known as Idaho. The ancestral cartographer who made the map also depicted animal nations on the lower left area of the map, including bison, deer, mountain sheep, elk, antelope, and human beings. Inclusion of these suggests that the map was used for hunting and tracking purposes, or to define the territory. It's likely that the map depicts

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[183]Annita Hetoevehotohke'e Lucchesi, "Indians Don't Make Maps: Indigenous Cartographic Traditions and Innovations," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 42, no. 3 (2018): 13

[184]See Joe Bryan and Denis Wood, *Weaponizing Maps: Indigenous Peoples and Counterinsurgency in the Americas* (New York: Guilford Press, 2015).

[185] Malcolm Lewis, "Indian Maps Their Place in the History of Plains Cartography," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (Spring, 1984): 91-108.

the entire drainage basin area of the Snake River, suggesting an intimacy of knowledge with a broad expanse of territory.[186]

Quick-to-See Smith's maps can be viewed as a continuum of what cartographer Robert Rundstrom has called *process cartography* which places emphasis on the act of production rather than the artifact of mapping. [187] In Quick-to-See Smith's case, the painterly application of paint reveals the active narrative to which she refers. Viewing Quick-to-See Smith's paintings as a part of a long heritage of cartographic processes at work in North America contextualizes her work with that of broader discourses on Indigenous representations of, and relations to, land. Regardless of specific lineage, the artist draws upon a lengthy Indigenous history of map making that is reflective of uninterrupted relationships with place. Specific relationships to place remain the central delimiting factor of indigeneity at large.[188]

Images of land in North America have come to take on new meaning in the 20th and 21st centuries as North American identities changed and strengthened toward new and evolving nationhoods. From the closing of the frontier in the last decade of the 19th century, and through two world wars, and the many dissents from narratives of nationhood, the meanings surrounding America-as-visual-icon have shifted. Artists responsive to this shifting paradigm turned to maps and images of the continent as a powerful motif in their work. As Denis Cosgrove situates this turn,

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[186] Malcom Lewis, "Hiatus Leading to a Renewed Encounter," *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 58.
[187] Robert Rundstrom, "Mapping the White Man's Burden," *The Common Property Resource Digest* 45 (1998): 1-9.
[188] Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red*, 3rd Edition. Fulcrum Publishing (Golden, Colorado: 2003), 64-67.

> While cartographers were striving for methodological rigor in such matters as projection, scale, topographic representation and nomenclature regarding the achievement of such rigor as a foundation for the neutrality and universality of their images, art was dominated by a series of avant-garde movements whose intention was to criticize and subvert long-standing ideas and practices of representational art. That critical intent soon redrew the boundaries of art itself as a socially and politically engaged activity.[189]

Quick-to-See Smith's re-mapping project of the early 21st century then, can also be viewed in context of the continuum of settler and European artists using mapping as a critical representational practice.

Artists working the 1960s and 70s began using maps of The United States continental landmass, as well as individual sites as meditations on a nation whose definitions of selfhood were in turmoil. Most notably, Quick-to-See Smith's maps have been compared to Jasper Johns' *Map* series painted in the 1960s. But other map artists from the 1960s and 70s include the pantheon of mainstream white land art practitioners of the Earthworks generation, Nancy Holt, Richard Long, Robert Smithson, and others like Yoko Ono, Robert Indiana, Agnes Denes. Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's relative obscurity from this canon of better-known "mainstream" artists is indicative of the still-outsider status of American Indian artists who remain considered separately from categories of American and Contemporary art history.

But importantly, conceptual mid-century artists were at work in shifting cartographic practice as an art form into the critical realm, and even more importantly as an art form that was engaged in political discourse relative to land possession and occupation. Johns' map series, for example could be argued to be an exploration of the

[189] Cosgrove, "Maps, Mapping, Modernity," 38.

painterly surface as much as it could be argued to be about the image of the North American land mass. Surrealist artists and Situationists drew on cognitive mapping exercises and the developments of cognitive psychology as they related to, and revealed, the importance of social and individual perceptions of self and place. Conceptual artists, including the Earthworks generation of Land Artists moved cartography and art production most dramatically toward each other. Some of the Earthworks' generations of land art are explorations of the intangibility of place, focused instead on the documentation and measure of certain aspects and abstractions of the experience of place. These artists focused more "on *the idea* of an artwork, on theoretical methodologies of documentation, on site, and on performance."[190] As midcentury and later artists shifted the cartographic paradigm toward abstraction away from the map as an artifact, space was created to allow for increased critical dialogue.

This space then, is where Quick-to-See Smith's maps function, and this is the continuum of mapping as a process where her work can be understood. The series functions similarly to settler conceptual artists' work, as it contributes to dialogue about the multiple meanings of American place. Quick-to-See Smith's maps also direct critical attention to maps as a motif that is a powerful carrier for identity, relationship, and shifts focus to the processes that the act of mapping reveals.[191] This series is also an important

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[190] Ibid, 41.

[191] These overlapping meanings and competing memories comprise some portion of what anthropologist Marc Augé has called "supermodernity," in which an innumerable narrative takes place in the same place. Though not the focus of this paper, I'm interested in further exploring how the idea of supermodernity collapses time and space toward one another, especially is time is rooted in place. The various layers of meaning and shifts of belonging on North American lands promise an exciting dialogue for this theory. See Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, translated by John Howe (London: Verso, 1995).

piece of cartography that is critical of colonial legacies—building in part on the established character of radicalism in conceptual art's engagement with cartography, Quick-to-See Smith draws on Indigenous criticism of settler colonial paradigms for her re-mapping project.

Maps are always selectively inclusive. No map can fully contain the experience of land or place; the concept of a "map" is always a form of gestural abstraction What is seen on a map must always be limited, and often maps of the Americas disregard or selectively omit Indigenous presences, as European style cartography has long been at the service of nation building.[192] In four of the paintings from the 2000 body, Quick-to-See Smith addresses this erasure: *Tribal Map I* and *II* and *State Names I* and *II. Tribal Map I* (Fig. 6) and *Tribal Map II* (Fig. 7) show the present location of the various American Indian Nations, and acknowledge First Nation Reserves, Mexican and Central American indigenes. Clearly typed text of the name of each U.S. community has been carefully placed near the region where that community resides today, within the confines of current legal state and provincial boundaries. By including those imposed borders, Smith nods to the multiple meanings of land in the Americas.

Two especially striking revelations are made upon viewing *Tribal Map I* and *Tribal Map II*. First, that region of the first American "frontier," the Ohio River Valley, appears completely devoid of Indigenous habitation today. The frontier is featured prominently in maps of colonial America and is a clearly important feature for the way thinking about American nationhood developed. Through a series of Indian Removals to Indian Territory, the Indigenous peoples whose homelands are in this "first frontier"

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[192] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 170-178.

region are absent in their autochthonous place. Communities' names are now thickly clustered atop Oklahoma, foreign to the land there. This region of the fertile Appalachian range, homeland to an immense diversity of Indigenous peoples has given way to the American frontier spirit. In both maps, Indian Territory is represented in the form of the present-day State of Oklahoma. In making this choice, Quick-to-See Smith conflates the timing of Indian Removal from throughout the continent onto the place of Oklahoma. Through this technique, time and space become intimately tied, and compressed through the experience of Native communities in relation to the land there. The states in the region are painted on Quick-to-See Smith's map in varying banal shades of green, pink, yellow, and brown. Here her thick painterly application of loosely bound paint drips down the canvas more overtly than in other regions, suggesting the slippage of meanings and relationships to land in this place. Throughout the remainder of these maps, paint also drips and seeps across the named reservations and community sites, sometimes obscuring their printed names.

The second, related observation is that the states to the west of the Missouri River are simultaneously dense with Indian peoples and prominently rectangular. The lands to the west of the second frontier of American westward expansion, those states west of the Missouri, are now home to the vast majority of U.S. Indian population. Both *Tribal Map I* and *Tribal Map II* are diptychs, divided near the waters of miníšoše. The westward push of American nationalism pressed the densest population of Indian peoples into the land along the Missouri River in the Great Plains, reflected in Smith's tribal maps. The states on which displaced (and replaced) communities' names rest are rigidly squared, an active reminder of the structure of land allotments and American legal impositions on land that

is not square. The structure of these states is directly traceable to federal policies of land allotment and division, and dismissive of traditional territories of Native peoples in the region.[193] The squared angles of the western states are monument to Indigenous dispossession, and function as an important visual aspect of Smith's work. Again here, she combines the aesthetic communiqués of those various and competing institutions of memory upon the land. In the squared states, Quick-to-See Smith marks a painterly reminder of those institutions, histories, and laws which dispossessed Indigenous communities across the continent.

This deep re-examination of American memory rises again in *State Names I* (Fig. 8) and *State Names II* (Fig. 9). In these two paintings, the map motif is treated through the naming of those 27 states whose names have Indigenous origin.[194] The naming of states in this way is an intervention in the accepted narratives of Indigenous heritage in North America. These paintings stand as a reminder, and an intervention in dominant memory about which language is privileged, and which is made invisible. In calling out these specific states, Smith provides a counter narrative to the vanishing Indian paradigm; hers is a narrative that actively ruptures ideas about westward settlement. Further, in drawing on the previous point about Indigenous presences in the early American frontier,

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[193] These structures are encoded in the United States in the Preemption Act of 1841, The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, the Homestead Act of 1862, the Timber Culture Act of 1873, the Desert Land Act of 1877, the Timber and Stone Act of 1878, General Allotment/ Dawes Act of 1887, and enforced through the United States Court of Private Land Claims (1891-1904) and individual state boundaries and legal structures.

[194] Named states include: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Hawai'i, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Canadian provinces: Yukon, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, and Mexican states: Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Durango, Coahuila, Tamaulipas)

it is worth noting that the states in the Ohio River Valley *all* have Indigenous language-based names.

These named states serve to visually privilege aboriginal presences in the various places throughout North America. Notably Quick-to-See Smith also includes those Canadian Provinces and Mexican states whose names also have Indigenous origin in her map paintings. Here Smith approaches the continent from both transnational and trans Indigenous vantage. Treating Canada, the United States and Mexico as equally, though differently colonized spaces. In so doing, she positions all Indigenous North Americans similarly: colonized and resisting erasure. Furthermore, placing Indigenous words across the two-dimensional representation of the land of North America forms a monument to indigeneity. Each word is a reminder that Native languages persist even in those nation-states whose official state languages are foreign.

Languages are central to culture. Much has been written about the loss of language through the history of aggression as assimilation policies submitted to American expansion. Much also has been written about the importance of language preservation in Indigenous communities, and the use of language in healing historical traumas, including healing and structuring Indigenous relationships to land.[195] Mapping and language are both cultural processes that reflect the various ontological and epistemological structures of culture.[196] Language, like mapping, is a social archive of memory, as agreements about meanings allow communication within any community and

[195] Nancy Turner and Katherine Turner, ""Where Our Women Used to Get the Food": Cumulative Effects and Loss of Ethnobotanical Knowledge and Practice; Case Study from Costal British Columbia," *Botany* 86, no. 2 (Feb. 2008): 103.
[196] Margaret Wickens Pearce and Renee Pulani Louis, "Mapping Indigenous Depth of Place," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 32, no. 2 (2008): 110.

through translationacross communities in what Bruno Latour calls "immutable mobiles."[197] Unique Indigenous languages and connections to place are near the heart of our identities, and utilizing words that are rooted or directly from Indigenous languages are important symbolic gestures that should serve to remind us of our own histories and presences relative to the land.

Land and Body

For some Indigenous artists, gestures toward remembrance and reclamations of human relations with land are also a move to remember and reclaim their own embodiment. Scholars like Deer and Kronk have pushed for consideration of land-based issues of sovereignty and Indigenous self determination to *also* be considerations of Indigenous control of the body. The work of the two artists I consider in this section continue and enlarge the linked concepts of land and body sovereignty. In the works I analyze in this chapter, Ana Mendieta and Faye Heavyshield suggest models of Indigenous land and body connections that contrast to the model established through the written productions of John Smith, with which I opened this chapter.

The Indigenous body and land both hold importance as comparable, equally important, invested sites of self-determination, in part because both the Indigenous body and land have been damaged through the actions of the settler state, and because both

[197] Bruno Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together," in *Knowledge and Society in the Sociology and Culture Past and Present*, Henrika Kuklick and Elizabeth Long, eds. (Greenwich: JAI Press Ltd., 1986), 1-40.

hold immense value as carriers and originators of culture.[198] In remembering the value of the land as a body, and the body inversely as land holds potential for defining the values and practice of culture; as we relate to female bodies, so do we relate to the land. Remembering this relationship opens paths for Indigenous approaches toward human and land kinships as we experience and practice place. Focusing on a body/land connection can also be a powerful tool of resisting colonial violence and framing it as a gendered foreign incursion on Indigeneity, broadly defined.

The idea of the land being an extension of the embodiment of Indigenous woman is important to many Indigenous communities. It is so central in fact, that the notion is deeply embodied in many origin stories about how humans and other animate and inanimate life forms came to exist. The land/body connection is therefore absolutely central to the ways some Indigenous communities conceptualize and theorize the existence of the world. Vanessa Watts illustrates this notion through an analysis of Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe origin stories and their teachings. Watts calls the Indigenous connection to land "Place-thought," which is she defines as "the non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never *could* be separated. Place-thought is based on the premise that *land is alive and thinking* and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts."[199] Watts extends her framing about Place-thought, and the animacy of land as rooted in, and in kinship with, the feminine body. She argues,

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[198] Sandrina de Finney, "Indigenous Girls' Resilience in Settler States: Honouring Body and Land Sovereignty," *Empowering Women for Gender Equality*, 31, 2 (2017): 18.
[199] Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a European World Tour!)," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 21.

> To be animate goes beyond being alive or acting, it is to be full of thought, desire, contemplation and will. It is the literal embodiment of the feminine, of First Woman, by which many Indigenous origin stories found their inception. When Sky Woman falls from the sky and lies on the back of a turtle, she is not only able to create land but becomes territory itself. Therefore Place-thought is an extension of her circumstance, desire, and communication with the water and animals—her agency. Through this communication she is able to become the basis by which all future societies will be built upon—land.
>
> In becoming land or territory, she becomes the designator of how living beings will organize upon her. Where waters flow and pool, where mountains rise and turn into valleys, all of these become demarcations of who will reside where, how they will live, and how their behaviors toward one another are determined. Scientists refer to this as ecosystems or habitats. However, if we accept the idea that all living things contain spirit, then this extends beyond complex structures within an ecosystem, It means that non-human beings choose how they reside, interact and develop relationships with other non-humans. So, all elements of nature possess agency, and this agency is not limited to inanimate action or casual relationships.[200]

Watts echoes thinking that is common throughout Indigenous belief and ceremonial practice that honors the earth and other life forms as imbued with agency. The notion of the land as gendered is not isolated to Indigenous epistemologies alone, but framing land thus allows for a practice of kinship in dynamic ways throughout Indigenous communities.

Place can be understood as the specific experience of land in a reciprocal relationship, in which land informs the cultural features of a society, which in turn reflects the values and ways that community interacts with land. For Indigenous communities, this can be said to have a spiritual aspect, which is sometimes gendered female. This notion of place-thought is represented in diverse ways across Indigenous traditions. The idea is expressed succinctly in the novel *Solar Storms* by Chickasaw

[200] Ibid, 23.

novelist Linda Hogan. In that book, one character expresses the view that her society's relationship to the land is unifying for her people, and forms the backbone of culture. The storied land makes one people distinct from another—specific relationships to the land make us who we are.[201]

Beyond its central importance to many diverse Indigenous communities, the notion of the gendered land also takes on profound (and dangerous) notions in context of the dynamics of power implicit in the histories of settler colonialism. The hetero-patriarchal systems that were brought to North America beginning in the 15th century would alter the nature of human and land relationships at their core. Through those imported systems, ancestral practices that placed human beings into kinship with the living world were damaged and replaced by a worldview of dominion. Such systems attempt to perpetually destroy and replace Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies that are rooted in a relationship with place.

Indigenous feminist thinking has established critical approaches to thinking through the damaging imports of colonial thinking that were brought to North America through colonial and settler colonial channels. Native feminist theories continue to grapple with critical thought about the impacts of these sorts of impositions on Indigenous communities, lands, and bodies. Kanaka Maoli scholar Dr. Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) and Dr. Angie Morrill (Modoc and Klamath) demonstrate this engagement, specifically as it applies to gendered effects of settler colonialism through land dominion. They argue that

> within Indigenous contexts land is not property, as in settler colonialism, but rather land is knowing and knowledge. Conceptualizations of land

[201] Linda Hogan, *Solar Storms*, (New York City: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 177.

> and place that rely upon latent notions of property are tangled in the ideologies of settler colonialism, dependent on constructions of land as extractable capital, the denial of Indigenous sovereignty, the myth of discovery, and the inevitability of the nation-state…. when Manifest Destiny is reexamined at the intersection of colonization and patriarchy, it is evident that the strategy is not at all benign, but a convenient rationale that has permitted genocide. Manifest Destiny relied upon gendered and arrogant notions of the dominion of man over the earth, the divination of the founding and expansion of the United States, and narratives of American exceptionalism, which still are employed to defend the country's role in global politics and occupations. Manifest Destiny, somewhat after the facts, became the explanation for the atrocities of settler colonialism, more for those who benefit/ed by settler colonialism so that they might more easily stomach their own complicity in ongoing colonization.[202]

Such critical engagements with colonial, settler colonial, and patriarchal views of land coincide with issues of bodily sovereignty, as demonstrated by Dr. Sara Deer earlier in this chapter. When issues of Indigenous land and body are brought into discourse with one another it is evident that those issues are inseparable from one another, and that Indigenous autonomy without an appeal to white or settler ascendancy is the goal for Indigenous people.

In dominant art historical discourse, the Indigenous land/body relationship and interconnection is too often overlooked, romanticized, or misunderstood. Some art historians have been critical of common depictions of Indigenous people depicted as a part of "nature" in romantic landscape paintings while others have been critical of the omission of any evidence of human presence.[203] Many scholars of this paradigm focus on

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[202] Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism" Challenging Connections Between Settle Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (Spring, 2013): 21 and 27.

[203] Roger Cushing Aikin, "Paintings of Manifest Destiny," *American Art* 14, no. 3 (Autumn, 2000), 78-89. Andrew Menard, *Sight Unseen: How Frémont's First Expedition Changed the American Landscape* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 42. W.

the ways that the Indigenous body was included or omitted at the service of the objectives of the settler state.

Themes of expansion, the pristine wilderness, and availability of resources are common considerations in analyses of North American landscape art that includes or selectively omits the Indigenous figure. Such scholarship often fails to consider Indigenous perspectives about our relationships with land, and whether representation of our bodies in the land is appropriate from the views of Indigenous cosmologies and episteme. And while such thoughtful critiques about Indigenous presences and absences have been central to thinking through the meanings and impacts of landscape painting, those critiques can extend further into the installation and performance arts, as well as institutions such as museum spaces and biennales.[204] When discourse about the body is made directly relevant to "land art," much of that conversation is restricted to scholarship about Cuban-American artist from the Earthworks generation, Ana Mendieta.

Mendieta is a divisive figure within the Land Art and feminist art historical canons, and too rarely considered in discourses focused on Indigeneity. Exhibitions of the Earthworks artists have routinely omitted her work, though she was a provocative character and intimately entwined with that group. Such omissions have given rise to rancor, protest, and endless pages of critique about the gender dynamics in the art and museum spheres. Inversely, many articles, books, reviews, and exhibitions include her work as a central focus.[205] Mendieta is arguably the most visible North American

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J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* 2nd Edition (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007), 7-37.

[204] Amy Lonetree *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 1-29.

[205] Jane Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 3.

Indigenous diaspora land artist based on her attention to Indigenous cultural forms, and regardless of her heritage claims to Indigenous communities. Her work is broadly studied, taught, exhibited and written about in mainstream art history. Mendieta's *Silueta* (Fig. 11) series, produced between 1973 and 1980 is the primary focus for scholarship that links the female body and the land. This focus is reasonable, as the series makes obvious connections between the female body and the land. Mendieta's *Rupestrian Sculptures* are the focus for scholarship about her connections to Indigenous culture. The latter series was made upon her return trip to Cuba in 1980. Here, I add to the large body of scholarship about *Silueta* and the *Rupestrian Sculptures* to further argue that Mendieta's work in the series should also be considered in context of Indigenous North American diaspora. I view these two series as a continuum of Mendieta's engagement with Indigeneity that anchors her oeuvre in an interest in the Indigenous land-body connection.

As a general categorization, Indigenous identity is measured, claimed, and represented differently between the predominantly white and Latino North American nations. Colonization under English, French, and Spanish edicts unraveled differently in each point of contact and with different objectives. But as one of the first sites of contact with European colonial explorers and a site of critical importance in the trade of enslaved Africans into North America, Cuba is a place where expressions and maintenance of Indigeneity and race is as critically important as it is difficult.[206] Christopher Columbus arrived in Cuba on his first voyage in 1492, where he encountered Taíno communities. Events transpiring as a result of Columbus' arrival include a decimation of Indigenous

[206] Jason Yaremko, *Indigenous Passages to Cuba, 1515-1900*, (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2017).

communities, the opening of the transatlantic slave trade, and waves of both colonization and settler colonization of Caribbean islands. These events mark foundations in the contests over land and "resources," the basic motivation which underwrites, motivates, and justifies the ongoing settler colonial occupation of North America. Today, a few communities expressly claim Indigenous roots, but centuries of racial mixing mark the island nation's population differently defined compared to Indigeneity in The United States or Canada. Spanish conquistadors and colonial invaders routinely raped and murdered Indigenous people in the Caribbean, and the admixture of enslaved African people throughout the 17th-19th century contributes to the immense diversity of racial type in the region today.[207] The identifying Indigenous communities of Taíno are mostly located in eastern mountain regions of Cuba and on other Caribbean islands.[208]

The history of Cuba in the 20th century continues the legacy of colonization in North America. As it pertains to Mendieta, the imperialist policies of the United States of America are especially important to consider. Mendieta was born in Havana in 1949, four years before the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. Cuba was a colony of Spain from Columbus' arrival until the late 19th century. Backed (and heavily controlled) by the United States, Cuba claimed its independence in 1895. The Cuban Revolution was in part motivated by an urgent desire to end the colonial nature of colonial governments that had defined Cuba for the previous four and a half centuries. Since the Cuban revolutionary

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[207] Robert M. Poole, " What Became of the Taíno? The Indians Who Greeted Columbus Were Long Believed to Have Died Out," *Smithsonian Magazine* (October 2011), https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/what-became-of-the-taino-73824867/

[208] José Barreiro, "Indigenous Cuba: Hidden in Plain Sight," *American Indian Magazine* 18, no. 4 (Washington D.C.: Tmithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Winter 2017), https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/indigenous-cuba-hidden-plain-sight.

move toward severing their relationship with Spain in the 1890s, the United States gained immense political, economic, and social control in the island nation, effectively becoming the new colonial power there. Under the rise of Fidel Castro, Cuba made a revolutionary attempt to rid themselves of imperial influence of the government. Mendieta's father aided the United States CIA in attempts to undermine Castro's revolutionary rise against Cuban president Fulgencio Batista.[209] Fears of communism and new forms of colonial indoctrination informed the politics of both the United States and Cuba at the time- a factor that would chart Ana Mendieta's life. Under these conditions, Ana and her sister Raquel were brought to the United States under a mass exodus of immigrant children into the United States mainland, known as *Operation Peter Pan*.[210] They were raised in a series of foster homes and juvenile correction facilities in Iowa, where their heritage and identity came under intensely racist scrutiny.

During her teen years, Mendieta formed a racialized identity that would align her eventual artistic practice with the radical conceptual, Indigenous, and Black artists of the later decades of the 20th century.[211] This point is often subsumed by classifications of Mendieta into categories of mainstream feminism and conceptual arts practice. Nevertheless, her work was uniquely critical of the United States history of colonialism and settler colonialism, which had come to define her relationships with both the United

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[209] *Guggenheim Museum*, "Ana Mendieta," https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/ana-mendieta.
[210] See University of Miami Research Guide, "Operation Pedro Pan Collections Guide," https://sp.library.miami.edu/subjects/pedropan and Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta*, 50-51. Operation Peter Pan was funded by the U.S. State Department when the Mendieta sisters were brought to Iowa.
[211] Karina M. Cabañas, "Ana Mendieta: Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," *Women's Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1999), 12.

States and Cuba.[212] During her career, she made strides to differentiate herself from mainstream white women artists. In a catalogue essay for example, she wrote,

> We the people of the Third World in the United States have the same concerns as the people of the Unaligned Nations. The white population of the United States, diverse, but of basic European stock, exterminated the Indigenous civilization and put aside the Black as well as the other non-white cultures to create a homogeneous male-dominated culture above the internal divergency [sic]….
> During the mid to late sixties as women in the United States politicized themselves and came together in the Feminist Movement with the purpose to end the domination and exploitation by the white male culture, they failed to remember us. American Feminism as it stands is basically a white middle class movement.[213]

Through aligning herself against mainstream feminism, Mendieta made critical inquest against the same settler colonial and neocolonial structures, violence, and normalization as the other Indigenous artists whose works I examine throughout this dissertation. Because of this alignment, I argue that Mendieta can reasonably be understood in context of Indigenous radical land artists. Further I argue that her positioning as a racialized person during her time in the United States, as well as her roots in Cuba position her work as globally important in thinking about Indigenous relationships and kinships with land. Her work was about more than being racialized or "othered" in her experience as a Cuban Latina—her *Silueta* and *Rupestrian Sculptures* series specifically direct attention toward Indigenous beliefs and views of kinship with land.[214]

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[212] Jane Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta,* 54-55.
[213] Ana Mendieta, "Introduction," *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third Worlds Women Artists of the United States* ex. cat., (New York: A.I.R. Gallery, September 1980).
[214] I am not Taíno, or Latina. I understand that there as likely some who would like to more stridently omit Mendieta from discourses surrounding Indigeneity, and I make space for that discussion. In my research I have not found a mention of Mendieta's Indigenous heritage, so I understand and welcome the discussion that places Mendieta's work as extractive of Indigenous customs, and make space for the possibility that her

In context with the land/body connections that Indigenous communities value, as I have presented them in this chapter— especially in linking the female Indigenous body with land, Mendieta's *Silueta* is an important departure from mainstream white feminism. Further, Mendieta demonstrated an active interest and engagement with Indigenous cosmology and understandings of the land/body relationship through *Silueta*. The series positions her uniquely, but tenuously between the conceptual frameworks of the conceptual, Earthworks, and mainstream feminist art movements that were emerging at the time the series was created. But perhaps her work can fit more comfortably in these discourses—and her demonstrated departures from them— if her close attention to Indigeneity is considered as a working paradigm of her practice. In 1973 Mendieta traveled to Oaxaca with her MFA cohort from the University of Iowa where the centuries of integration of Indigenous and European cultures reminded her of the cultural forms that she was born into in Cuba. While in Mexico, her interest in Indigeneity and the Native roots of Latino culture is evident in her turn toward exploration of land, especially as it pertains to embodiment.

Her first work for the series*, Silueta-Imagen de Yagul* (Fig. 12) was created on that trip in 1973. The work, which exists today only as a photograph, was made in Oaxaca at an ancestrally important site, Yagul. In the photograph, Mendieta's nude body

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work marked a harmful imposition on Indigenous beliefs about, and relationships to land. Nevertheless, racial "purity" is not an accurate or appropriate measure of Indigenous heritage as I have been taught and understand it. This is especially true in places where colonialism has made large strides toward obscuring Indigenous traditions and intermixing Indigenous bloodlines with colonial and settler colonial ones, through means of rape, abduction, and assimilation as is the case in many Latin American countries. These places host histories of violence that differ from my own community's, and their relationships with histories of colonialism are unique. Nevertheless, it is worth considering Mendieta's heritage as a means to better understand her work, especially as she took on a racialized identity during her time in the United States.

is centrally located on the picture plane surrounded by stacked rock forms. Her body is mostly obscured by plumes of white flowers at the ends of green stalks that are clustered around and above her. Her right arm is almost visible, as are her feet and parts of both legs and her hips. Her left hand is also evident, pressed closely against her left thigh. Her face and torso are mostly obscured.

Yagul is located in the central valley of Oaxaca, and contains a network of caves and two archeological complexes. Zapotec occupied the site at the time of Spanish contact in Mexico. Under a Spanish colonial policy, the Zapotec community was removed to a village less than a mile from their ancestral home, Tlacolua in 1560.[215] At Yagul, biological evidence demonstrates the ancestral shifting of Indigenous Mexican culture toward agrarian practices—well preserved seeds of gourds, beans, and other squash, as well as the earliest known cobs of maize were found organized between two of the caves at the site.[216] It is also a site where excavations in the 1960s revealed a host of ancestral rock art throughout the cave complexes.[217] Yagul is a site that carries immense importance in demonstrating the land-body connection for Indigenous peoples, suggesting that it is a place where human beings' relationships with place became increasingly intertwined at an extremely early date. This site then, is central to the

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[215] Michael Lind, *Ancient Zapotec Religion: An Ethnohistorical and Archeological Perspective* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2015).
[216] UNESCO, World Heritage Centre, "Prehistoric Caves of Yagul and Mitla in the Central Valley of Oaxaca," https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1352/. Pumpkin seeds and maize at Yagul date from between 10,000 and 6,500 BCE. See Reyna Paz Avendaño, "There are Already More Than 30 Sites Registered with Cave Paintings in Tlacolula and Mitla," *Cronica*, July 28, 2015, http://www.cronica.com.mx/notas/2015/911758.html.
[217] María de la Luz Gérres Martinez, "La Producción de Arte Repuestre en el Contexto del Primer Poblamiento de México: Algunas Evidencias Tempranas," *Human Origin Sites and the World Heritage Convention in the* Americas, (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2015), 100-125.

formation of Indigeneity broadly, and embodies central features of Indigenous cultures, which persist today.

Of particular importance to Mendieta's *Silueta* series—comprised of over 200 images—Yagul hosts a substantial compendium of evidence of Indigenous ritual practices that tie culture (in this case Zapotec) and land. Mendieta meditated often about the land as a sort of "womb" or mother to which she desired to return. *Silueta* can be said to be an exploration of that longing and desire to be reclaimed by the ancestral teachings that link human bodies with land-as-mother. Mendieta wrote,

> I have been carrying out a dialogue between the landscape and the female body (based on my own silhouette). I believe this has been a direct result of my having been torn from my homeland (Cuba) during my adolescence. I am overwhelmed by the feeling of having been cast from the womb (nature). My art is the way I re-establish the bonds that unite me to the universe.[218]

It's unclear whether Mendieta would have been aware of it, but Zapotecs in Yagul have a long history of making offerings that demonstrate the connection and Indigenous perspective of land-as-mother extremely clearly. The complex where *Imagen de Yagul* was made, called *El Placio de los Seis Patios* (The Palace of Six Patios) has an area where ancestral Zapotecs made offerings of newborn babies' umbilical cords by burying them in the ground within ceramic vessels. This practice continues in Zapotec communities today, revealing a continuity of Indigenous beliefs about relationships with land. Umbilical cord burial and carrying are common practices for many Indigenous North American communities, ranging from site-specific community burials to individual

[218] John Perreault, "Earth and Fire: Mendieta's Body of Work," in *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* Petra Barreras del Rio and Perreault eds. (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1988), 10.

created objects that would be carried throughout life by the baby or one of their relatives. Iconography on the Zapotec painted ceramic umbilical vessels at Yagul and elsewhere suggests that the practice of burying umbilical cords coincide with ideas about agriculture (corn designs), fertility (genitalia), and blood.[219] Evidence of the coinciding ritual relationships between body, blood, agriculture, and land is extremely pertinent at the site where the earliest known evidence of agricultural practices were found— Yagul.

Beginning the *Silueta* series at a site where such deep connections between human beings and land was so centrally important suggests Mendieta's initial impulse within the series was rooted in Indigenous teachings and ceremonial practice. Her demonstrated thinking in evidence at the beginning of her largest body of work reflects Vanessa Watt's conception of place-thought as well as Deer and Kronk's arguments about the perceived gendered nature of land. Her engagement with Indigenous ceremonial practice is more extensive than a longing for "magic" that some scholars have dismissed it as. Rather, I stress that her practice was rooted in an Indigenous approach that was developed through her experience as a racialized Cuban Latina within a mostly white American context. Inversely, it should also be recognized and understood that the communities on whose sites Mendieta made her work remain living vibrant Indigenous communities which still practice their traditional relationships with land. In Mexico, the Zapotec continue to practice their ceremonial relations with the land—those practices are not Mendieta's

[219] Adam T. Sellen, "Sowing the Blood with the Maize: Zapotec Effigy Vessels and Agricultural Ritual," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22, no. 1 (Spring, 2011): 71-89.

heritage. And in Cuba, Taíno communities still live and practice their kinships with Caribbean islands.[220]

Nevertheless, the specific sites she selected for her *in situ* works, starting with Yagul demonstrate this common thread; Mendieta was looking for ways to reclaim ancestral Native thinking and practices rooted in land. Mendieta's trip to Oaxaca was during the first year of her MFA program at Iowa State University, the beginning of her artistic career. After producing over 200 images of installations, and films associated with *Silueta*, the *Rupestrian Sculptures* moved Mendiata "to the source" of her personal claims to Indigeneity—Cuba.

At the closing of the seven years of exploring the various connotations of the land- body connections in *Silueta*, the *Rupestrian Sculpture* (Cave Art) series (Fig. 13) marks a direct turn toward Mendieta's own biographical claims of Indigeneity. Whereas the earlier works linked to Latino Indigeneity broadly (Yagul as the epicenter of Indigenous agrarian practices in North America), the works she made in Cuba directly linked her art career to her homelands, and to the long-storied relationships of Indigenous peoples with that specific place. Mendieta was supported by the Cuban Ministry of Culture in a month-long return trip to the Island in August of 1981. While there, she focused her time at three sites near Havana: Guanabo, Jaruco, and Varandero.[221] Guanabo and Jaruco are cities, 14 and 23 miles from Havana respectively. Varandero is an isthmus that creates the Bahia de Cárdenas on Cuba's north shore.

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[220] Poole, " What Became of the Taíno?," https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/what-became-of-the-taino-73824867/.

[221]"Ana Mendieta: La Tierra Habla (The Earth Speaks)" Press Release (New York: Galerie Lelong & Co, October 17, 2019), http://www.galerielelong.com/exhibitions/ana-mendieta5/selected-works?view=slider.

Each of these places has sites where ancestral Taíno created rock art that links those communities to the land in ritualistic and ceremonial practice. Hundreds of sites throughout Cuba have been identified as ancestrally important rock art sites, largely in caves, grottoes, rock shelters, and in underground limestone caverns, and it's probable that many more remain unidentified to academics, though might continue to be in use for Indigenous communities. Many scholars have suggested that the presence of sculptures and rock art at these locations references Taíno creation stories, in which human creation began in a cave.[222]

At Jaruco, Mendieta focused her time at *Escaleras de Jaruco* (The Stairs of Jaruco) National Park where she made the core compendium of works in the *Rupestrian* series. At Jaruco, she carved ten abstracted figures into soft limestone rock walls and inside caves, which she titled *Mujeres de Piedra* (Stone Women). These were dedicated to, and named for, ten female Taíno deities, Albohoa (The Beautiful One), Atabey (Mother of the Waters), Bacayu (Light of Day), Guacar (First Menstruation), Guabancex (Wind Goddess), Guanaroca (First Woman), Itiba Cahubaba (Old Mother of the Blood), Iyare (Mother Goddess), and Maroya (Moon Goddess).[223] Mendieta researched multiple sources for information about the character of these female deities, seeking to understand the ways they functioned for Taíno culture.[224]

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[222] Marlene S. Linville, "Cave Encounters: Rock Art Research in Cuba," *Dialogues in Cuban Archeology*, L. Antonio Curet, Gabino Le Rosa Corzo, and Shannon Lee Dawdy eds. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 72.
[223] Artspace Editors, "The Secret of Ana Mendieta's Mysterious Cave Women," *Artspace* (Feb. 10, 2016), https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/book_report/ana-mendieta-stone-women-53518.
[224] Olga M Viso, "The Memory of History," *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body* Olga M. Viso ed. (Washington D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 2004), 90.

The figures share abstraction, but each differs in its specific stylistic content each is represented as an individual, identifiably "female" form (however essentializing that assignation may be). *Guaranroca (First Woman)* is typical of the abstraction Mendieta employed. The photograph of the figure is closely cropped, obscuring an orientation of the work relative to the land it is carved into—this is seen in every one of the images Mendieta produced of the low-relief sculptures. The head of the figure tips to the left, with arms descending downward, ending above the hips. The thin torso connects the top and bottom halves of the form. The bottom section is larger in width than the top, with rounded "hips" tapering downward until they meet together at the bottom point of the form. Between the legs, the space has been brushed smooth, with the exception of a deepened gouge at the center, suggestive of female genitals. Genitals are not seen in each of the ten figures, but most have some essentially "female" identifying feature, including breasts, large rounded hips, or tapered waists.

While Mendieta herself may or may not have had direct ancestrally defined Taíno heritage, her attention to the Indigenous deities of this tradition suggest her desire to understand and "claim" that heritage as it was conflated for her, with the very land of Cuba itself. Her reclaiming act is in defiance of the structures of identity that are imposed by North American settler states— both the US and Cuba. Considering this desire then, Mendieta shows investment in the idea that specific places reflect and contain memory and kinships with humans. Her works invest in the Indigenous memory that each site contains and embodies. These two series, *Silueta* and the *Rupestrian* Sculptures demonstrate ways that gendered land can function for Indigenous peoples in diaspora. Mendieta's longing return to Cuba and her forming of it as her "motherland" is a notion

embodied in the *Rupestrian Sculptures*, which should be viewed as discursive with *Silueta*. By contrast, *Silueta* is a record of the longing of a person in diaspora, displaced from homelands. The works in the series reflect at once an assertion of connection to land, a female gendered perspective of it, and attention to site-specific interventions that make emplaced memory come alive.

Mendieta's choices in the locations where she created *Silueta* and *Rupestrian Sculptures* demonstrate that she regarded land as a container and archive of the specific Indigenous community that emerged from that site, as well as the centuries of overlapping histories and memories that result, ultimately, in Mendieta herself. Both series embody her historically positioned relationships to the land, the tensions with the various nation-states that defined it, and her internal longing for return as well as her own resistance to strict definitions of identity. Whether or not Mendieta was directly descended from Taíno or Zapotec communities, her relationships with the lands on which she created her works embody Indigenous kinship structures with land, as it is understood as a gendered body.

Though critiques of the essentializing representations of the "woman" body are valid, her attention to the ancestral memories that are contained in place fits with those notions of Indigenous kinships to land. Asserting connections to those memories resists colonial impositions that would otherwise sever connections with place and land. Thus, Mendieta's works demonstrate one way that place can be understood and *practiced*, as Tuck and Mackenzie argued in *Place in Research*.[225] Further, these works make reclamations of the land in North America as female, away from the harmful tradition

[225] Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research,* 19.

established by the likes of John Smith, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Mendieta's oeuvre embodies, in part, reclamation of the power dynamics that Smith's maps and stories represent, as she rejects the disempowerment of the female land-body connection.[226] As such Mendieta's *Silueta* and *Rupestrian* series can be considered in discourse with Indigeneity at large.

Faye Heavyshield's installation *Body of Land* (Fig. 15) extends the Indigenous land-body discourse away from the gender essentializing and other troubling aspects of Mendieta's sculptural series. Begun in 2002, *Body of Land* is an artistic representation of the Indigenous land-body connection that is more directly and specifically rooted in an Indigenous relationship with place, for example. The work is a mediation of the relationship of the artist and her family, clan, community, and nation with the lands that have defined them for centuries—not unlike the *Silueta* and *Rupestrian* series.

In the process of creating and installing *Body of Land*, Faye Heavyshield took digital photographs of the skin of her grandchildren, children, friends, and other relatives, as well as herself.[227] The resulting images share a wide variety of color and textural forms. Heavyshield then took each of the close-up photographs and curled them around themselves into a conical form. These little cones were then arranged in the gallery relative to one another in abstraction.

The work has a multitude of layers of meaning, all of which coalesce to express the land-body kinships that offer definition for Indigenous communities. The work

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[226] Kiara M. Cabañas, "Ana Mendieta: "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am,"" *Women's Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring- Summer 1999): 16.
[227] "Meet the Artist: Faye Heavyshield," YouTube Video, 1:58 min., National Gallery of Canada, May 15, 2017, https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/exhibitions/meet-the-artist-faye-heavyshield

functions as a multivalent examination of ways body and land and history function together and provide avenues for remembrance that demonstrates Indigenous land and body kinships. These themes include the history of photography for Indigenous North Americans, shapes and forms that give rise to individual Native communities on the land, and the concept and formal expression of the concept of "home" as it exists both in body, in a dwelling place, and as a homeland.

The history of photography parallels the unfurling of Manifest Destiny in the United States, and the colonial expansion of European resource extraction in Canada, as both nations unfurled toward the Pacific Ocean.[228] Ethnographic photography grew throughout the 19th century, as white contact with Indigenous peoples increased, and it paralleled beliefs about the eventual disappearance of Native nations. Many Indigenous artists have utilized this media as a means to "reclaim" or counteract the harmful ethnographic histories that were influenced by impositions of photography on Native communities. The instances of Native people turning to photography as their chosen artistic media, or as an aspect that works toward their larger artistic projects marks, for many of them, a reversal and a confrontation of the power dynamics that had too often defined our communities.[229]

Heavyshield's use of digital photography in *Body of Land* embraces this reversal in two ways. First her practice specifically rejects the ways that Indigenous bodies and flesh were depicted as ethnographic and anthropological perspectives, which sought to

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[228] Brian Dippie, "Allegories and Indian Destiny," *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1992): 40-57.
[229] Lee Philip Brumbaugh, "Shadow Catchers or Shadow Snatchers? Ethical Issues for Photographers of Contemporary Native Americans," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 20, no. 3 (1996): 33-49.

taxonomize Native peoples, and which turned Indigenous bodies into spectacle.[230] Heavyshield's photographs in the installation of *Body of Land* are such extremely close-up images of flesh that the skin itself becomes like a tiny landscape. These images defy the spectacular impulse as they are hardly recognizable as flesh. Moreover, the photographs defy the objectification of body type, skin tone, or other markers that code individual bodies as "Indian."

Second, Heavyshield's photographs lay claim to the photographic process itself. In an interview about her process, she said that the work was borne from her return to her homeland—the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta. When she returned home, she returned to family, land, language, and culture of the Blackfoot Confederacy, of which the Kainai are part. When she returned, she began making art again, and began with her own self. She says, "It was just as easy as taking a digital camera and shooting a digital close-up of my skin. The images are of my skin… I didn't want the distraction for the viewer to think, "Oh is that a hand?" or you know, just trying to puzzle it out." She continues, speaking of her process in the production of the piece,

> As time went on, I started using other people in my family… There's one in there, it's of my grandson. It's like a little landscape. You know those little bones at the base of the neck, on the base of the spine? Those little knolls? That's what I shot of him, on his body. [231]

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[230] Alison Griffiths, "Science and Spectacle: Native American Representation in Early Cinema," *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, S. Elizabeth Bird, ed. (London: Routledge 2018), 79- 96.
[231] "National Gallery of Canada Artist Interview: Faye Heavyshield" YouTube Video, 6:56 min., National Gallery of Canada, January 3, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfyLIaaL6tA

Through the process of making images of her own body and the flesh of her family and members of her community, Heavyshield makes a reclamation of both the Indigenous body, the representation of Indian flesh, land, and community. That she did this through a media that has an immense history of contributing to negative effects for Indigenous peoples, *Body of Land* can be classified as an artwork of resistance and reclamation. The work counters the way representation of body by the likes of John Smith, with whom I began this chapter, as an Indigenous woman turns toward making images of her own body in a process of self-definition. As she moved outward from the photographs of herself, to include her grandchildren and other members of community, she also defied the gendered essentializing for which some have critiqued Mendieta. For some communities, land is at once mother, father, ancestor and community, defiant of the gender binary, but still containing those aspects ascribed to "female" bodies.

Beyond making reclamation of the Indigenous body, *Body of Land* is also reclamation of land. In the same interview, Heavyshield spoke to the ways that various textures and colors in the compendium of photographs she produced are an evocative reminder of the land itself. The soft forms that were revealed in the close-up images of flesh reminded her of the soft coulee forms that dip down into prairie streams and meandering riverbeds. Coulees define the southern Alberta landscape—the steep sided v-shaped valleys are found along most riverbeds throughout the region. Those forms were created when glaciers receded and formed the prairie grasslands, and were then eroded by forces of water and wind that also define the region. Coulees are sanctuaries for hundreds of species and form individualized ecosystems. The landforms are important in understanding plains communities' relationships with land—for Blackfoot Confederacy

members in particular; coulees are featured in many stories and legends, and contain teachings for those communities.[232] The shapes of coulees reminded Heavyshield of the shape of a mother's body that she called "kind to the eye," soft rounded forms, not unlike Mendieta's soft female forms carved into sandstone in Jaruco National Park.[233]

In one installation of the work, at Kelowna, Heavyshield reflected on envisioning herself shrunk to the scale of the small curled paper forms, abstracted landscapes of skin and prairie.[234] It is easy to perceive oneself as extremely small in scale relative to land in open prairies, so the reversal— making representation of land that is relatively small to the human body was an exercise in opposition. Heavyshield's work is in part a meditation on landscape as a personal and phenomenological experience relative to land itself.[235]

Formally, the conical shapes that Heavyshield created for *Body of Land* are suggestive of traditional Plains communities' lodges. In Siksika, the language of the Blackfoot Confederacy, the term for traditional lodges is "niitóyis."[236] Lodges for Kainai and other Blackfoot communities are customarily constructed with sewn hides of bison or later with canvas, surrounding long lodge poles cut from poplar trees. Huge encampments of Blackfoot Confederacy communities are depicted in early works of the German artist Karl Bodmer, and photographers Walter McClintock and Edward S. Curtis. Curtis made an image of various communities including Kainai camped together for a Blackfoot

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[232] John McLean, "Blackfoot Indian Legends," *The Journal of American Folklore*, 2, no. 11 (October- December 1890): 298.
[233] "National Gallery of Canada Artist Interview: Faye Heavyshield" YouTube Video, 6:56 min., National Gallery of Canada, January 3, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfyLIaaL6tA
[234] Ibid.
[235] Deborah Everett and Elayne Zom, *Encyclopedia of Native American Artists* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), 71.
[236] Plural form is "niitóyiistsi."

Sundance ceremony in 1898 (Fig. 16). In the image, Blackfoot niitóyiistsi sprawl across the face of the land, rooted around a central opening. Such formation was customary for Blackfoot Confederacy and other Plains communities. The photograph shows what Walter McClintock called a "white city" of painted lodges bundled together and reflecting the sun against the undulating prairie lands.[237]

Blackfoot Confederacy niitóyiistsi traditionally contain immense wealth of information about individuals and family who own them, as the painted designs both on the inside and outside surfaces recount biographical information and details about the heritage, deeds, and identity of individuals who created and used them. Each niitóyis is unique. The images painted on each hide lodge covering are a graphic representation of individual and community identity, representing the use of sophisticated visual language to communicate a broad range of unique identities.[238]

Beyond the graphics painted to represent individual identities within Blackfoot lodges, the hides used for each lodge reflect community relationships and kinships with the animal nations from whom those hides were culled. The use of animal flesh in the creation of Kainai lodges is reflected in Heavyshield's installation, in which human flesh forms the outward "skin" of the small conical "lodges" that give form to the artwork. The connections between human body, human flesh, animal flesh, land, history, and tradition are made tangible in the installation—body becomes land, which in turn becomes body again in an inseparable loop.

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[237] Walter McClintock, *The Old North Trail, Or, Life Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 207.
[238] María Nieves Zendeño, "Art as the Road to Perfection: The Blackfoot Tipi," *Cambridge Archeological Journal*, 27, no. 4 (2017): 633.

Customary forms of encampment, community making, and relationships to land are the background on which Heavyshield drew in her production of *Body of Land*. Throughout, the work resists the preponderance of the power dynamics inherent in colonial looking—at both body and land. *Body of Land* represents an ultimate rejection of the model of engagement embodied in John Smith's 1612 map of colonial Virginia, coupled with his fantastic story of Pocahontas. The work confronts the violence implied in Smith's colonizing actions, as the land and the body are reclaimed as Indigenous.

Figures



Figure 1
Virginia
John Smith (English)
1612
Published by William Hole, 1624; Sixth State.
Library of Congress Geography and Map Division No. G3880 1624 .S451
Washington D.C.

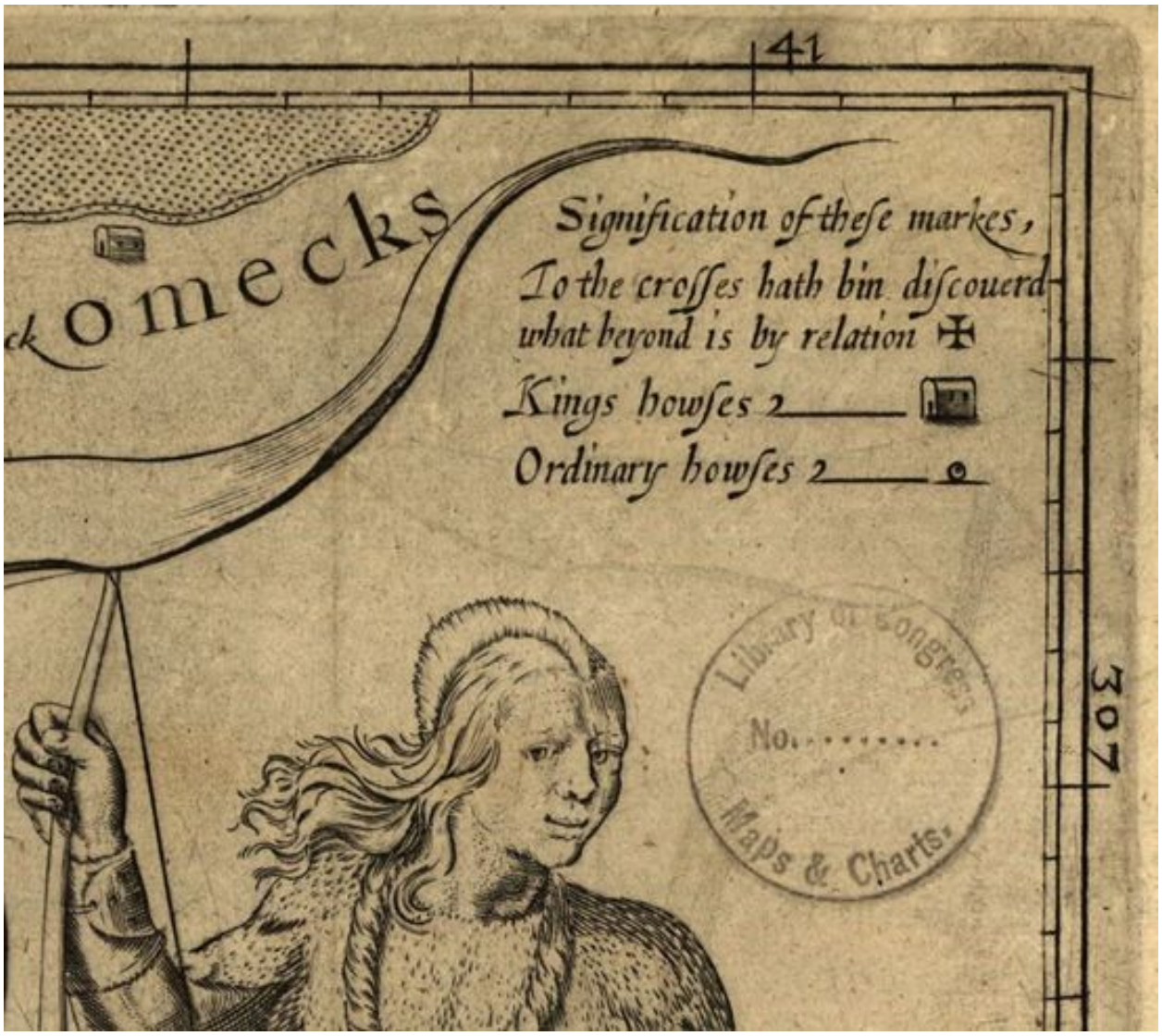
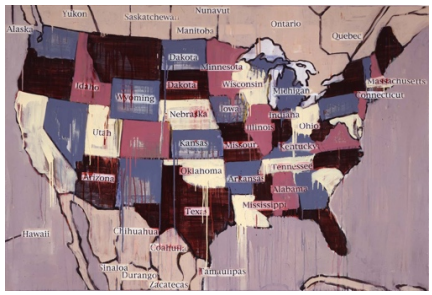


Figure 1.1
Virginia (Detail)
John Smith
1612
Published by William Hole, 1624; Sixth State.
Library of Congress Geography and Map Division No. G3880 1624 .S451
Washington D.C.











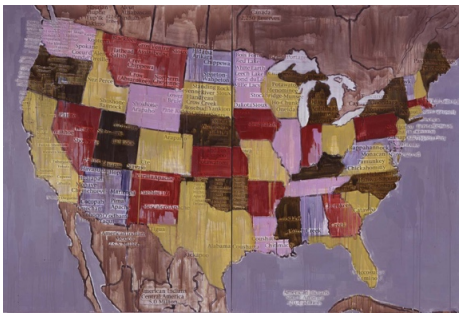








Figure 3
Map Series (2000 segment)
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)



Figure 4
The Browning of America, 2000
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)



Figure 5
Map Rock Petroglyph
Basalt
600 meters northeast of Givens Hot Springs, Canyon County Idaho
Image courtesy Idaho Historical Society

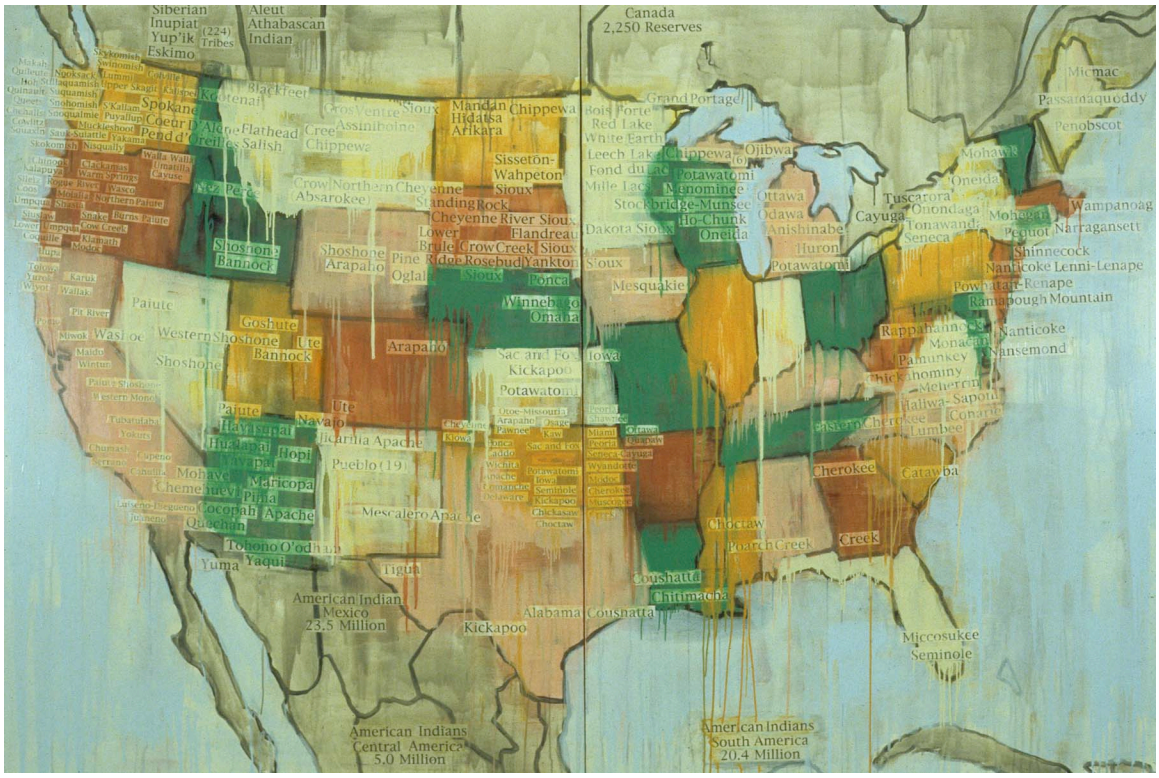


Figure 6
Tribal Map I, 2000
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)

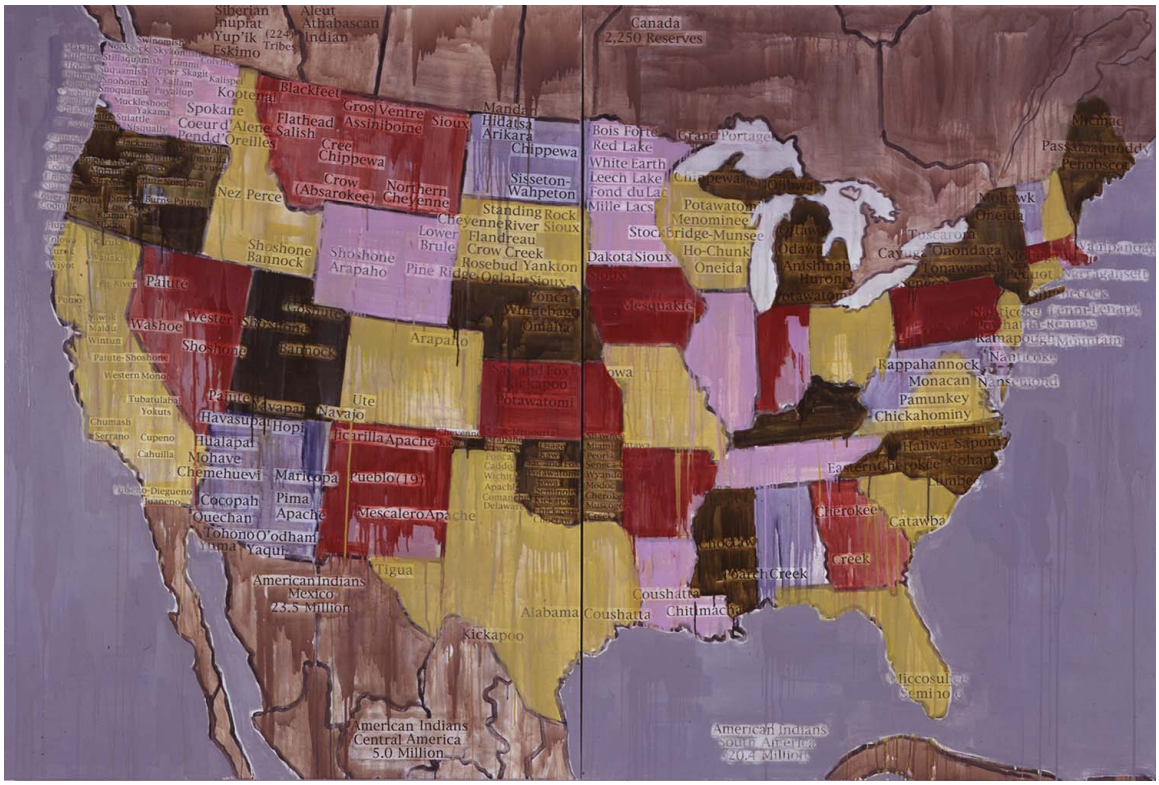


Figure 7
Tribal Map II, 2000
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)

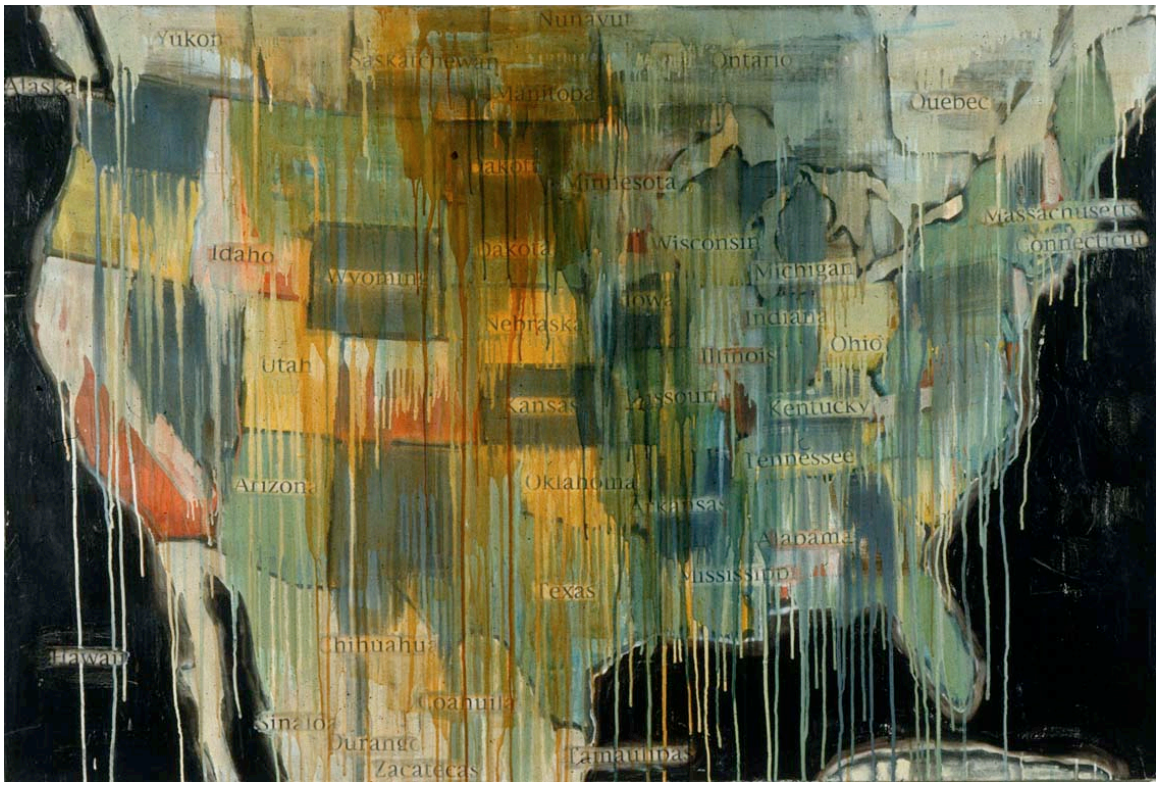


Figure 8
State Names I, 2000
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)

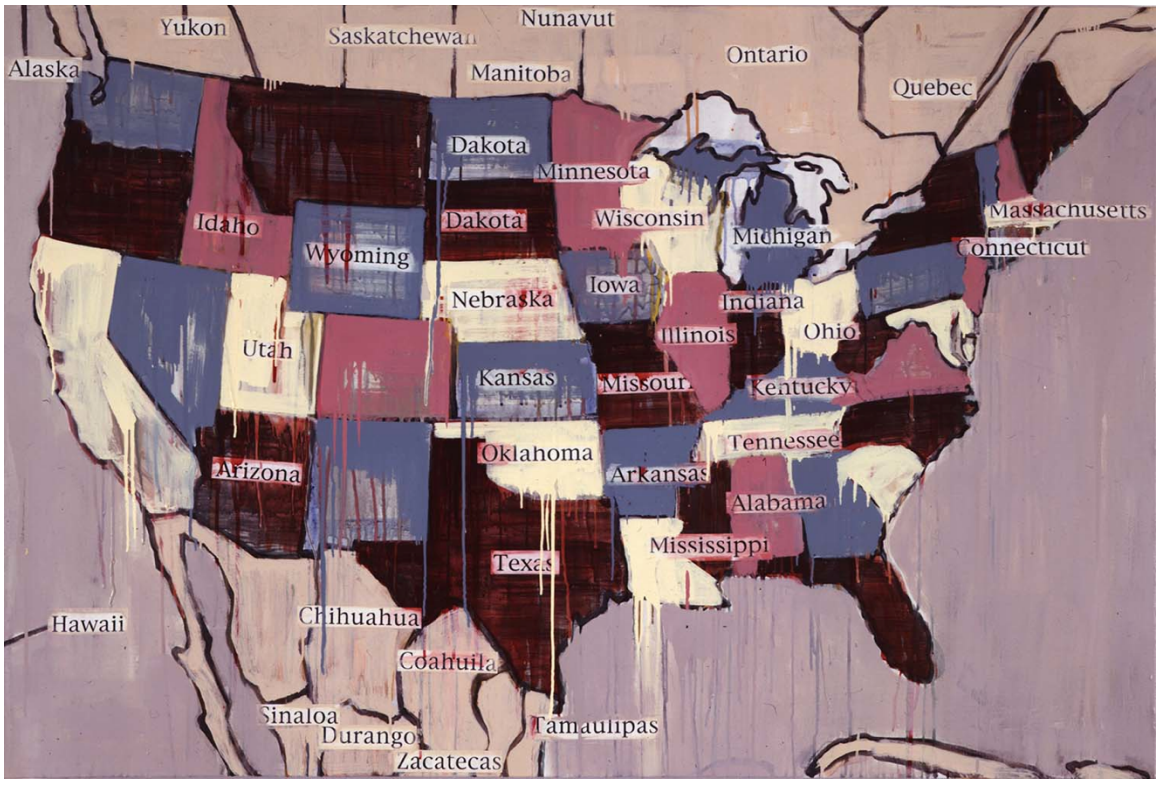


Figure 9
State Names II, 2000
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)

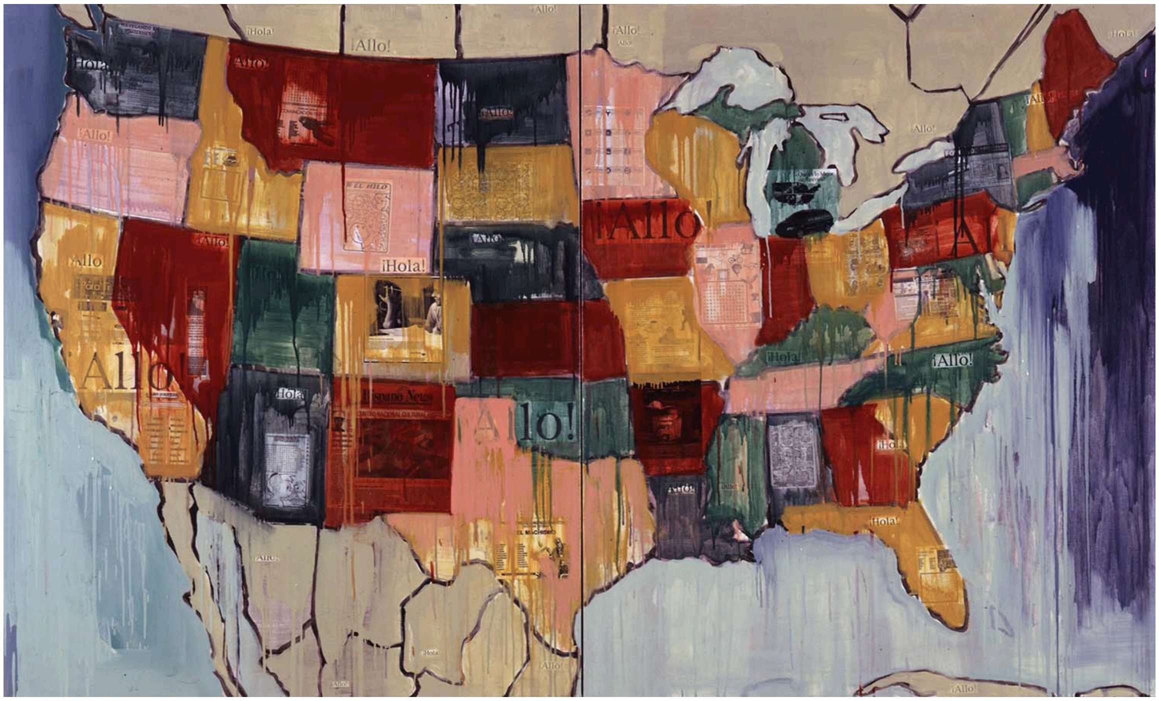


Figure 10
Echo Map I (Allo), 2000
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish-Kootenai/Métis-Cree/Shoshone)

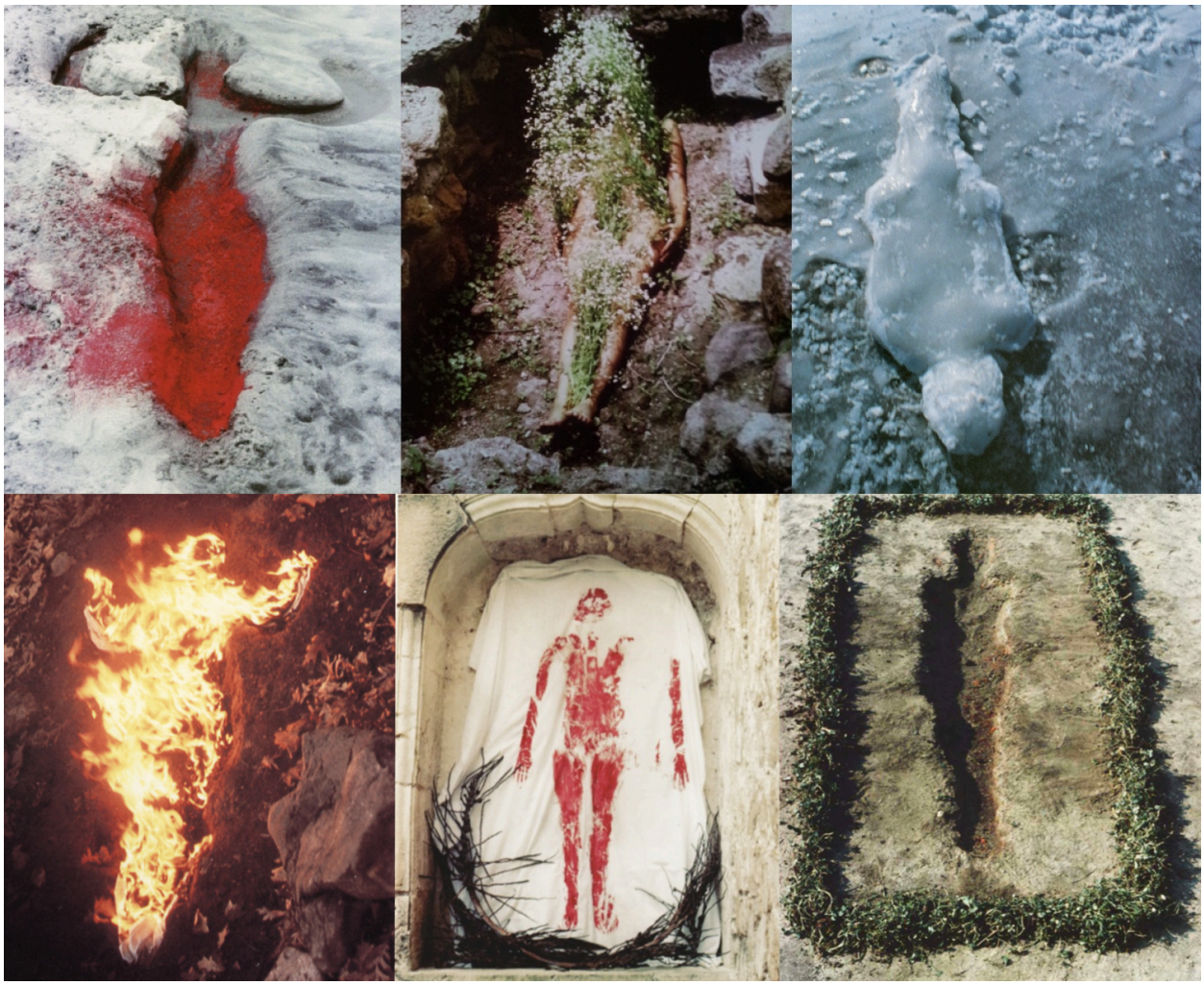


Figure 11
Silueta (selected works) 1973-1980
Ana Mendieta (Cuban, U.S. Citizen)



Figure 12
Silueta- Imagen de Yagul, 1973
Ana Mendieta (Cuban, U.S. Citizen)



Figure 13
Esculturas Rupestres- Guabancex (Goddess of the Wind) and Itiba Cahubaba (Old Mother of the Blood), 1981
Ana Mendieta (Cuban, U.S. Citizen)
Escaleras de Jaruco, Jaruco National Park, Cuba



Figure 14
Guanaroca (First Woman) from *Esculturas Rupestrian*, 1981
Ana Mendieta (Cuban, U.S. Citizen)
Escaleras de Jaruco, Jaruco National Park, Cuba



Figure 15
Body of Land, 2002
Faye Heavyshield (Kainai Nation, Blackfoot Confederacy)
Installed at the National Gallery of Canada, 2010

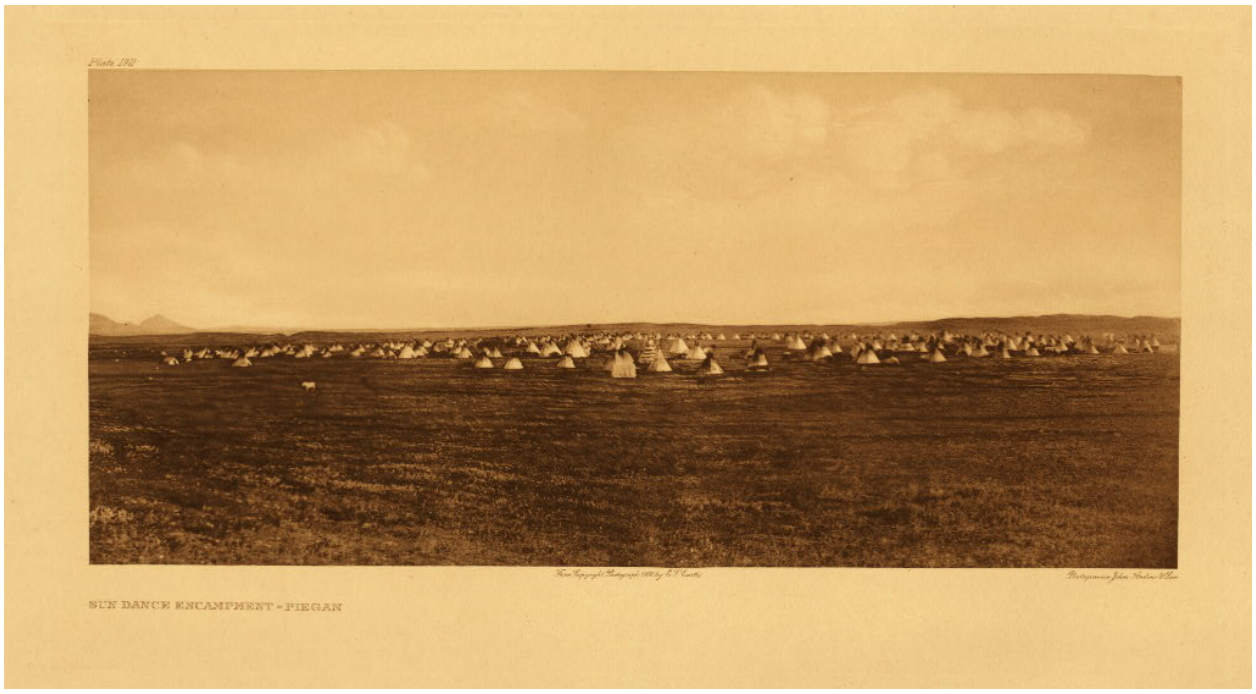


Figure 16
Sun Dance Encampment- Piegan, 1898
Edward S. Cutis (U.S. Citizen, White)
LOC Identifier: CP06009

Nakón I’abi Glossary for Chapter III

Makoče	Land/Territory
Makoče Wa’owabi	Representation of Land (map)
Miníšoše	The Missouri River
niitóyis	Blackfoot Confederacy lodges (singular)

IV. Įdóheya

In Assiniboine language, the word *įdóheya* is an adverb that means facing toward home. It is a word that I turn to often, and which defines my thinking about North America as Indigenous homelands. In this, my final chapter, I examine an installation by a First Nation artist whose work represents historically embedded knowledge that situates Indigenous peoples at home and in kinship with land. In the previous chapter I ended with a discussion of the land in relationship with the Indigenous body—particularly with the female gendered body, as a means to introduce concepts explored in this chapter. There, I considered the body as the first home and analyzed an installation by Faye Heavyshield, in which the body and the land became stand-ins for one another in abstraction. Here, I will expand on the concepts raised by Heavyshield's work as I turn to an installation by Serpent River First Nation sculptor Bonnie Devine.

I chose to focus on Devine's installation for this final chapter because in many ways, it brings me back to the beginning. I am brought back to the beginnings of Indigeneity writ large; I am brought back to the beginnings of this dissertation, in which I wrote about the land existing as ancestor, relative, and archive; I am brought back to my own beginning and my own negotiation with past and future at once—as I make efforts to understand my own life in an ongoing relationship with land. I understand these perspectives as foundational to Indigenous life in North America, and ultimately these concepts should be understood to underpin *every* artwork I have analyzed in this

dissertation. Every instance of Indigenous visual art that is referential to land is an extension of the idea of home because the land itself is the basis of Indigenous culture. So, any work that stems from Indigenous cultural expression is an extension of that concept. In this chapter Devine's work perpetually reminds me of what it means to be ancestrally at home on the back of this land, and what it means to experience "home" under centuries of duress.

Throughout this dissertation, I have relied on the work of Dr. Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie in their book, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology and Methods*. While the emphasis of *Place in Research* is focused on social sciences, I have found immense use for this framework throughout my analysis. My approach to the topics in this dissertation comes from an understanding of what Tuck and McKenzie term "critical place inquiry" (CPI), which is a methodological approach to analyzing human experiences of and relationships with place and land. By coupling their methodology with art historical analysis, I have made space for a consideration of Indigenous North American artforms in which land and place determine and define culture—namely that Indigenous experiences of place and relationships with land are foundational to the formation of Indigenous society.[239] Further, Indigenous cultural practices form land and provide meaning to human society, in reciprocity. Tuck and McKenzie's model conceptualizes place as dynamic and interactive and, importantly for the themes I address in this chapter, also consider the land itself and nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as vital foundations for the expression of "place." This methodology extends my own understanding of land and nonhuman inhabitants containing agency. The agency of land

[239] Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015). See page 19 for the full list of the tenets of CPI.

and nonhuman life forms is a central facet of the work that is included in this chapter; as such I anticipate a sincere consideration of that belief as a core truth that roots Indigenous cultures. I have demonstrated throughout my dissertation a variety of ways Native artists have rejected and intervened in the normalization and erasure of settler colonialism, which is also a theme that forms a vital component of this chapter. These analytical tools have formed the primary approaches I have taken throughout my dissertation and will continue to inform my approach in this last chapter.

In Kinship

Land is at the heart and in the deep-down origins, and in the simplest definition of "Indigenous." Indigeneity is a concept profoundly entwined in land that is fundamentally and inexorably *home*. The concept of homeland is represented, honored, and believed-in at every level in Native culture, from the primordial slurries at the beginnings and messy middles of our origin stories. Homeland is an idea evident in every protest, action, and behind every frontline in the Indigenous history of North America since at least 1492. It is a concept that is celebrated and mourned in ceremony. Our connections to land are demonstrated in our clothing, our accessories, and in every way that we represent ourselves in the world, from contemporary ribbon skirts that brush against the tall prairie grasses (and against concrete in the city) to the motifs of mountains and directions painted, sewn, and quilled onto our oldest ancestral clothes. Everywhere— and I mean every *where*— we look on this land, we see evidence of ourselves. Our oldest grandfathers are the rocks here; our greatest- grandmothers dictate the tides here. The

land mass of North America is at once root, teacher, lover, and determiner of Indigenous peoples' fate. We belong to her, no less than a suckling babe belongs to the mother's breast. The land holds the memories of our oldest and longest-buried kin. We are taught that when we return to them one day and that they are happy to be again with our land.

Again, *this* land is our home.

Indigenous peoples express the characteristics of relationships with land through a variety of forms including language, song, ceremony, and the social practices that our societies dictate. In a 2000 article, "Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous Perceptions of the Human-Nature Relationship," Enrique Salmón (Rarámuri) characterizes Native perspectives on the relationship with land and nonhuman inhabitants as one of extended circles of kinship, in which human beings are "sharing breath with our relatives."[240] The same concept is contained in the Nakón word, "midáguyebi," which contains the philosophical suggestion of Assiniboine ontology of interconnection with all things as relatives—kin.

Kincentricity explains a concept developed by O'Odham and Chicano ecological thinker Dennis Martinez. Martinez posited that Indigenous worldviews are wrapped up in beliefs in which human beings and the earth are tied to a circular interaction and reciprocity. The word was meant to shift away from anthropocentric terms in common parlance, toward a more equitable and balanced perspective that affords agency to non-human life forms in ways more robust than other words and phrases do. In short, kincentricity describes a paradigm "where we have a relationship with not only our immediate biological family, our extended family, our tribe, our clan, our community, but

[240] Enrique Salmón, "Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous Perceptions of the Human-Nature Relationship," *Ecological Applications* 10, no. 5 (Oct. 2000): 1328.

also with plants and animals out in the natural world."[241] The relationships individual Indigenous communities develop with the world ultimately differentiate us and define tribal community identity and the roles and identity of the individual.

Understanding Indigenous worldviews as *kincentric* allows for a greater understanding of Indigenous cultures. [242] Such an understanding is pivotal to Native artists whose work focuses on land and land issues because in the kincentric view, land itself is a relative, and all things that emanate therefrom are part of an interconnected family network. This perspective is taught and is innate in Indigenous cultures, as it is carried in ceremony, song, and in land management practices and traditional life ways. Seeing kincentric perspectives as central to Indigenous culture allows for a sharpened understanding of Indigenous history, motives, and the ongoing activity of Indigenous peoples in defense and in honor of the land. Kincentricity is at the heart of Indigenous ecological practices and land management, as well as spirituality and the development and maintenance of culture.

Further, a kincentric framework perceives land as an *active* participant in creating meaning, forming culture, defining values, and building relations. In this view, the land is not just the site on which history unfolds. Rather land is in active dialogue with memory, spirit, and time, however it is measured and understood— and time is measured differently within tribal and ceremonial communities. Time is also formed by land. The two function as kin to define experience and create human beings' phenomenological engagement with place.

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[241] Dennis Martinez (Interviewee) and David E. Hall (Interviewer), "Native Perspectives on Sustainability: Dennis Martinez (O'Odham/Chicano)," 2008 interview, http://www.nativeperspectives.net/Transcripts/Dennis_Martinez_interview.pdf, 3
[242] Ibid, 8

Damages done to those kinship systems through centuries of Indigenous dispossession of place and the ongoing incursions and threats to animal, water, and mineral nations on the traditional territories of Native communities has resulted in immense cultural upheaval. In many ways the ills that plague First Nations and American Indian communities stem from the intergenerational trauma inflicted on ancestors through the destruction and erasure of the kinship paradigms that gave birth to our cultures. I examined this concept briefly in Chapter I, when I reflected on the destruction of Choctaw history at Nanih Wiya and the "lost race" theory. Upon their forced removal to Indian Territory in the 19th century, Choctaw traditional practices *in kinship* with the land were disrupted and distanced. There are numerous other instances in which threats to Native culture and Indigenous trauma responses can be linked to desecrations of customary kinship structures, which include the human *and* non-human world. Whether our traditional practices are in place or not, the historical and cultural relationships we inherit as relatives of the natural world continue to define Native communities. In short, the kinship model underwrites Indigenous cultures and motivates our relationships with the world: with the plant, animal, and mineral nations that co-exist with us in time. This is an Indigenous worldview.

Home/Land

Indigneous means connected to place, in one form or another. Martinez' framing of *kincentricity* makes space for the ways home and Indigenous connections to land and place have been imperiled by the intrusions of settler colonialism over the last four

centuries. In his 2008 interview with David Hall, Martinez urges Indian people to work toward economies of restoration of land, kinship, and culture as a means to combat the ill-effects of these centuries of compounding history. The concept of being *at home* on the land in North America is troubling when one considers the overwhelming urban Indigenous unhoused populations that live unseen in our cities and on reservations throughout the United States and Canada.[243] Perhaps mainstream America's unwillingness to see these people is part of the ongoing legacy of the colonial desecrations of our ways of life—the destruction of Indigenous community gives rise to our relatives walking the streets of the US and Canada—exiled in our own lands. It gives rise to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people.[244]

Yuchi and Mvskogee/Creek artist Richard Ray Whitman explored the paradigm of Native homelessness in his series of thirty-seven photographs, *Street Chiefs* (1970-80s).[245] In that series, Whitman's portrait photographs of the urban unhoused Native people in Oklahoma City intervenes in centuries of dehumanizing photography that defined Native people for at least a century. While it focuses on a subject that denies the romanticizing fetishism that many had come to expect from representations of Native

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[243] It is reported that American Indian and Alaska Native young adults experience homelessness at three times the prevalence as white non-Hispanic peers. See Matthew H. Morton, Raúl Chávez, and Kelly Moore, "Prevalence and Correlates of Homelessness Among American Indian and Alaska Native Youth," *The Journal of Primary Prevention* 40 (2019): 653.

[244] Annita Lucchesi and Abigail Echo-Hawk *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls: A Snapshot of Data from 71 Urban Cities in the United States*, (Seattle: Urban Indian Health Institute, a Division of the Seattle Indian Health Board, 2018): 20.

[245] Laura M. Furlan, *Indigenous Cities: Urban Indian Fiction and the Histories of Relocation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 126-128. See also W. Jackson Rushing, "Street Chiefs and Native Hosts: Richard Ray (Whitman) and Edgar Heap of Birds Defend the Homeland," in Richard Bolton ed., *Green Acres: Neocolonialism in the United States* ex. cat. (St. Louis: Washington University Gallery of Art, 1992), 23-42.

Americans, Whitman's series unflinchingly insists on Indigenous self-determination and self-depiction.

Rather than exploiting his unhoused subjects in their condition, Whitman's photography is humanizing. In the series, Whitman focused on those who may have served in roles of "chief," or may have been esteemed within traditional cultural kinship structures, were it not for the destruction of customary ways of life in kinship on the land. The series forces an examination of urban Indian homelessness that balances dignity and destitution.

A striking photograph from the series, *Untitled (Family)* (Fig. 1) shows a couple and their baby daughter on the street.[246] The man is seated on the sidewalk with his legs crossed in front of him. He wears a black shirt and a lighter button-up overshirt that has short sleeves smeared with dark spots. The pocket of the shirt is dirty, and sags under the weight of whatever it carries. The man's gazes directly at the lens of the camera, behind an expression torn between humor and fear and that suggests both embarrassment and pride at once. His mouth twists slightly, as though his tongue is lifted in his left cheek. A lock of jet-black hair dips over his right eye while the rest is feathered around his face, longer toward the back. His right-hand rests on his right knee, holding a freshly lit cigarette, while his other hand secures his baby on his lap. The man wears jeans and scuffed white sneakers. The baby wears a light-colored snap up jumper with a lace trim around her collar. Her outfit is unbuttoned around her legs, which culminate in bare feet. The sleeves of the jumper are pushed up around her elbows. Her legs are crossed as she

[246] It's unclear whether this photograph was actually intended as a part of the *Street Chiefs* series, but it has been widely attributed in scholarship in context with the other images from the series. More analysis needs to be done to affirm its intended place in Whitman's oeuvre.

sits nestled on the man's lap. She also glances at the camera, with an expression more curious than defensive. A white baby bottle sits on the ground near her naked feet. At the man's right, the edges of a canvas bag are visible on the left margin of the photograph. To his left, the woman leans toward his head. She arches toward him while her back presses against the brick wall behind the group. Her hair is pressed back from her face and about her shoulders. She wears a dark shirt and has a sweatshirt tied around her waist. Her knees are brought up near her chest and are draped with her crossing arms. Her right hand falls gracefully between her legs. She also wears scuffed gray sneakers. Her expression is more curious and entertained, suggesting a familiarity or acceptance of Whitman's imposition on their family moment. Her mouth imitates a smile, and her eyes sparkle toward the camera. The family sits on a little brick stoop that stands only inches off the concrete slab of sidewalk before them. The concrete is marked with splotches of dirt and grease, and a window is in the wall above where the woman is seated, directly behind her head.

The series is a poignant reminder of the realities facing Native communities today, and one of the ways Native people suffer on their own lands. The photograph of the family resists the exploitative and romanticizing photographic tropes and "poverty porn" that harm Native communities, while also not shying away from the difficulty of the situation. As Jennifer Vigil argues,

> Whitman employs various strategies and incorporates multiple media to address issues of identity (personal and tribal), sovereignty, survival (personal and cultural), Indian removal, social change, language preservation and historical amnesia. While his critiques are poignant peeling back the veneer revealing the painful realities of Indigenous life, the underlying message is one of resistance, survival, and cultural vibrancy. He challenges the notion that Native peoples are extinct while

> revealing the continued assaults against Indigenous people, their land, and their way of life by the United States and its citizens.[247]

The photographs in *Street Chiefs* turn toward a more holistic understanding of history and a greater recognition of the lived realities of Indigenous communities today. For these images, the dark burdens of history are balanced with the resilience of spirit. The photograph of the family is a reflection of living humanity in a raw form—and full of all of the nuance that entails.

I heard someone once say that homelessness is anathema to Indigenous people. In the process of writing this dissertation, I have thought about that statement a lot- maybe too much these days. Whitman's *Street Chiefs* series presents a perennial archive of the changing conditions of "home" for American Indians, and is a reminder that "home" must take on new meanings as individual and collective contact with the structures of settler colonialism and violence differ, and shift over time and place. The series suggests at once "homeless-ness," while at the same time draws attention to the inherent "home" where Indian people are on the land. If one considers the emplaced kinship of Indigenous peoples with land, the homelessness of Whitman's subjects takes on new connotations. Viewed from that angle, the series brings to light new notions of "home" and questions the experiences of homelessness at large. This is a salient mediation into discourse about class in Indian Country, a conversation too often overlooked in Native American Art historical analyses, and which should be considered in larger contexts about living Native cultures.

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[247] Jenifer Vigil, "Richard Ray Whitman" in Nancy Marie Mithlo ed., *Manifestations: New Native Art Criticism* (Santa Fe: Museum of Contemporary Native Art, 2012), 190.

By contrast to Whitman's photographic intervention in *Street Chiefs*, the 2008 installation *Writing Home* by Serpent River First Nation Ojibwe sculptor Bonnie Devine marks discourse about "home" differently. *Writing Home* was curated by Heavyshield and installed at Gallery Connexion in New Brunswick, and then travelled to the Urban Shaman Gallery in Winnipeg. Juxtaposed to Whitman's photographic series, Devine's installation makes a poignant statement about the roots of one Indigneous culture in one specific place— Serpent River— while also still attending to the difficulties of the history embedded there.

The installation of *Writing Home* is comprised of three major elements: four diptychs that pair detailed photographs of rock from the Canadian Shield on the Serpent River Reserve with text, five cast glass sculptures made from casts taken from the rocks near her home (Fig. 2), and a video cycle that demonstrates her process in creating the works in installation. In the works in the installation, urgent attention was given continually to the land and the archival nature of land as an ancestor. Though the forms within *Writing Home* appear to be abstractions, Devine made work that was specific to her community's ancestral place. The works incorporate direct imprints-photographic and cast- to convey a perspective that is inherently specific and linked to *that* land.

The result of such careful attention and stringency is rooted in Devine's respect for the land, and her method of revering the land in kinship. The kinship paradigm is reflected in the way that Devine actively took care not to damage or displace the features of the rock from which she worked, and from which her abstractions drew. Rather, the agency of place was honored and kept, and those forms were brought into the galleries

envisioned as text *from the land* itself.[248] The conceptual approach Devine took in making the works in *Writing Home* stands in Indigenous defiance of the Earthworks artists' conception of the "non-site" as it was imagined by Robert Smithson in works like *Non-site (Palisades-Edgewater, N.J.)* from 1968 (Fig. 3). Where Smithson's works disrupt the local environment, and focus on the dissolution of place, Devine honors place as its own sovereign. In Smithson's theorizing of "non-sites," he suggests that the materials brought into the gallery continue in a metaphoric relationship with the place from which they were taken.[249] Such a stance contradicts Indigenous perspectives and kinship relations with land effectively neutering the agency of materials.

For Devine, the integrity of "site" of the Serpent River Reserve and the ancestral homeland of the Ojibwe remains central to the meaning and impact of *Writing Home,* and the various elements that comprise it. In the installation, Devine asserts both her community's relationship to their homelands and the old forms of those lands themselves. In an interview with me, she shared that the work is "essentially hopeful, essentially optimistic."[250] In contrast to Smithson's fascination with decay and destruction of place and the metaphorical relationships that displaced forms have with sites, Devine's installation is focused on the security and permanence in the ways that "such an ancient place will hold layers and layers of story." For Devine's work in *Writing Home*, bringing the various elements into the gallery setting is "not just to look at objects, it's also to be in the presence of something else. And I don't know what that else is exactly, but it seems to

[248] John G. Hampton, *{Person, Place, Thing}* ex. cat. (Regina: Neutral Ground Contemporary Art Forum, 2012), 51.
[249] Robert Smithson, "A Provisional Theory of Nonsites," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Jack Flam ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 364.
[250] Personal communication with Bonnie Devine, transcribed October 8, 2018.

me that the rocks, and the leaves, and the various things that I have brought into that space have a story of their own to tell and I see my job as an artist to make it possible for those things to tell their story."[251]

The Serpent River First Nation is located at the bottom of the Canadian Shield (Fig. 4). The Canadian Shield is the geologic core of North America, rooting the continent, and fixing it in its current location. Ancestral communities, understanding the importance and strength of this immense landform marked the rocks outcroppings all along the Canadian Shield. The rocks contain many ancestral teachings, stories about land and history, and the wisdom of various communities.[252] The art contained on the rocks throughout the Canadian Shield contain content and references to context that suggests the moral perspectives and experiences of ancestral Indigenous people from the region, which are intended as teachings for those who come after.[253] The land, in this instance, is literally an archive of Indigenous knowledge.

The Serpent River Reserve, where Devine spent her childhood, was established in September, 1850 after the Robinson- Huron Treaty was signed. The region has a rich history of fur trapping and trading and forestry. In the decades following WWII, uranium mining overwhelmed the area surrounding the Serpent River watershed- the traditional stewardship of the Serpent River First Nation.[254] Mining tailings polluted the community

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[251] Ibid.
[252] See Selwyn Dewdney and Kenneth E. Kidd, *Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962) for a detailed study of rock paintings in the Great Lakes region in Canada.
[253] John L. Creese, "Algonquian Rock Art and the Landscape of Power," *Journal of Social Archelolgy* 11, no. 1 (2011): 3-20.
[254] Lianne C. Leddy, "Poisoning the Serpent: The Effects of the Uranium Industry on the Serpent River First Nation," in Karl S. Hele, *The Nature of Empires and the Empires of*

and damaged the plant and animal communities that share the watershed region with the Serpent River Ojibwe.[255] This paradigm threatens community resources—the Serpent River First Nation remains under a water boil advisory to date.

Caught in the tension between overwhelming environmental damage and decay *and* the deeply historical permanence of the Canadian Shield with all of the archival materials it holds, Devine turned to those rock forms themselves. She wondered what agency was contained in the geological forms themselves—wondered what the rocks could tell her. For this, she viewed the rock forms as ancestors whom she engaged in conversation. The works in *Writing Home* form a compendium of Devine's textual discourse with the land. Beyond abstractions of place, the series of artworks brings evidence of discourse into the gallery setting, pushing audiences to witness those larger ancestral forms and histories. The installation invites viewers to bear witness to the engagement of an Indigenous woman (Devine) with her homeland – Lautrentia.

The diptychs contain text that is addressed to four different individuals, and each is named for the person to whom the work is addressed:

Letter to Sandy (Fig. 5) is addressed to Devine's friend Sandy Robigeshik, who presented a paper on the history and migrations of Manitoulin Island (Odawa Mnis). The island, located in Lake Huron across from Serpent River First Nation Reserve, is the largest freshwater island in the world, and is a historically important place for the Three Fires Confederacy of unified Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi. Manitoulin Island

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Nature: Indigenous Peoples and the Great Lakes Environment (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013), 125-148.
[255] Ibid, 131.

is unceded Odawa territory, and the kinships of human beings and land in this place mark a core asset for Anishinaabe culture.[256]

Letter to William (Fig. 6) is addressed to William Warren, the Ojibwe historian and translator who recorded much of the history of the Ojibwe in his English language books in the 19th century.[257] Warren was instrumental for Devine in learning about the history of her community, and understanding the context of transition during the 19th century.[258]

Letter to Grandfather (Fig. 7) is addressed to the signatories of the Robinson-Huron Treaty (1850). This treaty had seventeen signers, who represented their respective communities. Under provision of this treaty, Anishinabek bands were dispersed, and land was ceded to the British Crown for the establishment of reserve lands. On this work, Devine included the text of the treaty on the right side of the diptych and pierced that text with sewing in red thread (Fig. 8). For her, piercing the treaty language with red thread was a means of taking ownership and challenging that document, and its implications for dividing up Anishinabek homelands.[259] *Letter to Leonard* (Fig. 8) is addressed to Devine's first husband, who died early in his life. The "text" on the right side of *Letter to Leonard* is comprised of machine stitching using red thread.

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[256] "Meet Native America: Duke Peltier, Ogimaa (Chief) of Wiikwemkoong Anishinabek," *Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian* Blog, April 17, 2014 https://blog.nmai.si.edu/main/2014/04/meet-native-america-duke-peltier.html.
[257] See William W. Warren *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1885).
[258] Phone interview with Bonnie Devine, October 2018.
[259] Ibid.

All four of the diptychs in *Writing Home* include a closely detailed photograph of the surface of the rock at the Serpent River Reserve. Photographs appear as abstractions of blocked color and stratifications of organic materials—moss, lichen, and sprigs of clustered leaves. The rock forms vary in color and shape, and the stratifications of the geologic formations are evident in the various colors and textures that form the ancient rock forms. The diptychs also include text. Devine's use of text in these diptychs—consistent with her use of text in many works in her oeuvre— reinforce the conceptual framing of the rocks as *in discourse* with her. These works are *letters* to her home land. Text helps solidify the concept of "writing" and "letters" used in the titles of both the exhibition and in the titles of each individual artwork within. Heavyshield wrote that Devine's work in *Writing Home*,

> Remodels the act of "writing home" into an actualization of her correspondence with home, specifically Serpent River. Through photographs, sound, and impressions cast in glass, the artist represents her home, replete in texture and history. Writing and text have always figured in Devine's practice; words and their meanings, their "look" on the surface of paper akin to the stitching of red thread on a white surface. The stitches become legible as memory and the handwritten letters are missives to her place in this landscape. Each of the components in this body of work is indicative of the immersive process this artist employs with her material and medium. In this way, *Writing Home* merges absence and presence… words become threats and the rock transformed into the lens of glass remains the rock.
>
> Drawing with and from rock, Devine gives us privy to a conversation of human geography. This is writing, and this is home.[260]

The other major element in *Writing Home* is the series of cast glass sculptures. Collectively these are called *Letters from Home*. The title of this series of sculptures

[260] Faye Heavyshield, *Writing Home* ex. cat., (Winnipeg: Urban Shaman Gallery, 2008), 3.

again reinforces the discursive act to which the exhibition invites audience to bear witness, between Devine and the land itself. In these works, the land is understood as engaging in communication with Devine, in providing a matrix and a teaching for her. Devine traveled to the Serpent River Reserve and spent time on the rock near the shoreline of the Georgian Bay. These rock formations are some of the oldest rocks in the world, and Devine's works explore the way that such an ancient place could hold centuries of meaning and significance, as she worked to understand what those forms would teach her, in a kinship relationship with them. The title of the work suggests a reversal and a response from the land. In the diptychs, Devine was writing letters "to" her homeland. The cast class sculptures stand as discursive text "from" the land.

To make these works, Devine made plaster casts from natural matrix of the rock, which were later used to cast the glass sculptures (Fig. 10). Each is simultaneously an exact replica of the stone she used for the matrix of the glass, and a representation of the larger idea Devine understands as communicated by the rocks themselves. The title of the work is a reminder of the concept of "home" for the Anishinabeg, as the artwork is as a discursive tool that communicates memories of homeland within the gallery. The resulting work is the four translucent cast glass forms—small rectangles that Devine centered on birch plinths in the gallery. Each cast "stone" appears to glow with the gallery lighting, and each reveals the textures of the rock from which they were cast. Throughout, the work in *Writing Home* perpetually invites the witnessing of one artists' desire for home, and the response that "home" provides through these sculptures and photographs.

Despite the changes and difficulties the Serpent River First Nation and other Anishinabek communities have experienced over the last several centuries of land loss and degradation, the installation and individual artworks in *Writing Home* succeed in providing a positive message of endurance, vitality, and persistence. In these works, Devine's cultural foundation in kinship with land is robustly evident. In her textual exchange with her homeland, Divine solidified her connections with those places that formed her culture. Of the exchange, she remarked, "I'm still here. And that's what I was trying to do – I was trying to show them (the rocks and by extension ancestors) that we're still here. We've been changed of course, but our connection to the land endures."[261]

Įdóheya

Following the leads of Whitman and Devine as well as the other artists I have analyzed in my dissertation, my research has given rise to my own new questions about what "home" means. My study has been in part underwritten by attention to the ways Native people make meaning surrounding the concept of home, as it is emplaced, in constant discourse with, and inseparable from the land. My own experiences of home have dictated so much of what I have written in this dissertation- it has directed my analysis in ways that I was both aware of and ways of which I was ashamed. It is honest, nevertheless.

[261] Phone interview with Bonnie Devine, October 2018.

Through all of this, I am constantly aware of those who do not have access to their homelands—I write this dissertation on land that is home to Caddo and Wichita communities, but only know a handful of individuals from those communities here. Oklahoma, as Indian Territory and the destination for communities forcibly removed from their homes through centuries of federal policy is a place in which memories of trauma and resilient adaptability lie just beneath the surface. Indigenous memory of homelands, and the longing for the original places of those removed communities' habitation is palpable here, as is the spirit of recovery and willingness to make the most of *this* place.

I am also routinely in discourse with my own sensibility of home, and the lands that formed my ancestors' culture. The Assiniboines were first made out of the clay at the bottom of Lake Winnipeg. The earliest written accounts do not reflect us accurately, but the Assiniboine origin story teaches us about how we learned to walk upright and tall out of the waters there, and we have always tried to reflect those values. Many more recent writings have said that we are a "lesser" band of Sioux; this is also inaccurate. Jesuits Priests and French fur traders wrote about the various Assiniboine bands starting in the early 1600s. Though the objective of much of this early writing is to detail business dealings with those various bands in Manitoba, Winnipeg and Alberta, they are important sources, which give context for European arrivals into Assiniboine territories and colonial perspectives on my ancestors.

There were three primary groups of Assiniboines (with a great diversity of bands) at the earliest arrivals of Europeans in North America. A wide variety of Assiniboine "nations" still exist today, and we currently reside in a number of locations throughout

the United States and Canada. My community, the Fort Peck tribes were settled in an area that was formerly a shared hunting ground—it is land that supported a immense population of moving cultures of seasonally migrating communities. Our traditional culture is one that was always responsive to the land which gave rise to inherently adaptive practices as we developed and maintained kinships with the plant, animal, and mineral nations that share our makoče and exist in time with our communities.

Two Assiniboine bands, Canoe Paddler (Wadópana) and Red Bottom (Húdešana), currently live at Fort Peck, alongside several divisions of Dakota and Lakota.[262] Nevertheless, it's worth thinking through how each band within the Assiniboine "nation" varies in its contact and conditional relationship with both the Canadian constitutional monarchy and the United States federal government.

Our traditional form of government was relatively decentralized, and responsibilities and obligations primarily resided within families. Kinship networks organized into bands headed by "chiefs" (húgá or ịtą́cą). Leaders had no authority to compel the actions of other people but headed the band council. Their positions were primarily merit-based.[263] Councils deliberated on matters concerning the group and made decisions that had general impact including camp movements, diplomacy, major hunting strategies, and policing functions. Those parties individually affected traditionally

[262] I am from the Húdešana (Red Bottom) clan of Assiniboines. We were called Húdešana because of a tradition of carrying medicinal red roots for our community, and the bottoms of our wiʾíkceya tíbi (tipi) became red from regularly being positioned in the midst of colorful plants.

[263] Merits of leaders include generosity, wisdom, bravery, successful hunting or providing for members of the community. See Smith and Miller, *The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana, 1800-2000* (Poplar: Fort Peck Community College, 2007), 22.

resolved crime.[264] Assiniboine spiritual practice centers the concept of "waką" or the incomprehensible sacredness of things, including the land and our nonhuman kin. We practice ritual cleansings in "sweat" lodges and center our spiritual practice on the annual Medicine Lodge.[265]

Earliest interactions with European peoples in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries pushed Assiniboines into alliances with the Western Cree in Canada's boreal forests. Accounts from this time describe primarily trade-based Assiniboine relationships with the Cree, Atsina (Gros Ventre), Niitsitapi (Blackfeet), Numakiki (Mandan) and Nuxbaaga (Hidatsa), French fur traders at Lake Nipigon, and later with the English Hudson's Bay Company.[266]

The Hudson's Bay Company functioned as the de facto government for European settlers on the continent prior to the establishment of the United States and Canada.[267] Pressures to maintain control of trade with French and English tappers as well as aggressions from Dakotas to the south pressed Assiniboines westward and southward.[268] New territories ranged from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Bismarck, North Dakota, spreading west along the Missouri River. Assiniboine bands migrated in an immense diaspora, due in part to the vast range of valuable resources for trade, and in

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[264] Raymond J. DeMallie, "Assiniboine" in *Handbook of North American Indians, Plains,* 13 (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution 2001), 586.
[265] Some have said that the Assiniboine medicine lodge is not a true "sun dance" in the same sense as many other (primarily Central and Southern Plains) tribes, as our prayers are not directed at the sun during this ceremony. Given this dispute, I choose to call this annual ceremony the Medicine Lodge.
[266] Ibid, 572-3.
[267] Hudson's Bay Company was also the world's largest landowner at one point, their holdings consisting of 15% of North America, known as Rupert's Land. See *The Royal Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company* at http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/collections/archival/charter/charter
[268] The Hudson's Bay Company was at one point the largest landowner in the world.

another part due to our traditional reliance on herds of bison, which are a migratory species. At the 1776 founding of the United States of America, Assiniboines were migrating into this region, and were heavily embroiled in trade relations.

Heavy engagement with trade in the Northern Plains brought disease and danger to Assiniboines who had migrated out of our traditional homelands. Several waves of smallpox decimated populations in the various Assiniboine camps. Furthermore, migrations of Lakota and Dakota bands into the region intensified competition for resources and trade alliances. The last decades of the 18th century mark a time of intense change and violence across the Northern Plains, as movement and anxiety over resources pressed tribal groups into new challenges. American interests in these lands resulted in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The Lewis and Clark Expedition first record American contact with the Assiniboines at Fort Mandan in 1804. The Expedition reported an unfavorable view of the Assiniboine bands in the Upper Missouri region, as long held trade relationships with the Hudson's Bay Company adversely affected the new nation's interest in regional resource extraction, including trade and westward expansion. Captain Meriwether Lewis' journals suggest a sense of danger surrounding Assiniboine presence in the Upper Missouri and Yellowstone River region, calling us "a vicious illy disposed nation."[269] My grandfather is buried about 100 yards from the place where the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery disembarked from their travel up the Missouri River. When my family visits his grave, we are reminded of the tension inherent to that place, as our position is rooted there in tension between Indigenous and American historical trajectories.

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[269] *Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, May 10, 1805, [Lewis], at https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/item/lc.jrn.1805-05-10#lc.jrn.1805-05-10.01.

In addition to Lewis and Clark, several prominent explorers wrote about and observed the Assiniboines in the Upper Missouri during the first decades of the 19th century. American westward expansion policies mandated studies of the Great Plains, and the Assiniboines were firmly established as a Plains culture by the mid-century. Karl Bodmer (Swiss) and George Catlin (American) made important artworks that document early perceptions of Assiniboine peoples. Catlin, a Pennsylvania-born painter entered into The West several times in the 1830-40s, equipped with a belief that American expansion would portend the demise of Indian peoples. He created an "Indian Gallery" of over 500 encyclopedic images of peoples west of the Missouri; Catlin's first expedition in 1830 corresponded with the Indian Removal Act of the same year. His paintings and drawings depict Native Americans in a pristine nobility, reflecting a belief in impending expiration. Bodmer entered the interior of the continent with fellow explorer, German prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian, Prince of Weid in 1833. Bodmer and Maximilian's records of, and images from, their thirteen-month expedition up the Missouri River are invaluable historical records of their contact with these peoples.[270] Both Catlin and Bodmer have images of Assiniboines in their oeuvre.

Through the early 1860s Upper Missouri region was primarily populated by Indian peoples; American settlement was relatively isolated to isolated trading and military posts.[271] Assiniboine contact with federal officials was rather sparse in contrast to the other Siouan tribes, as our territories formed the northernmost borders of the Indian

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[270] See United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Library, *An Illustrated Expedition of North America*, https://www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits/speccoll/exhibits/show/an-illustrated-expedition

[271] Dennis Smith, "Fort Peck Agency Assiniboines, Upper Yanktonais, Hunkpapas, Sissetons, and Wahpetons: A Cultural History to 1888." (doctoral dissertation, Lincoln: University of Nebraska 2001), 115.

Affairs Office Region known as the Upper Missouri Agency.[272] Congressional allocations to the Upper Missouri Agency, including a budget for gifts was pitiful, and ineffective at forging relationships with the powerful tribes in the region. The gift allocation for 1831 was $480.[273]

United States territorial expansions through the 1840s and 50s were fueled by discoveries of gold in California, Montana, Oregon and Dakota Territory, as well as the lure of newly "available" territories in the southwest after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This American expansionist ethic deeply stressed tribes. As early as 1841, Commissioner of Indian Affairs suggested the creation of a large northern reservation similar in function to Indian Territory on the Southern Plains.[274] And though this Northern reservation was never created, the idea of it gave rise to two policy considerations. First, reservations would serve as isolating barriers between tribes and settlers. Second, concerns about Indian isolation on reservations justified wholesale assimilation efforts.

The Fort Laramie Treaty, which established formal relationships between the Assiniboines and the United States federal government determined the legal tribal boundaries of the signatory tribes. [275] Two signatures on the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty represent Assiniboine interest: Crazy Bear and The First Who Flies. Reports from the

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[272] The Upper Missouri Agency was established in 1818, with the objective of controlling trade and tribes in the region. See Chester L. Guthrie and Leo L. Gerald, "Upper Missouri Agency: An Account of the Indian Administration on the Frontier," *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 10, No. 1 (Mar. 1941): 47-56.
[273] Ray H. Mattison, "The Indian Frontier on the Upper Missouri to 1865," *Nebraska History* Vol. 39 (September 1958): 244-52.
[274] Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 339-40.
[275] Other tribes that signed the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty include the various Lakota and Dakota bands (Sioux), Cheyennes, Arapahos, Crows, Hidatsa, Mandans, and Arikaras.

time explain that Assiniboine leaders were reluctant to travel to the treaty negotiation camps, because they became vulnerable to Blackfeet attacks, and because they would be situated deeply in the middle of land controlled by enemy Lakota bands.[276] Ultimately, the lands designated for Assiniboines in the Fort Laramie Treaty were rich in resources, including a vibrant population of bison. Additional provisions in the Treaty allocated $50,000 annual disbursement for fifty years to each signatory tribe. This provision was not ratified by Congress, but was instead amended to a ten-year span. Assiniboines traveled to the Milk River Agency for the first decade after the Fort Laramie Treaty.

A rash of treaties from the 1830-60s ceded great swaths of land from Indian control and opened the area to white settlement.[277] Coupled with additional waves of disease and the discovery of gold in western Montana, pressure increased in the region. Relationships between the various tribes and the federal government were increasingly tense, ultimately erupting into the violence of the Plains Indian Wars of the 1860s. A number of treaties in which tribes ceded land for overland American trails went unratified by Congress, angering those tribes who had previously maintained relatively positive relationships with the government. President Grant, who had been involved in the Indian

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[276] Edwin Thompson Dennig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri: Sioux, Arikaras, Assiniboines, Crees and Crows*, John C Ewers, ed., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1961), 83-86.

[277] Treaties include: The "Pine Tree Treaty" and the Dakota Treaty of 1837, 1851 Dakota Land Cessation Treaty (Traverse des Sioux), The 1858 Yankton Treaty, and Upson's Treaty in 1868. See Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, "Relations: Dakota & Ojibwe Treaties, Land Cession Treaties," *Treaties Matter,* http://treatiesmatter.org/treaties/land for further information.

Wars appointed the first Native American Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1869, which led to sweeping reformations of the department, known as Grant's Peace Policy.[278]

Despite Grant's intentions to instill peace in the American interior, tensions remained high. The 1860s witnessed the passage of the Homestead Act, the construction of the Great Northern Railway Line, and the near-total destruction of the Northern bison herd put immense stress on the Assiniboines at Fort Peck. Confinement to a limited territory and the slaughter of this herd forced Indian people to rely on the meager rations from the agencies established in their territories. Most treaties outlined annuities to be paid to tribes for their huge cessions of land. These annuities often included basic food items, cattle, and farming and ranching necessities. Goods delivered to the agencies were often of substandard quality, such as thin cotton material and food items ruined from moisture during transport. At other times, dishonest Indian Agents sold the goods on the side to make extra money for themselves.[279] Assiniboine and Sioux tribes at Fort Peck were under the supervision of the Methodist Church during Grant's Peace Policy.

In an Executive Order in 1873, Grant again interfered in the affairs of the Upper Missouri. This order established an undivided reservation for Blackfeet, Atsina, Assiniboine and "Sioux." This order also founded Fort Peck at the confluence of the Milk and Missouri Rivers. These actions diminished tribal territories and further contributed to rising hostilities.[280] The 1870 and 80s are a dark epoch in Assiniboine history. An

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[278] William H. Armstrong, *Warrior of Two Camps: Ely S. Parker, Union General and Seneca Chief* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 73-78, 137.
[279] Julie Cajune, "Montana Reservation Profiles," Indian Land Tenure Foundation at http://www.lessonsofourland.org/sites/default/files/Reservation%20Profiles_3.pdf.
[280] Montana Office of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau Superintendent, *Fort Peck Reservation Timeline, Sioux and Assiniboine Tribes*, March, 2010, http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/IEFA/FortPeckTimeline.pdf.

additional wave of disease decimated our populations, and though the federal treaty-making era had officially ended in 1871, Assiniboine lands at Fort Peck were shifted to the federal reservation system in the Sweetgrass Hills Agreement in 1888. 17,500,000 acres were ceded to federal control.[281] Sweetgrass Hills diminished the vast terrain of the Assiniboine to a reservation shared with various Dakota and Lakota bands. A Congressional Act further contracted reservation boundaries in 1888 to its currently maintained 2.1 million acres.

The direct federal control under the reservation system proved hugely difficult for those Assiniboine and Sioux bands at Fort Peck. Sitting Bull escaped the pursuit of US military forces by stopping at Fort Peck on his way to Canada in 1877. Other individuals remained in conflict with the various religious missions who began schools and continued their interference with these people. [282] Depletion of the northern bison herd and deductions of beef and other of rations led to starvation.[283] An Allotment Act in 1908 carved into the lands held by the tribes at Fort Peck, as 1,348,408 acres were deemed "surplus" and opened for homestead entry. Currently, 44% of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation is held in tribal trust, and the remaining 56% is privately owned, state, or federally controlled.

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[281] Miller & Smith, 68.

[282] Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterians, Mormons, and Catholics all maintained missions and schools at Fort Peck. Some still do, though they are no longer directly funded by the federal government.

[283] My grandma Almira Cox Jackson's journal tells about the impact of this time. When the government came to build reservation homes in Poplar and Wolf Point and Glasgow, they were unable to find any land that did not have mass burial sites. The situation became so dire with encroaching winter that Army Corps workers opted to throw remains in the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. Other bodies were removed to several small cemeteries overlooking the Missouri, and others remain buried under government housing tracts. My grandpa and great grandmother are in a Methodist cemetery on a bluff over the Missouri.

The lands at Fort Peck are abundant in resources, including water, oil and gas. Water rights maintained by the tribes at Fort Peck precede the establishment of Montana as a state, and in part helped preserve the tribes from termination as the sole proprietors of the waters in the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers that comprise the boundaries of Fort Peck. The Fort Peck Dam was the first major construction project under federal control of the US Army Corps of Engineers in response to the Great Depression. Thousands of workers came and established boomtowns in the area, and Assiniboines and Dakota workers contributed to the project, though their contributions and positions remain unrecognized.[284] The Fort Peck Dam was the first cover of the newly published *Life Magazine* (Fig. 11). White's photograph shows the immense art deco architectural features of the dam and processing center that were built there in the 1933.

This photograph is a constant reminder for me of the persistence of Native memory at Fort Peck and the experiences of my people in tension with the push toward expanding American interests. The land holdings of the Fort Peck tribes were severely eroded when the Fort Peck Dam was constructed, and public accounts of the history of that massive national construction project routinely omit this important part of our history in relationship with the land. The construction of the dam set the standard for engagement between the Army Corps of Engineers and tribal communities, including the 1944 Pick-Sloan Plan, which would dictate the trajectory of "development" projects throughout the nation. For our community, the mode of engagement between the Army Corps and

[284] Unpublished images made by cover photographer and Works Project Administration employee Margaret Bourke White reveal the racial dynamics during this period in the small boomtowns surrounding Fort Peck. Indian people were explicitly prohibited from entering or fraternizing with the new white populations. See Ben Cosgrove, "LIFE's First Cover Story: Building the Fort Peck Dam, 1936," *Life.com,* http://time.com/3764198/lifes-first-ever-cover-story-building-the-fort-peck-dam-1936/

Indigenous communities is evidence of a genocidal disregard for our relationships with land and emplaced memory, marking an immense overreach of federal powers.[285] This trajectory is visible in recent clashes regarding the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Mounting threats rise even at the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, through which the Keystone XL Pipeline is planned to pass, despite Indigneous rejections of these plans.[286] Despite the political difficulties and tensions implicit in our history Assiniboine culture remains actively allied and in kinship with the land.

There's an open prairie in northern Montana, nearly at the borders with Canada and North Dakota. When you stand in the middle of it, you might forget where you are, and time melts past and future. The signs of modernity that aren't in your pocket or attached to your own body all sink far below the horizon; no wires, fences or even roads are visible. You won't get cell service, and photography is strictly prohibited, so don't bother bringing your phone. This instruction is actively enforced. The wind will whip your hair and singe your eyes to tears. It will fill your lungs with the mild austerity of growing sage, dirt, and the gentle smell of moving freshwater. You might hear the meadowlarks erupt in their hymn to the plains, or crickets humming along. My favorite sound is the tall grasses bumping into one another on the wind, harmonizing with the sound of faraway thunder.

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[285] Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (New York: Verso, 2019), 151.
[286] In November 2015 The State Department under President Barak Obama denied TransCanada's permit to construct the pipeline. On March 24, 2017, the US State Department under Donald Trump issued a new presidential permit which approved the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. On November 9, 2018, US District Judge Brian M. Morris blocked Trump's permit, ruling that the environmental review was incomplete. At the time of this writing, TransCanada crews are assembling on tribal lands with immediate intent to proceed with construction.

This isn't an unknown or virgin landscape, despite all of the edenic descriptions it might merit. No—this is a land where generations of people have come to pray, and be reminded of who we are. Evidence of the faith and hope of waves of Nakota, spanning decades whips in the prairie wind here. The skeletal remains of dozens of Nakota tíbiwaka (Sun Dance arbors) rise from the plain. Flags, the symbols and carriers of prayer in red, blue, yellow, and green still affixed to the cą́waką (center lodge poles) from the last decade flap in the wind. Structural remnants and the incised land itself form an archive of faith, intimately known only to the gods of the North American prairie, but connected to her people with blood, sweat, and smoke.

The isolated, severe landscape lends itself as a stage to the drama of the Assiniboine Medicine Lodge, the open practice of our indigeneity and our kinship with place. It is a field alive with hope and survival, a monument to Indian resurgence, and a place far too sacred to record in photograph. This is the prairie that has forged in me an impetus to write about places in my scholarship. It is the place where I feel the most centered and awake; my analyses and thoughts about Indigenous relationships to *place*, and my interest in these relationships were born on that plain.

Joshua Wets It, an Assiniboine informant to early twentieth century scholars of Native American history explained one perspective. In a conference in Denver in 1968, hosted by the Myrin Institute in Denver, Colorado he said, "In our Indian religion… we're thankful that we're on this Mother Earth. That's the first thing when we wake up in the morning to be grateful to the Great Spirit for the Mother Earth: how we live, what it

produces, what keeps everything alive."[287] Herein Wets It provides an explanation for Indigenous place-based understanding, founded in gratitude and survival. These principles extend to Indigenous "religious" concepts and spiritual practice.

I return again to a foundational 1974 text on Native American culture *God Is Red*, in which Dakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr. posited,

> (Indigenous) religious traditions (are) taken directly from the world around them, from their relationships with other forms of life. Context is therefore all-important for both the practice and understanding of reality. The *places* where revelations were experienced were remembered and set aside as locations where, through rituals and ceremonials, the people could once again communicate with the spirits.[288]

My analyses throughout this dissertation are rooted in this paradigm. The argument that Indigenous "religious" concepts emerge from place-based reality is positioned in contrast to Western thinking in which religious culture is considered "universal" and disregards the significance of *place*. Given this construction, it is useful to consider how Indigenous communities remain as relatives to place, and why Native communities remain in kinship with land.

As Devine said, "our connection to the land endures." The art I examined throughout this dissertation reflect on that kinship paradigm. For example, Postcommodity's *Repellent Fence* was an anti-monument against the destructive imposition of the US/Mexico border as a damaging interruption to the lifelines of the frontera region, for example. Colleen' Cutschall's *Spirit Warriors* reminded visitors to the Greasy Grass of the strength and long history of Native communities there and

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[287] Sylvester M. Morey, *Can the Red Man Help the White Man*, (New York: The Myrin Institute 1970), 48.
[288] Vine Deloria, Jr. *God Is Red*, 3rd Edition, (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing 2003), 65-66. Emphasis mine.

intervened in Indigenous erasure from that land—a restoration of the outward face of Indigenous kinship. And in another example, Heavyshield's *Body of Land* made the kinship of the land and body visceral and tangible, while also personal and embodied. Throughout, the artists I selected for this work have made art that seriously makes space for Indigneous kinships with land and with the non-human world. These works helped me see my own relationship with land as Nakón wíya, through reclamations, reminders, and refusals of the narratives of erasure and obscurity.

Figures



Figure 1
Untitled (Family)
From *Street Chiefs*
Richard Ray Whitman (Yuchi and Mvskogee/Creek)
ca. 1970-1988



Figure 2
Writing Home (Installation View)
Installed at Gallerie Connexion
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008



Figure 3
Non-site (Palisades- Edgewater, N.J.)
Installed at the Whitney Museum of American Art
Robert Smithson (US Citizen, White)
1968

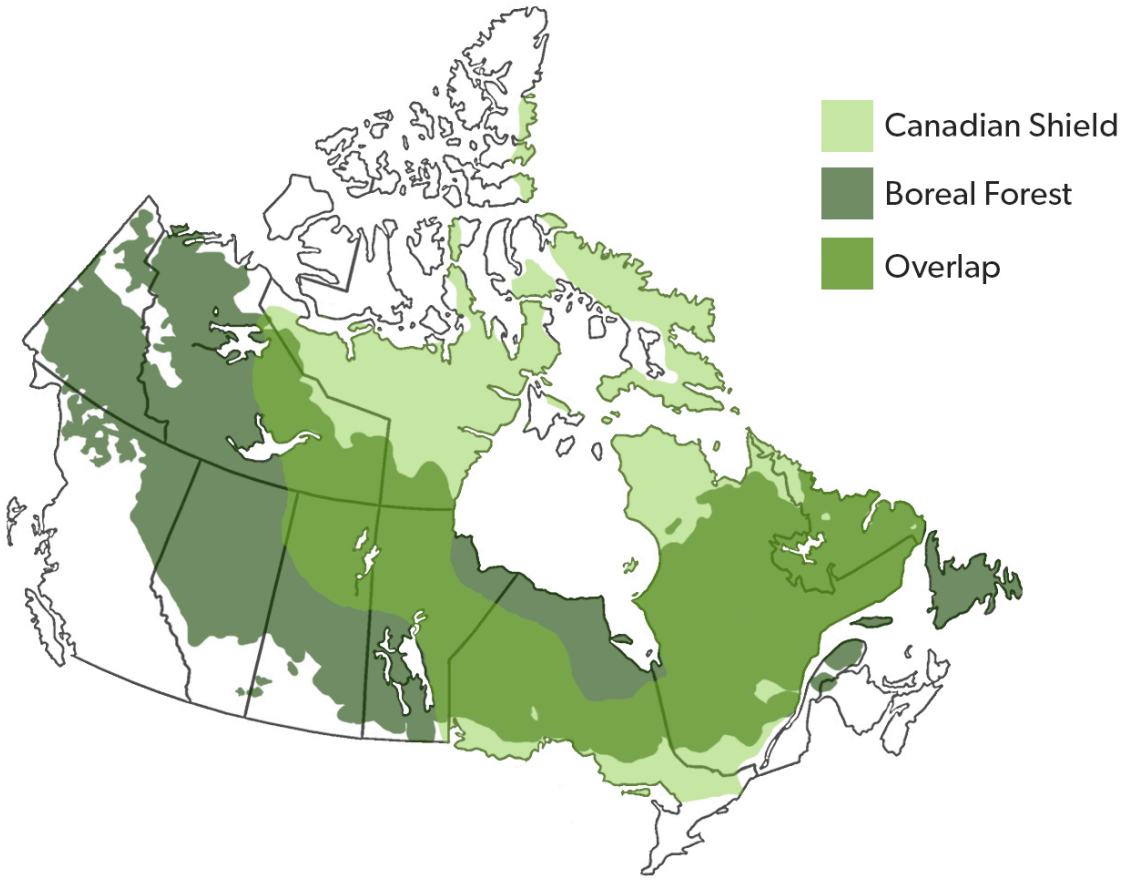


Figure 4
Canadian Shield and the Boreal Forest
(Serpent River First Nation marked)



Figure 5
Letter to Sandy
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008



Figure 6
Letter to William
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008



Figure 7
Letter to Grandfather
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008

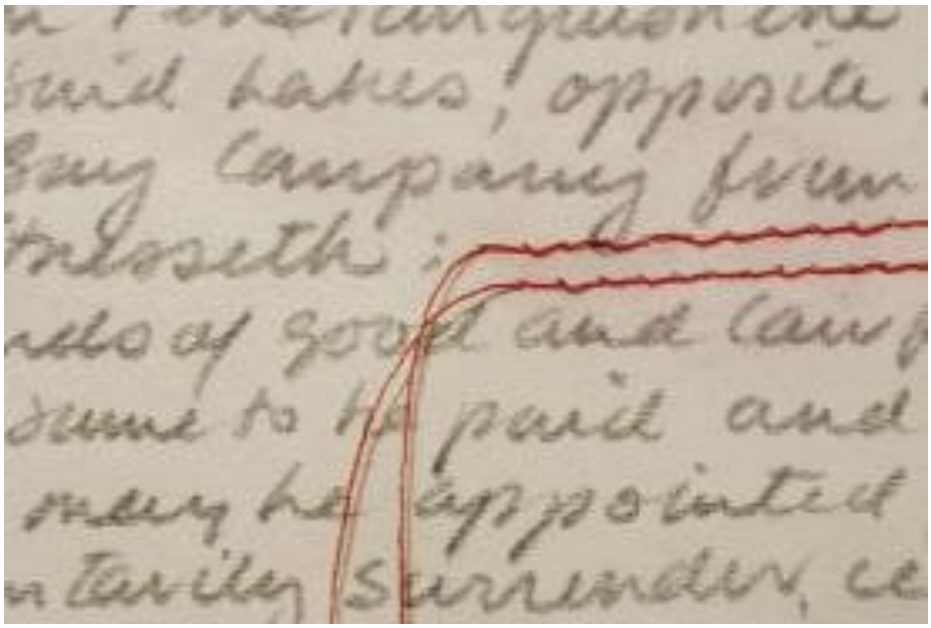


Figure 7.1
Letter to Grandfather (Detail)
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008



Figure 8
Letter to Leonard
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008



Figure 9
Letters from Home
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
2008



Figure 10
Bonnie Devine (Serpent River Ojibwe)
In process of creating matrices for *Letters From Home*
2008

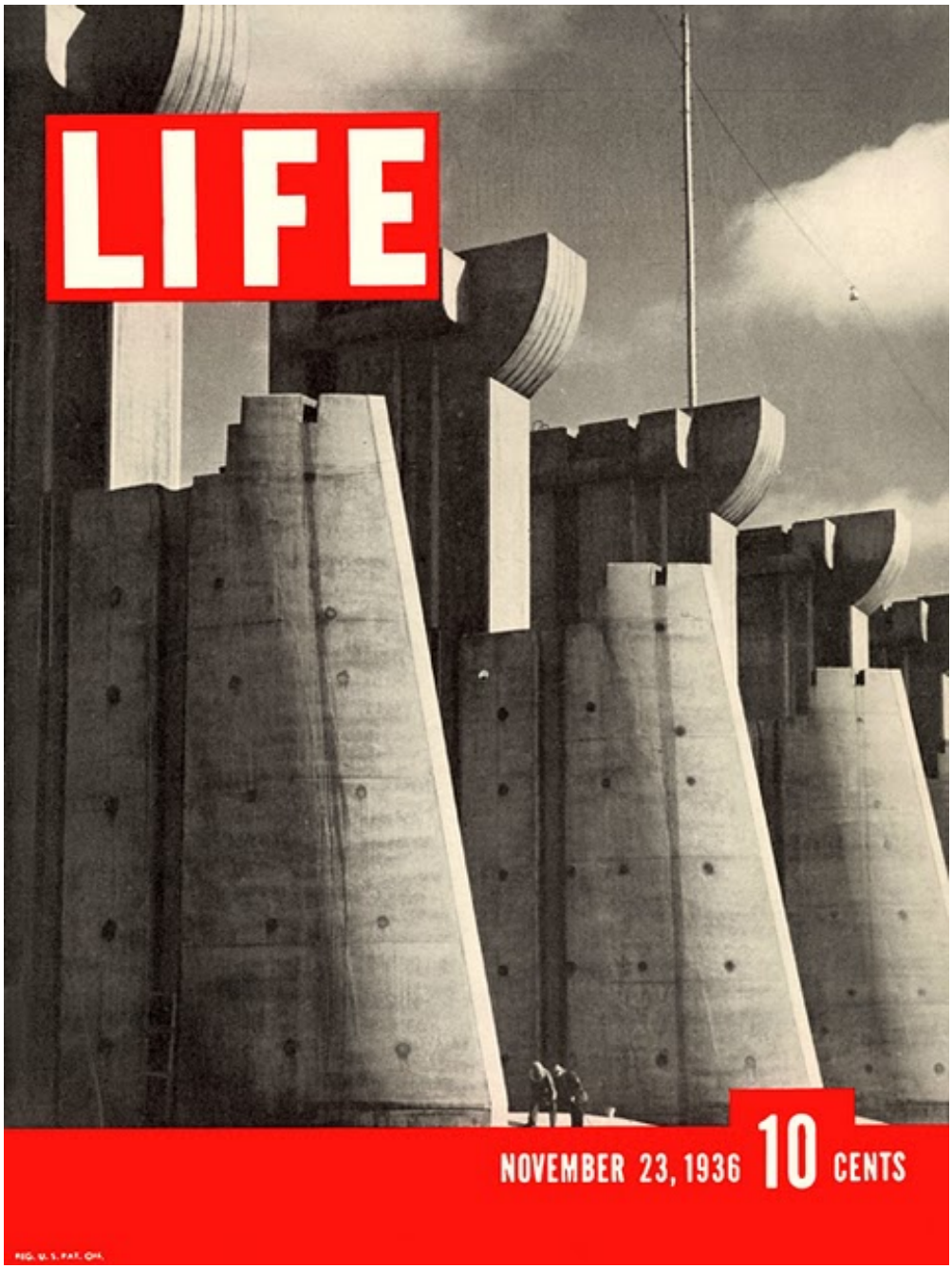


Figure 11
Fort Peck Dam
Margaret Bourke White (US Citizen, White)
Published on the cover of Life Magazine
1936

Nakón I’abi Glossary for Chapter IV

Įdóheya	Facing toward home; homeward
Midáguyebi	My relatives
Odawa Mnis	Manitoulin Island (Anishinaabemowin, Odawa Dialect)
Húdešana	Red Bottom, an Assiniboine clan
Tíbiwaka	Sun Dance Lodge
Cą́waką	Lodge poles within a Sun Dance Lodge

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