THE MUSINGS AND MAKINGS OF AN INDIGIQUEER TIME-MEDDLER

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Introduction

As an Indigiqueer Neurodivergent, I explore colonial history, meddling with its timeline through fashion. Clothing is my form of embodied resistance, a vehicle to set out new propositions, to change the freedoms we (my ancestors, loved ones, and descendants) inherit; autonomously, culturally, spiritually, artistically, and academically. I do this work through my Indigiqueer eccentricity, "It's like you have three large vats… and your projects scoop and mix content from each of them." said my supervisor, Hélène Day Fraser, in our first-semester check-in. In one, I have **a critique of colonial history**, and the role of the artist Emily Carr as a figurehead. In a second, I have **storytelling, particularly from my own heritage and cultural perspective**. And in the third, **pop and contemporary culture** – my love and affinity for shared passions, agencies, advocacies, and aesthetics that become shared nostalgia, framing moments in time. Drawing on my three vats of content I revisit areas of the past, infuse it with my contemporary perspective and reimagine an alternate dimension. I gleefully meddle – intentionally - with time.

As I do this work, I am asking myself:

- What new dimensions are created when meddling with time, countering colonial capitalism, and ensuring an Indigiqueer, neurodiverse future?
- Can new forms of social and cultural knowledge be created via “chronopolitics” that ensure an Indigiqueer, neurodiverse future? What does this look like? How might these function?

- What does it take to counter the romanticizing or tokenizing of the pre-contact of Europeans with my people?
- Can the blending of my Indigenous ways of knowing, making, and ethicality with elements of pop culture, stories, materials, and methodologies gained through academic assimilation accurately portray my Indigiqueer, neurodivergent, contemporary experience?
- Can these blended expressions of identity and alternate dimensions created through the politicization, confrontation, and reimagining of time embody the hopes and efforts of my ancestors while acting as an effort to establish space for my descendants?

The effects of colonization are of constant interest to me, particularly the process of colonial-cultural appropriation and mythologization of the *Other*[1] before inclusion in Western Art. I am disturbed by the disproportionate value that has been given to appropriated works over the culturally authentic ones of my people. While non-Indigenous appropriations of works have found their way into contemporary venues (gallery spaces, institutionalized education), Indigenous originals were criminalized, expelled from our land, and/or preserved as trophies in museums—a tactic used by colonizers to justify unjust theft under the pretense of benevolence. An example of this hypocrisy is the potlatch ban (1885-1951) that outlawed Indigenous gatherings and spiritual practice, occurring in parallel with the lifetime and success of the artistic work of the white settler and well-known Canadian Artist Emily Carr (1871-1945). I am acutely aware that I am attending an institution named after the latter, both because of her success and,

[1] "The Other is set up against the hegemonic "universal human being" – that is, white, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied cis-men."- Zevallos, Z. (2011) 'What is Otherness?' *The Other Sociologist*, 14 October. Online resource: https://othersociologist.com/otherness-resources/

ironically, because of my own (successes) affording me access. In response, as a way of processing my disquiet, my work addresses ideas of transparency and incongruent imposed colonial moves on the lands of my people. While I draw on my own experiences and my maternal lineage I am also seeking to move beyond outputs of personal expression, developing artwork that reveals the tacit culture war that persists to this day.

Why has colonial (Western/ European) culture, and by extension capitalism, sought to conquer, criminalize, de-future and then appropriate other cultures on a global scale? And how does this legacy continue today? What forms does it take on? My personal experiences and the ongoing challenges I face in navigating colonial culture such as displacement (Armstrong, 3.), especially through grief, to pursue economic and institutionalized academic opportunities (Carli, 2.), have led me to ask how my art can act as sites of reclamation, adoption, and adaption, how it can counter colonial-capitalist cultural appropriation? A reoccurring dilemma in this exploration is the realization that most aspects of colonial practices, languages, stories, and methodologies originate from Other cultures. Cultural appropriation occurs when members of a historically privileged group take symbols, customs, and other elements of an oppressed group, declaring them to be "appropriate" (Jihad, Aaliyah.TEDXYouth, 01:06). Cultural appropriation extracts aesthetic components of Global South and Non-Western culture and expression from their context, even in the seemingly ironic backdrop of the historically privileged's colonial oppression of Other cultures. This dynamic is both revealed and yet exacerbated by the prevalence of social media, a contemporary construct which heightens a demand for transparency simultaneously as to create content quickly, and thereby often unthoughtfully. Presenting them in Western Art and Fashion has been an ongoing, privileged and ignorant move of the Global North. A good

example of this is described by associate editor at BBC Lindsay Baker, in "YSL's obsession with the 'exoticisms' of the 'Orient'" in the 1970's (Baker, 2018). *Othered* by the West have found themselves legally and socially punished for their culture,[2] revealing the power structures that persist and act to gatekeep who and what is seen within the public sphere and how. Add to this an even more complex tension: the use of elements of the majority culture is not considered cultural appropriation; rather, when taken it is referred to as '*assimilation*' and, when adapted it is referred to as, *'adoption'*. In the academic context of Canada, residential schools provide a poignant example, the forced assimilation of Indigenous children through mandated Western education, was not insignificant. Further, Indigenous adults who wanted to pursue post-secondary risked enfranchisement, as that right and freedom (author and critic, Lee Maracle 117.), along with the right to vote, were circumstantial; giving up "Indian" status and treaty rights, the right to cultural identity and heritage, under the BNA Act. The issue of cultural appropriation is rooted in the unequal power dynamic between the "historically privileged and historically oppressed" (Jihad 01:06).

My method of creating purposely subverts the cultural appropriation that constitutes Western, colonial culture. I do this by playing and subverting Western, colonial aesthetic forms (such as billboards, pop culture, pant suits, and Western Art history and mythology). A large portion of

[2] In North America/Turtle Island examples of legal and social punishment include:

- The British North America act claiming Indigenous people's political autonomy and land, the Indian Act claiming authority over identity, trading enfranchisement for academic and economic opportunity, and enacting the Indian Act, The BNA Act: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/constitution-act-1867
- The Indian Act, enacting blood quantum, and The Potlatch Ban, preventing cultural practices, harvest, and social illegal. The Potlatch Ban: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/the-indian-act.)
- In the US, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 signed by Pres. Andrew Jackson, authorized lands west of the Mississippi to be granted in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders. Approx. 4,000 deaths on the journey became known as "the trail of tears." The Indian Removal Act: https://guides.loc.gov/indian-removal-act#

the Western culture I was raised within was shaped by colonial history of genocide against other cultures, including my own, globally. Given this I have found myself asking, how can I both assert myself and respectfully take on ideas embedded within Western culture that, like my own, also have origins that come from elsewhere?

This dilemma led to the focus of one of my first MFA pieces titled ***Persephone + Hades.*** This body of creative work was the opportunity for me to study and respond to the origins of concepts included within the purview of Western art (e.g., Classical Grecian art and "mythology" in ***Persephone + Hades: An engagement Homage*** to Sappho), working through my ire at the colonial, historical parallel lack of care or concern regarding Indigenous cultures both locally and globally. Motifs (visual language in place of text), symbols (often spiritual and/or sacred symbolism), stories, identities, and practices are repeatedly taken out of their cultural contexts for social and economic gain. In the Indigenous context of Canada, examples of this include the appropriation of Cowichan sweaters, and the taking of totem poles into museums charging admission. This continued absorption into the hegemony of Western Art also extends to the 64 other countries that were originally under the rule of the British Crown (the Commonwealth nations), and have over the last century sought independence.

My interest in the mixed relations of signs and symbols in the world around me, diverse Indigenous cultures' visual languages, or quite similar in readability rooted in familiarity, pop culture has led me to try to access hybrid realms. My work is constantly in search of relatedness. In finding ways to communicate my own experience in the contrasting spaces, I find myself

within the comfort and natural alignment my home and family provides, versus the rough transitions, assimilation, and adaption of myself within institutionalized academia.

My hybrid experience is not unique. Independent scholar of art history, Dr. of Philosophy Birgit Haehnel describes a hybrid "third" place as one created by the non-synchronous temporality of national and global cultures. Hybridity creates a tension unique to borderline existences, as people negotiate incommensurable disparities. The difficulties connected to imbalances in cultural exchange that have resulted from European colonization also led to the ongoing intentional and unconscious integration of signs and symbols, on both the side of the colonizer and the colonized. In order "to 'translate,' and thereby reinscribe, the social imagery of metropolis and modernity," cultures of a postcolonial contra-modernity also make use of the cultural hybridity of their boundary conditions (Haehnel, 176). In negotiating colonial power relations, an opportunity to transcend the understanding of ethnic or cultural binarism takes on the form of a new, hybrid realm of cultural difference (Haehnel, 176).

My relations to colonial legacies

Indigenous Ethics and Connection

My every day and my creative output is inherently connected to Indigenous Ethics - to the umbrella philosophies that are apparent and shared across diverse and distinct Indigenous Nations world-wide. The following are generalized observations of overarching philosophies within my own culture and the many diverse Indigenous cultures across North America. These **ways of being** are not "owned" by anyone specifically, I will not use citation.

- We (everyone and everything) are connected to everything and everyone all at once, and we impact them perpetually. Language enforces this; many of the words we use to communicate have several meanings that establish connections in various contexts.
- We (everyone and everything) are not entitled to all knowledge; some knowledge we are born into, some other forms of knowledge we earn over time and through preparation.
- We (everyone and everything) exist in the past, present, and future all at once. we embody the hopes and efforts of our ancestors and hold the needed efforts and hopes for our future descendants. Seven generations forward, seven back; recognize your impact to ground yourself in your present.

When I think of ways of being and storytelling from a cultural perspective - whenever I am creating or researching - I find myself returning to Jeanette Armstrong's essay, *Keepers of the Earth*. A Syilx Okanagan author, educator, artist, and activist, Armstrong explains the Okanagan's word for 'insanity,' translates also as 'displacement' from the "Okanagan view of a healthy, whole person" (Armstrong, 3). This resonates. My creative practice deals with duality and tensions between senses of self, with the displacement that is felt when there isn't space and balance– for the whole –for all the aspects of me as an Indigiqueer, functioning in institutionalized academia and surrounded by colonial capitalism. Following Armstrong's lead, I consider four aspects of self in my work: the physical, the emotional, the intellectual, and the spiritual self. Armstrong makes the point that the **physical self** should be understood as something beyond our bodies, that it is the "land's-dreaming capacity" – its ability to dream us. "We survive by how our body interacts with everything around us continuously" (Armstrong, 4).

The Okanagan term for the **emotional self** translates as the “heart". Our emotional self is our capacity to bond and form connections with those around us, "community and land intersect in our beings and become a part of us" (Armstrong, 4). The **intellectual self** is "the spark that ignites" (Armstrong, 4). As the starting point in our actions, the intellectual self is flawed if it is not combined with our emotional self. Finally, the Okanagan term for the **spirit self** translates as the combination of the individual with “the larger being of which all things are part,”; the spirit self is "without substance while moving continuously outward" (Armstrong, 5). Importantly, the other selves must subside and become quiet to be conscious of the spiritual self.

These senses of self are something I am aware of in everything I do, especially artmaking, and writing. When I make art, my physical connection to the material I am working with is very present; the land that dreamt me, the fibres in the fabric, the human makers of the material, dreaming my creation into the world through my hands, and how these connections keep me alive in a world where I need an income to survive. Choosing this career path of artmaking is more than an act of expression – it is also an act of survival. Passion and tension cause my emotions to run high. I feel as though I am absorbing my interests and sources of inspiration; they become ingrained in/part of me, influencing my thoughts and feelings in a manner that goes beyond the body. I also take comfort in reducing the aspect of my intellectual self to "the spark that ignites," as I am someone who can get easily very absorbed and in my head about the things I choose to accomplish. My thoughts are not the flame but the sparks that set off my acts of creating and connecting. I associate them with my spiritual self, with the act of creating. All the other selves are satiated and quiet, and something without substance moves forward until it manifests itself in my hands. To share the art that emerges in this way is a vulnerable act, one

that bonds me to all who connect with it; the family members they are intended for, and I am comfortable with, as well as the viewer whom I might not know and might not be comfortable with. Viewer responses vary vastly and consequently deepen conversation in unexpected ways, as I discuss in relation to my graduation exhibition, "A Piece of Sky" at the end of this document.

Armstrong's evocative articulations of self signal the ways in which Western rational knowledge is only beginning to catch up to Indigenous ways of knowing. Used in the past to invalidate Indigenous ways of life globally and to help justify genocide, Western assumptions are shifting to align with ideas of connectedness (Armstrong, 3.) in terms of wholistic wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 68.), an example I illustrate by comparing the two. In their work on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), psychologists Ryan and Deci note that there are three human psychological needs: **Autonomy-** we need to control our lives, and connecting to Armstrong, we need to connect with all of our senses of self (Armstrong, 3**.); Competency-** feeling capable of mastery or learning, connection to the physical world (Armstrong, 4.)**; Relatedness**- caring for and in turn be cared for by others, or "heart-self" (Armstrong, 4). Connected to this, they assert that **intrinsic motivation** is an innate propensity that people have to fulfilling these needs (Deci and Ryan, 70.), and that **extrinsic motivation** coming from outside sources such as societal standards, deadlines, authority figures, grades, and relationships are also internalized or assimilated into our self. Through their study of the extrinsic factors that facilitate versus undermine our intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 71). Deci and Ryan developed Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET). CET focuses on our need for competency and autonomy. Deci and Ryan identify that positive feedback can enhance one's feeling of competency, while negative comments will diminish it. Not a simple equation, they also note that without a sense of

autonomy, the feeling of competency will not enhance intrinsic motivation alone. In theory, according to Deci and Ryan, all three needs, **autonomy, competency, and relatedness**, must be fulfilled to achieve well-being (68). Particularly when related to Armstrong, I find this to be true – and illustrative of the way Western science catches up to Indigenous knowledge, despite the prior being historically weaponized to justify a genocide on the latter. Reflecting on this, I believe acts of British colonization in Canada and elsewhere sought to take away Indigenous autonomy on the political, psychological, physical, and wholistic levels. In response, and as an active counter, my work seeks to meddle with this disruption and explore what dimensions are created when Indigenous autonomy is safeguarded. My work is both a thank you gift to my ancestors for their endless work assuring the freedoms I inherit (Maracle, 117.), and a commitment of my responsibility to do the same for my descendants.

My need to connect to my sense of self/ my four selves (as outlined by Jeanette Armstrong and discussed above) is deeply tied to a need for autonomy, and the field that I have an ancestral draw to; Art - a historical privilege in colonial spaces, and illegal for Indigenous people during the Potlatch ban. Ryan and Deci's Self Determination Theory (SDT) seeks to explain how humans gain a sense of competency through our intellectual self (the spark that ignites) and our physical selves. Our ability to "survive by how our body interacts with everything around us continuously" (Armstrong, 4.) is essential. We achieve relatedness through the triad of our heart, physical, and spiritual selves. SDT helps to explain why I do what I do: following an ancestral draw and countering historical restrictions greatly fuels my sense of autonomy. I have had every economic reason to pick something safer and yet I continue. Working with my hands and

creating material form and cultural expression out of previous, already materialized forms and cultural expression gives me a great sense of competency and connection to my environment; as I create based on the world around me, my material has come from the earth or a person the earth dreamed (Armstrong, 4). Pursuing further education while making friends with like-minded people, maintaining close connections to my family, and embracing my spirituality fulfils my relatedness amidst the stress of academia.

Coming from a Western academic context Deci and Ryan's work lacks, in comparison to Armstrong, the connection between wholistic well-being (Deci and Ryan, 68.) and the land, a physical plain (Armstrong, 4.) that provides a sense of relatedness and competency (Deci and Ryan, 68.), and affirms our innate responsibility as humans to sustain it. The growing concern for global warming, and the recognition of the need for sustainability, has led to new outlooks on Indigenous knowledge. Western rational constructs are having to acknowledge that they do not have all the answers, that Indigenous leadership and knowledge are essential to biodiversity protection[3]. Given this, I wonder what alternate pluriversal[4] universes - where Indigenous knowledge was treated as equal - might look like. What form might a universe where extensive economic[5] and creative space is afforded for other cultures take? What would the globe look like if Indigenous practices and relational ways of being was recognized and valued over universal narratives dominated by Western colonial-capitalism?

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[3] "Indigenous peoples steward approximately 20% of the planet, but this relatively small share contains 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity." Senator Galvez. Senate Canada, Parliament of Canada

[4] "Taking the pluriverse as an ontological starting point, implies not simply tolerating difference, but actually understanding that reality is constituted not only by many worlds, but by many kinds of worlds, many ontologies, many ways of being in the world, many ways of knowing reality, and experimenting those many worlds." (PhD Political Science, Amaya Querejazu Escobari, 3).

[5] Economic, referring to specifically the current colonial-capitalist economy.

On doing, making, and knowing

I am forever grounded in the present by the knowledge that my existing comforts were hard-won by my ancestors. This is accompanied with an awareness that there are still many hopes that are "as-yet unfulfilled" (Demos, 28-29[6]). My own future moves have the capacity to directly impact the fulfillment of those hopes for my presently nonexistent children and descendants.

As an Indigenous, queer, neurodivergent, academic woman I realize I have formed different senses of self to exist comfortably in opposing spaces; immersed in the culture and community of home, and being off territory, spaces of Indigenous knowledge, and institutional academia. The irony of my mutable/ shifting self that I have used to survive is that it has also created clashes within me - my senses of self do not align, and as a result I often feel uncomfortable. **As an autistic woman**, I strategically pick parts of myself to express in separate contexts, "masking" the rest. This developed habit comes easy to me yet is insanely hard to counter. Masking is exhausting and prioritizes the comfortability of others in public spaces and institutions created without neurodivergence in mind, at the expense of my own comfort and wellbeing. **As an academic,** I've had to assimilate. The ways I was naturally drawn to communicate through storytelling as a child was (for a time) overtaken by schooling that favours summarization and making structured arguments out of other's words; privileging Western (European) modes of knowledge. At this juncture, over the past seven years I have intentionally worked to try find a balance with my Western training – a way to maintain and honour the non-western, Indigenous ways of knowing rooted in storytelling. And finally, **as a queer person**, I have come to understand my gender identity, which was delayed by a lack of decent media

[6] Demos on Yarimar Bonilla "Post disaster futures: Hopeful pessimism, Imperial Ruination, and La futura cuir"

representation that could help me understand this aspect of my being in the world. While it took until adulthood for my queerness to be realized, I have finally grown comfortable with bringing this part of my identity into my work for others to see.

On meaning-making: as a creative drawn to clothing

My background is in Visual/ Fine Arts. I am not trained in Fashion and yet I find myself endlessly drawn to and fascinated by it. Expression. Identity. Embodiment. Movement. Endless combinations, pieces with individual backstories from maker and wearer, with varying intensity and layers of sentimentality, symbology, and functionality. **Meaning-making** is integral to the creative propositions I make through clothing form, and intervention. Sociologist and fashion researcher Yuniya Kawamura links fashion styles to social developments, asserting that the main significance of the fashion system, lies in the transformation of clothing into fashion through the attachment of meaning (Haehnel, 174). Similarly and in relation to Indigenous ethics (as discussed in the named section above), Meghann O'Brien, a Northwest Coast weaver working in the traditions of Yeil Koowu (Raven's Tail) and Naaxiin (Chilkat) textiles asserts “Indigenous worldview and values have the potential to bring back the idea of clothing having meaning and power” (O’Brien, Fashion and Ancient Couture[7], 2019). O'Brien observes that in a world where “fast fashion and consumption of cheaply made garments continues to escalate…(and) clothing has become more disposable,”; Considering this and Kawamura, does fashion then include items

[7] As noted by O’Brien, the term “Ancient Couture” has been used by Dene artist/designer Sage Paul

of clothing that are inherently meaningful because of how we come by them?: A specific event, an interest in what we wear, and the passing of cherished clothing items results in fashion trends returning across generations as we inherit garments from loved ones. Reflecting on this leads me directly to regalia and the cultural garments of my people. Arguably they are not part of the capitalist "fashion system." Passed down from one generation to the next, they do however, carry deep significance similar to Kawamura's assertion. Despite fulfilling Kawamura's requirement of being connected to "events, and practices", I hesitate to include regalia as "fashion" for fear of demeaning and diluting the cultural symbolism to "specific interests" (Haehnel, 174). However, I do believe the fashion world is larger than colonial capitalization. Like other Indigenous creatives, I appreciate cultural textile, applique, and embellishment practices, all the while seeing their affiliation to Haute Couture (Meghann O'Brien 2019). Curator, educator, and director of the Indian Market Indigenous Fashion Show, Amber-Dawn Bear Robe's observation that "Indigenous fashion, pre-contact, was the original haute couture of North America. Everything was handmade and tailored to the occasion.[8]" resonates. Further, as O'Brien notes, the fashion world has the potential to "give renewed relevance for our worldview in a contemporary context, without having to alter the techniques and materials" (O'Brien, Fashion and Ancient Couture, 2019).

Western capitalist fashion trends and expectations can box us into conforming ideals and stereotypes. Equally, though, participating in fashion can be an act of resistance[9]. Fashion might not be my wheelhouse, but my Indigiqueer identity gives me a strong familiarity with colonial-

[8] as quoted by Maria Manuela, "Amber-Dawn Bear Robe Moves Indigenous Fashion Forward," 2021. https://www.newmexicomagazine.org/blog/post/amber-dawn-bear-robe-santa-fe-indian-market-indigenous-fashion-show/

[9] Journalist Jacy Topps, "Fashion as Resistance: The Everyday Rebellion." Huffpost 2017.

capitalistic boxes (and actively resisting them), leading me to an artist approach to fashion that encompasses storytelling, pop culture and decolonial provocation.

Arjun Appadurai, a cultural anthropologist, uses the term "scapes" (as in fashion-scapes) to describe the “complex contexts of social and economic relationships across national state borders during times of globalization” (Haehnel, date. P.172). These cultural flows, made up of the ever-faster movement of people, products, capital, and information across borders, has made it necessary for communities— experienced or imagined —to have less and less physical boundaries (Haehnel, date. p.172). Environmental anthropologist, David Gilbert used Appadurai's financial and mediascapes to explain the evolution of fashion systems throughout the world. By charting the various fashion geographies, he explains how the global economy is reliant on global migration networks, which can only be comprehended considering post-imperialism and postcolonialism (Haehnel, date. p.172).

In my work responding to existing fashion-scapes and my lived every day, I intentionally create a space comfortable for my queer, neurodivergent, Indigenous self. While I am only just beginning to engage and work with fashion, I know that I want to build toward creating clothing that enriches and contributes positively to the lives of both wearers and makers – clothing that everyone can find a piece of themselves in. I dream of a fashion line that supports Indigenous (and thus, sustainable labour and environmental) ethics as discussed in “Indigenous Ethics and connection above, that is inclusive (offering a broad range of sizing, gender expressive), that is functional for variously abled bodies, and that is built on transparent practices. Given this, I have made it my mission to become familiar with what it takes to bring clothing from the idea space, to the production space, to being worn by real people in their everyday lives. I am paying more

attention to my fabric sources and trying to use my scrap material. I know that I will only outsource labour for producing my work once I can afford to pay a reasonable living wage for its production.

Which leads me to return to the insights and observations of Meghann O'Brien, who draws comparisons between Haute Couture and the apparel made by Indigenous peoples (O'Brien, 2019) while also expressing worry that the current colonial-capitalist economy may pressure Indigenous artists into creating fast fashion. Contrary to the overall surge of fast fashion, she notes that "there is still a small facet of this world where clothing is still hand loomed, hand sewn, hand beaded, and hand embroidered" - Haute Couture (O'Brien, 2019). When O'Brien connected with the people who design Couture and are paid a respectable living wage, she was better able to see why the prices are justified and why some people view these garments as wearable art, despite fashion is frequently seen to be superficial and unnecessary. "This is a place where the quality of handmade textiles, beadwork, embroidery, and sewing is still held to a high standard and appreciated," says O'Brien.

Like O’Brien, I am considering the differences between mass-produced fashion and couture. Brands such as Urban Native Era, and Mobilize - an Indigenous brand known for "Streetwear with a Cree flair," also inform my perspectives. These brands embrace diverse identity, storytelling, and finding ways to counter the system. In the case of Mobilize, vibrant, graphic prints that are affordable to purchase by most people, because they produced on a larger scale, are highly accessible. These qualities of accessibility of expression through clothing is a quality I aspire to encompass as I move into producing clothing for others. And yet, I am enamoured and

fascinated with clothing that comes with highly refined skills and attention to detail- a time-based practice, interrupted by a capitalist world that forces artists to monetize to meet basic needs, but threatens to make the craft inaccessible. The work of the late Cuban American fashion Designer Isabel Toledo is an incredible example of the refinement and detail in a time-based craft. In Toledo's meticulous practice (Haehnel, 174.) the ability to see the process and the artist's human hand is lost by the viewer, the ability to witness her work becomes an event (Haehnel, 174.), all in the interest (Haehnel, 174.) of textiles and form. I learnt about Toledo through Andrew Ina, one of my peers in the MFA program. Toledo's clothing expressions encapsulate time and makes me keenly aware of what it takes to acquire deep knowledge of craft. Her thorough understanding of fabric, the way it behaves, its weight, the drape, and her skill to manipulate it is awe-inspiring to me. And so, I find myself in in the push-and-pull between mass-produced fashion and couture, unwilling to take a side. I value both. I acknowledge there is conflict and tension between the two. On one hand, I want my work to be accessible, especially to the communities I am a part of. On the other, as an artist, I know I will spend the rest of my life practicing and refining my capacities to make creative clothing forms in hopes that someday I achieve, and make something with even half the allure of Toledo's work - fulfilling an ancestral way of making as described by O'Brien (2019.) and Bear Robe (writer, curator, and model Maria Manuela, 2021). This push-and-pull is familiar, though, the tension is what my work is created in and a space I've learned to get comfortable in; As any Indigenous person creating and taking space in Institutionalized academia will describe.

Emily Carr

During the establishment of the colonial state under British control, Indigenous people (my ancestors) were prohibited from attending universities. Those who did so risked having their legal identity as "Indians" taken away from them, forcing them to assimilate and lose their land rights. Later, children were taken from families and placed in residential schools, or as was the case for my grandparents, Indian Day Schools, where their language and cultural practices were punished physically, emotionally, and socially. When the Indian Act was created, Emily Carr, the future artist, was five years old. The potlatch ban was enforced when she was fourteen, adding to the earlier colonial imposition of residential schools on Indigenous people when she was twelve. She died in 1945, six years before the Potlatch ban and fifty-one years before the termination of residential schools.[10] Given this it should come as no surprise that studying at Emily Carr University brings me a lot of mixed emotions. I have access to a wealth of knowledge from my cohort, supervisor, instructors, and equipped studio spaces to create things I couldn't dream of making in my living room. And yet, I question and am deeply uncomfortable with the University's namesake – with the histories tied to the artist, Emily Carr.

In "*Cultural Appropriations and Identificatory Practices in Emily Carr's 'Indian Stories*,'" Dr. Prof. Janice Steward outlines concerns around Carr's identification with Indigenous peoples and the context of Carr's possible motivations. Given the name Klee Wick by a Nuu-Chah-Nulth

[10] The Indian Act timeline, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/the-indian-act
The Potlatch Ban timeline, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/potlatch-ban
Residential Schools timeline, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/residential-schools
Emily Carr Timeline, https://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/emily-carr-timeline

elder, Carr built an identity based on her ideas of what it meant to be "Indian." Carr received her Indigenous name while "being chased out of the great house by a shouting Mrs. Wynook for capturing souls in her sketches" (Stewart, 60). Stewart reflects on the irony that Carr left "having assumed an aboriginal soul of her own. An Identity named" (Stewart, 61). I, in turn, reflect on the irony that this "Indian" identity was formed out of a warning; that Carr was actively stealing a living culture. Carr's idea of "Indianness," as quoted by Stewart, includes sentiments such as "plain, straight, simple," and "primitive but wise". Through these conceptions, Carr idealized pre-contact naturalness while contributing to the erasure of the colonial struggles experienced by the people she was attempting to represent.

A strong example of Carr's contribution to erasure can be found in an art exhibition that took place in Toronto in 1927. Carr participated, along with the Group of Seven, in "An exhibition which involved no contemporary Native Canadian artists... judged on their capacity to reflect 'the spirit of the Indian'... from an entirely white perspective" (Stewart, 63). In her work on Carr, Stewart notes the emergence of a confrontation of "her mythic 'true Indian'" and the 'real Indians' living on reservations," and the subsequent result is that less romantic "'real Indians'" are (even today) "stripped of their authenticity and positioned as inhabitants of a sort of liminal state in which they are represented as neither white nor Indian. They lose any claim to identity so that Carr may have theirs as hers" (Stewart, 63).

Carr's ability to "represent" Indigeneity was limited by the fact she was not entitled to know everything of the Indigenous cultures she visited; in fact, as a new-comer, communities would have treated her similarly to children in terms of knowledge and being ready for it. Stewart brings light to debate surrounding Carr's reflection in "Ucluelet," stating "to them I was a child." (Stewart, 68.) Adding to the discussion of whether this was to conceal shame around immaturity, or a literary choice, Steward suggests that it was because Carr viewed Indigeneity as childlike;

"According to (Rey) Chow's model, Carr used identification with First Nations peoples as a vehicle to allow her to escape imaginatively what she perceived as an empty existence, shunning the plastic manners, morality, and aesthetics of Victorian society for what she imaginatively perceived as the childlike simplicity, honesty, naturalness, and realness of First Nations peoples" (Stewart, 65).

I concur, and further the idea by comparing colonial knowledge systems to Indigenous ethics, as per section, "Indigenous ethics and connection" above. The expression of these sentiments by the Indigenous people she met was mistaken as "simple" or "primitive" by Carr (and her fellow settlers also) whose expectations were framed by European culture and ignorant of the complexities of Indigenous culture(s). Eve Tuck, Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Methodologies with Youth and Communities, and Dr. K Wayne Yang, professor and scholar of community organizing, critical pedagogy, and Indigenous and decolonizing studies, describe how information understood from a colonial point of view assumes, " Descartes' formulation, cognito ergo sum ("I think, therefore I am") and transforms into ego conquiro" ("I conquer, therefore I am)[11]"(Tuck and Yang, 224.). Doing so the colonial perspective links the entitlement

[11] Tuck and Yang referencing Dussel, 1985; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011.

to all information, to the entitlement to conqour Other peoples. In contrast, Indigenous ways of knowing do not entitle everyone to all knowledge, some knowledge is a birthright, some is only spoken when we are ready to hear. Countering colonial entitlement, “refusal, and stances of refusal in research, are attempts to place limits on conquest and the colonization of knowledge by marking what is off limits, what is not up for grabs or discussion, what is sacred, and what can’t be known” (Tuck and Yang, 225).

While Emily Carr's perspective and relationship with Indigenous people was limited by the European social/political framing of her lived point in time, she did have experiences that gave her a window into another way of seeing. Emily Carr visited my home village, Laxgalts'ap (Greenville), and wrote about it in her "Stories of Klee Wick.” She was surprisingly aware of the colonial wrongdoings that were happening. She wrote about how our village’s totem poles would rot (if remaining on their homeland) unless stolen/taken from the village we were forced to abandon, would be unseen until they arrived at museums; taken out of context. She wrote and shared the sentiment of how unfortunate the loss of my Nisga’a language would be. Quoting Emily Carr's "Greenville" regarding an exhibition of Carr's works involving the Nass Valley, brought back into our context, an exhibition at the Nisga'a Museum in 2014:

> "Now there was no one to listen to their talk anymore... By and by they would rot and topple to the earth, unless white men came and carried them away to museums. There they would be labelled as exhibits, dumb before the crowds who gaped and laughed and said, "This is the distorted foolishness of an uncivilized people." And the poor poles could not talk because the white man did not understand their language." (Lederman, Marsha. The Globe and Mail columnist, 2014).

The irony of Carr is that despite her clear understanding and concern of how colonization was impacting Indigenous peoples and cultures, she allowed her works depicting Nisga'a totem poles to be shown in galleries, completely out of context. She did so at the same time as white men were taking the real totem poles down and away from their home to places as far off as Europe. This was the case with my paternal Ye'e (grandfather) Earl, Sim'oogit (chief) Ni'isjoohl and his Wilp's (house/extended maternal family's) totem pole. Originally carved in the mid-1850s, it was taken from our land and was on display at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh until being brought home in 2023. Lee Wilson, video journalist, quotes Sim'oogit Ni'isjoohl,

> "' When they become fallen on their own, that's when they are not alive anymore… but all these poles that were taken were never fallen on their own, so in other words, they are still alive.'" Before describing how bringing the pole home was, in 2022, an as-yet fulfilled hope (Demos, 28.) of my Ye'e's uncles who died before making the journey themselves (Wilson, 2022).

For my part, my issue is not with Emily Carr the individual. It is not about what she was inspired by, or her arguably inappropriate identification as "Indian" creatively, or the irony that she got the name, Klee Wick, "the laughing one," from a Nuuh-Chan-Nuhl elder for stealing spirits in her drawings and running out of the longhouse laughing. Rather, my concern is with the high regard for Emily Carr's work in the Institutions comparison to the work of my people - that of the Indigenous communities and artistic cultural work that inspired Carr's own creativity and development as an artist. I question the praise of her works as I understand them to be stealing spirits out of their context, and that her romanticization of the "Vanishing Indian" as a product of

her time: but refuse to absolve her of responsibility under that excuse, because she was at least in-part, aware. Ms. Wynook told her directly, and Carr reflected on this dynamic in her own writing. But despite awareness, Carr ironically identifies her creative self as “Indian” despite not understanding the earliest Indigenous teaching; listen to your elders. Carr is human, layered, but I don’t see her as profound or complex. I see a career primarily pedestalled for taking the spirit of work that was not her own, I see an understandable but not excusable romanticization of a mythical version of Indigeneity, and someone we’d call, like a child, Ẇii a̲x̲-ts'imuxw: Ears for nothing! (or decoration). Given this, it should not be surprising to the reader that I question her regard as one of the greatest Canadian Artists, reflected by ECUAD’s claim of her namesake. I'm curious where the recognition of the works she depicted, or the contemporary artists that create work that depicts the Indigenous lived experiences that Carr desired to associate with, is. I question what it means for my creative practice to develop as I study in the institution that has her as its namesake. For the time being, I feel my responsibility is to voice and be transparent about my concerns.

Chronopolitics

Given my questions and concerns about Emily Carr and ECUAD noted above, my work navigates how I exist in the world by exploring the colonial past and reimagining a decolonized future, a form of chronopolitics. Chronopolitics as described in Radical Futurism by art historian and cultural critic, T.J. Demos is the politicizing of time, or the realization that the way we understand time is colonial-capitalistic and inherently political. My experience as an Indigiqueer artist has led me to explore the historical lack of inclusion of non-Western cultures due to global

colonization, one world agendas and the fallout of historical moments (such as that of the artist Emily Carr) that persist in “Canadian” cultural narratives. I do so by meddling with time. Decolonial praxis, Afrofuturisms, Indigenous and Chicanx Futurisms, queer and trans futurisms, crip futurisms, Muslim and Gulf futurisms, etc. all disrupt the timeline of historical oppression to create a reimagined past, present, and future (Demos, 9.) with more social and economic freedoms, autonomy, and competency, both psychological and political (governance) for the Others then, now, and to come. Realizing that our understanding of time is colonial, and capitalist comes easily when you your cultural perspective includes this level of presence; the consciousness of your ancestors’ efforts being responsible for the freedoms you have, knowing how much more they deserved and still how much they hoped for (for you), and having this urge to create more freedoms for your own descendants. Growing up I’d listen to stories of my loved ones and imagine worlds where they had the freedoms they deserved. I realize the gifts I have and my loved one’s unmaterialized hopes for me and imagine nearby worlds where I achieve those. I dream a world for my unborn children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren where they don’t have to work so hard for freedoms in their autonomy, competency, and connectedness to each sense of self. This sensibility directly informs my artworks; ***Hummingbird/Ascendent Dress*** (figure 8) imagines “a world where my daughter only wears Red in memoriam, and no longer, in awareness,” referencing the REDress project by Jamie Black. It is a continuation of my earlier piece ***70s Gigi / 90s Mama*** (figure 4), which references Cree and Métis artist and educator Michelle Sound’s “Seventies Mama” and expresses gratitude for my Gigi (grandma), my mom, Alisha B. Wormsley’s “There Are Black People in the Future”, Every Child Matters movement, Cannupa Hanska Luger’s “We Survive You”, and the REDress Project. The following will offer a more detailed discussion.

Indigenous storytelling - my way of knowing

Nisga'a Communication Systems

Another aid to understanding Indigenous storytelling (the vat of which I am fondest), are communication systems; for example, and a pull from my own cultural, artistic, academic timelines, Nisga'a communication systems as depicted by the “lady with Labret” mask. In 2015, I had the opportunity to learn to carve as I replicated this mask as part of the "Expanding Traditions Project" hosted by the Nisga’a Museum.

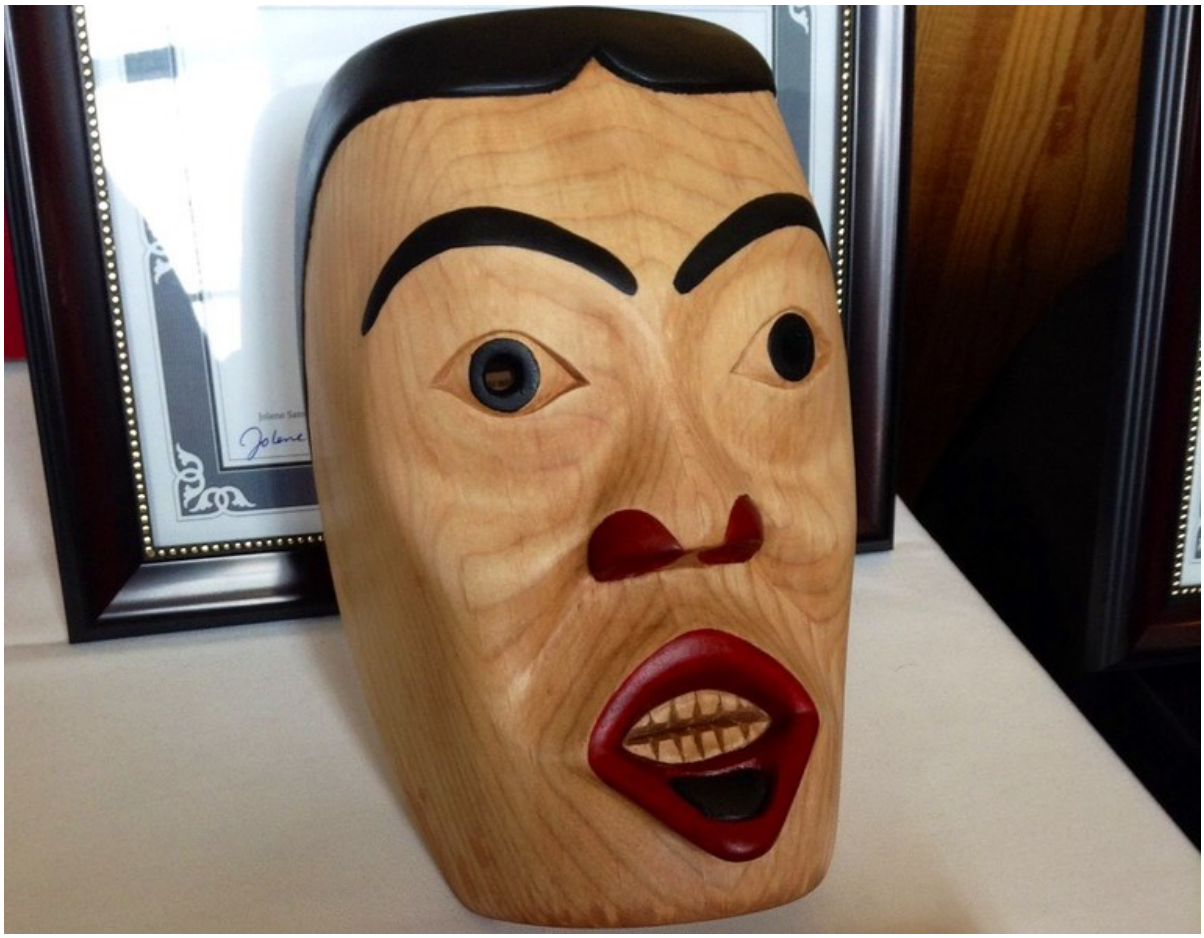

Figure 1, "Lady with Labret" Replica by Shaina (Richelle) Stephens, Expanding Transitions Project 2015, Nisga'a Museum

I replicated The Lady with the Labret mask from the permanent, Ancestor's Collection, signifying the value of words and Nisga'a communication systems. (see figure 1). This choice was informed by reading the From Time Before Memory: The People of K'amlighihahlhaahl (Nisga'a Language & Culture Program, 1996.)'s chapter on historical Nisga'a piercings at my Gigi Shirley's house June of 2015, before applying for my first job; This project was the beginning of my art and research practice. The following description has been developed over time through my memory of storytelling, From Time before Memory, and my research at the Nisga'a Museum as part of this project, and later as an interpreter and assistant:

Before the interruption of colonization, the young Nisga'a women of rank's lower lip was pierced and stretched as rank increased. Nisga'a children coming of age had their ears pierced by paternal relatives to signify they were not to be spoken to lightly. For young men of rank (in line for chieftainship), strands of wool or cedar would be inserted through four punctures in each ear and braided down. Beyond displaying rank, piercings encouraged a system of communication. The labret's purpose was to be a physical reminder to listen and deliberate before speaking. Stretching made speaking difficult, so words had to be worth the effort. The braided ear reminds the young chief to listen carefully and deliberately before initiating any actions. The matriarchs had the final word when the decisions were being made in the Wilp ("House," Maternal extended family historically living in longhouses), her labret a physical sign of her careful thought. Piercing practices may have been interrupted, but the choice to honor the traditions in various ways is now left in our own hands (and professional piercers), a choice not unaffected by colonial-capitalist working regulations and "professional" norms.

Nisga'a's cultural stories, language, and heritage has been safe kept for centuries through oral tradition, storytelling. Ours has been a knowledge tradition that has not relied (until recently) on written text. Instead, art functioned as our visual language; it communicated a story, sometimes through song and dance performance, a tradition I seek to mimic in my own work through the use of photographs. I create garments imagined for characters, mythological (***Persephone + Hades***) or in my matrilineal culture (***'70s Gigi / '90s Mama***). As I do so I try to embody the energy of my characters through the stories I have received from either family or academic assimilation. My choice to work in wearable garments and interest in fashion is influenced by many factors, including Nisga'a's adoption and adaption of the red and black Hudson's Bay fabric to create the regalia we perform story in.

The **labour of making** intentionally is integral to my practice, I incorporate my heritage's historical legacy of making alongside methods that have come with colonialization. By adapting methods, materials, and stories gained through combining Nisga'a ways of thinking and creating with elements gained through academic assimilation and pop culture to convey a contemporary Indigenous perspective. This will be a common theme through my time-meddling projects: decade-inspired clothing based on my matrilineal lineage in ***'70s Gigi / '90s Mama,*** Western Art history, astrology, Indigeneity, queerness, and academia in Persephone & Hades: an Homage to Sappho, and a futuristic garment created by digital tools, an imagining and gift for my future children, the ***Hummingbird / Ascendant*** Dress. Who I am also affects other **aesthetic and construction choices**. My neurodivergence manifests in sensory issues and a hyperfixation of colour coordination; I strive to make garments functionally and expressively comfortable. I gravitate towards bright, punchy colours and bounce between hyper-feminine forms and a love of androgyny.

Time Meddlers – my kind

It is essential that I credit other time-meddlers who have inspired me: Kent Monkman, Marie Clemens' "The Unnatural and Accidental Women," Michelle Sound's "Seventies Mama" and "Future Ancestors," Shonda Rimes' "Queen Charlotte", Diana Gabaldon's "Outlander," Alicia Elliott, and also the collective work of writers (Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Sonny Assu, Brandon Mitchell, Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley, Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley, David A. Robertson, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, Jen Storm, Richard Van Camp, Katherena Vermette, Chelsea Vowel) and illustrators (Tara Audibert, Kyle Charles, GMB Chomichuk, Natasha Donovan, Scott B. Henderson, Andrew Lodwick, Scott A. Ford, Donovan Yaciuk, Ryan Howe, Jen Storm) of -*This Place: 150 Years Retold*, a graphic anthology that tells the story of historical events in Canada from an Indigenous perspective. Drawing on traditional storytelling adapted in the form of a graphic novel that allows art to act as visual language accompanying the text each chapter of *This Place: 150 Years Retold* begins with a timeline of historical events in Canada that are featured and intersect with the story told. This retelling, a collaboration between several Indigenous artists and authors in Canada, tackles different issues connected to colonization: the Indian Act, the potlatch Ban, residential schools, land violence, and more. It does so without victimizing communities and by focusing on the counter-initiatives of Indigenous peoples across Canada through contemporary-Indigenous graphics. This anthology, along with the initial list of time-disrupters, inspired my interest in time-meddling (what Demos describes as chronopolitics, see section "Chronopolitics" above). An example of the possibilities that open when artists work together to confront how our colonial history is told, shifting the perspective from the colonizers to the Indigenous peoples. There is complexity in the continuous efforts to keep cultural identity yet adapt to a new environment to

fight for human, child, Indigenous, and land rights. Indigenous history and contemporary are layers of resilience, love, grief, pain, and the demand for autonomy. The kinship I feel towards each story is the same; regardless of circumstance and uncertainty, there is strength and grounding when you think seven generations forward and back, all at once. There are gratitude and strength from my ancestors' strong will and the deep, unshaken desire to ensure continued progress for my future-own to have a better quality of life, too. In my work, I take direct inspiration from the anthology's method of storytelling by starting with a snapshot of time, an art history period (***Persephone + Hades***), decades (‘***70s Gigi, ‘90s Mama***), and consider how the perspectives of the global ***Other*****s** have been condemned, appropriated, and excluded through colonization, and shift the gaze to highlight the Other perspective instead. I chose to reimagine the snapshot in time and what it could have looked like with a more inclusive, diverse, and unique space.

My work intends to counter the value of appropriated or romanticized "Vanishing Indian" tropes by highlighting the duality of my practice and revisiting different periods. I want to meddle the past, reimagined to be inclusive, disrupting our present and future timelines. My work ‘***70s Gigi / ‘90s Mama*** (titled after Michelle Sound’s ‘Seventies Mama’) explores two periods of time through my Gigi and then my mom. What would my Gigi Shirley’s favourite fashion decade, the ‘70s, have looked like if there had been diversity in designers instead of trends appropriating Plains Nations. What would a self-proclaimed hippie, committed to working hard (and playing hard), run around in? **-** A blue suede coat and flares with hand-painted, Nisga’a designs and her business logo from the future**.** What would my mom have worn in the ‘90s if plaid, originating as tartan in Scotland as a symbol of family identity and of the

Highlander uprising in 1745 (outlawed in England in 1746 after the British slaughtered the Highlanders until 1782 under: The Dress Act) had included a true to tartan history by a pattern reflecting her own family as resistance to colonial suppression of identity? In both cases I ask how can I include a piece of me, inspired by my loved ones, in time frames I was not present? In my work ***Persephone + Hades***: An Homage to Sappho, I take a different tact, asking the question: **What other cultures or religions became aspects of the past or mythology through colonization?** What is the connection between colonization and the church condemning Others' culture, spirituality, and sexuality? Moreover, if the dominant culture comprises elements of cultures condemned during colonization, what aspects of the dominant culture are "appropriate" to incorporate when assimilating. There isn't a word for "artist" in Nisga'a because this type of creation is less about the artist as an individual and more a process of letting the spirit realm speak through our hands; never created for the sake of creating art; instead, it serves as a visual language in place of text, telling stories, family history and identity, educating, and being a tool for healing on physical and spiritual levels. I communicate my love for my family, and try embodying their energies, retell stories I've explored through education, and leave intentions for the future beyond myself in my variation of Nisga'a.

BANFF – learning with other Indigenous creatives and a collective protective act

The 2024 Indigenous Haute Couture Residency with Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, a cohort of eight Indigenous designers, over four weeks we created garments from sketch, to draft, to stitch, experimenting with futuristic digital embellishments and learning traditional techniques in workshops lead by the endeared “resident-aunties.”

In imagining a future, I consider how my culture has already adapted; as described in the Nisga’a Communication section above, my choice to work and interest in fashion is influenced by Nisga'a's adoption of the red and black Hudson's Bay fabric, to create the regalia we perform story in – clothing is an important communicator of values for my people. The prompt of “Digital Embellishments” of the Spring 2024 Banff residency felt like a natural, contemporary and futuristic cultural adaption. Arriving there, I returned to an old friend, the medium of screen printing (photo emulsion of digital formline designs), and furthered my explorations of a new-to-me territory, laser cutting. A subtractive method, laser cutting is the reverse of the additive digital production that I learned and applied in ECU’s Material Matters Research Commons a year prior, 3D printing.

In the residency my fellow Indigenous designers and I spent a lot of time together. The nature of fashion and institutional deadlines (though we were repeatedly assured, a finished product was not the point) consumed our time and attention, while our own individual dreams and ambitions provided creative direction. We talked about the different obstacles that have impacted us on our different career paths as Indigenous designers: displacement; stolen works

and cultural appropriation; economic limitations; lacking mental health resources; feeling isolated in urban environments; being far from our families. There was an intense need for grounding. This was found and provided in the meditative, traditional beading, tufting, and quilling workshops lead by resident aunties: Suzan Marie a Dene artisan, knowledge teacher, author of Dene Spruce Root Basketry (2022.) that focuses on modern revival of Traditional methods; and Lucy Yakeleya an artisan and knowledge keeper who was born in Fort Good Hope, NWT and learned and honed many traditional ways of being, and creating as she grew up there and at Colville Lake. Suzan Marie and Lucy taught us to bead with two needles, to tuft reindeer fur, and to quill with porcupine. A skill that was particularly exciting to acquire with nominee-Lily Gladstone recently having work a quilled dress to the 2024 Oscars. A large part of me wanted to spend the entire program working on projects started in these workshops, to spend afternoons smelling tanned hide, being promptly corrected (and praised), listening to amusing stories and laughter, instead of falling into the stress of deadlines I've learned to self-impose. This sentiment was a collective one felt and expressed by the entire cohort. The tension between western ways of doing things and Indigenous knowing was highlighted for me in the third week of the residency when a significant, insensitive, communicative misstep by a Banff center staff drew my Indigenous peers and I to respond in a protective act, in support of our aunties. It is not often as young people, that we get to return a favour of cultural teachings, to our elders. Knowledge keepers hold a special place in Indigenous hearts, especially artists, as the information, technique, and story they poses are hard-won, and are the secrets to feeling reconnected when the colonial world seeks to instill displacement. The opportunity for cultural exchange with an elder, is an exceedingly rare honour. All in all, and administrative misstep aside, this was the beauty of the Banff Indigenous Couture residency, an initiative that brought together Indigenous creatives from many different nations

(spanning countries and continents!) to work and live together – providing the opportunity for rich cultural exchange and deep learning connected to cloth.[12]

The contemporary situation - pop culture and the quest for freedoms

Pop Culture

Pop culture and contemporary culture play a part in my work and indeed, in my psyche; as I have assimilated academically through elementary, to post-secondary, I have still needed and sought to relate and connect. Pop culture can bind groups of people, regardless of background especially when made with inclusive intent through shared interests, agencies, advocacies, and experiences that eventually become shared nostalgia. It has provided me with an important outlet. As an Indigenous person - relatedness is core to every aspect of my wellbeing, a source of both grounding and ethical responsibility (Armstrong, 3). Beyond my heritage's perspective, this need for relatedness is also identified as one of three human, psychological needs: a requirement to achieve wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 68).

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[12] Despite the beauty created by organizers and facilitators, it only takes one negligent and lackadaisical person to bring back unwelcome memories. Midway through our residency an opportunity for exchange was interrupted, and our knowledge keepers were made to feel unwelcome for something that was preventable and could have been easily remedied by the organizers. Considering recent histories where Indigenous people were not only made to feel unwelcome in Canadian institutions but also abused in Residential Schools for partaking in their own cultures, it was deeply disappointing to see a "professional" from an esteemed organization (the Banff Centre), behave in a way that resurfaced traumatic feelings for elders who likely experienced the worst, first-hand. True to our persevering nature, though, the aunties, Suzan Marie and Lucy Yakeleya, and the Indigenous designer participants (Heather Bouchier, Natalia Bermeo, Reggie-Ann Harrold, Stacey Mitchell, Taalrumiq Christina King, Tashina Migwans Odig, Valerie St. Pierre Smith, and myself) led by designers D'arcy Moses and Tishna Marlow responded with a determined caring and protective act. As a multigenerational collective of Indigenous-designers we communicated the need for transparency and respect, created a learning lesson out of it, and carried on enjoying an entirely-otherwise thoughtful, beautiful program.

Pop culture can create a sense of **relatedness** amongst peers. It can also **frame a moment in time for a larger population**. Starman by David Bowie serves as an inspiration outside of fashion and visual art-making that is integral to my practice. This song, released in 1972, is about youth finding hope in the musical intervention and enlightenment of an alien, a "Starman," sung from the perspective of said youth. The track's resonated with many and gave hope for the future to youth amidst the many political movements of the 70s, including the civil rights movement, women's liberation, the anti-Vietnam War campaign, the student movement, and the counterculture. I see parallels between these desires and hope for change and my own current situation/creative output. The song called for listening to and letting youth guide us as a society and calling anyone who feels 'different' to embrace themselves and dance in celebration. The message of hope resonated with many activists, queer, and 'weird' people alike, creating a space of comfort, unmasking, and celebrating[13]. The aesthetics and values of Bowie's Starman, has provided me with a spark for my own sense of self and my creative output - a means to connect a little piece of me to a time that my Gigi Shirley (my maternal grandmother) thrived in. The colour palette in ***'70s Gigi*** is Starman Inspired, and an extra piece of me (a freedom) gifted back to my Gigi as a thank you. I will discuss this work further in the section *Meddling with Time**, '70s Gigi / '90s Mama*** below.

In the context of the 2020's and contemporary pop culture, BIPOC creators and fashion brands committed to diversifying the Western fashion world are significant: Savage x Fenty is an example of a brand that initially inspired my work philosophically, but later became an example of what I don't want my work to do; cave to colonial capitalism.

[13] Example: 70s-set short-film LUX by director Issy Snailham, Musical Short, Random Acts, 2016. https://youtu.be/5QURz4YIvdU?si=F5yyD3T1oYucKrAi

The fashion/lingerie brand Savage x Fenty is known for being committed to body, gender, and race diversity. The brand's name can be read as reclamation of the term "Savage." Describing the context of North American Indigenous people, in relation to the current genocide being enacted on Palestine, Robert O. Smith describes Savage as term used by the dominant culture during colonization to condemn those of different cultures, races, spiritualities, and religions[14]. Through her brand's name, founder, Robyn Rihanna Fenty, nods to her origins and the rich history that she comes from; Barbados, an island colonized in 1627 by the British, that subsequently became a slave society only to be granted internal autonomy over 3 centuries later in 1961. Savage x Fenty challenges the usual subdued tones associated with lingerie by featuring bright, punchy colours that people of all gender identities can wear. Its annual runway shows counter the idea of traditional fashion presentation by showcasing people of all body types, abilities, ethnicities, and gender identities, dancing, modelling, and singing. In these productions, lesser-known artists are uplifted and featured alongside well-known artists, heightening their public presence and the reach of their work. Doing so they successfully highlight the lack of diversity typically associated with fashion and lingerie, prioritizing inclusion, and function over standardized aesthetics to celebrate human sexuality. And yet, I have growing qualms. As wonderful as the brand's philosophical mission is, its labour ethics have been called into question. Identified and listed by Re/make's journalist, Elizabeth Cline in their 2022

[14] Assistant Professor of History University of North Texas (Denton, Texas) on "Roy Harvey Pearce's Savagism and Civilization, first published in 1953…: a careful explication of how white civilization defined the "other" to better define itself and validate its hegemony. Pearce argues that "savagism" is a creation of "civilization", so civilization better understands the boundaries surrounding its proper existence. In the North American context, the "savage" was the Indian (undifferentiated by different tribes). While the Indian had many virtues (i.e., eloquence and closeness to the earth), these were all savage virtues diminished by contact with civilization. This problem, Pearce says, was "solved in such a way as to form a grand rationale for the progress of American civilization over what was called American savagism." The savage would eventually cease to exist in the face of civilization's inevitable, God-ordained expansion. Savagism salved the civilized conscience while completing the task: "Civilization had created a savage, so to kill him. Idea had begotten an image, so to kill it."3." **Civilization, Savagism, and the Presence of Burning Children** 206.

accountability report (Cline, Elizabeth L, et al., 13.) as a company with ratings fast-fashion brands such as Shein - due to its treatment of makers. I am left to wonder - what worth does a philosophy of clothing celebrating inclusion and accessibility hold if this is connected to economic, capitalist decisions that perpetuate a long history of exploiting groups of people who are treated as insignificant and inconsequential - as the Other?

Reflecting on Freedoms: The Western Concept of the Intellectual Self and the Colonized Peoples' Right to Freedom

"Find freedom in the context you inherit," (Maracle, 117.)

"find only freedom in the realms of eccentricity." (Bowie, unknown).

As an Indigenous artist and academic who inhabits institutions built on colonialism (ECU, the bank I work at, and previously VIU) my focus is firmly on freedoms in art, the economic freedom to access artmaking as a valid and viable career and form of meaning making. In Goodbye, Snauq Lee Maracle writes cathartically about displacement from both homeland and cultural setting, bringing the reader through the emotions of mourning a place, quandaries involving identity, displacement in institutional spaces, the unmasking of professionalism creating discussion and context into academic spaces, the hope and joy in irony as differing cultures who also adversely experienced colonization gain place, the shifted dreams amidst transformation, and the laughter that always accompanies the release in a goodbye.

As a queer artist, I find myself relating to Bowie, finding only more freedoms in my own eccentricities: inexplicable hyperfixations, intense passions, and a love of bright colour, inherited through nature, nurturing, and the collective dreams of the land, my ancestors, and family.

As a youth I moved consistently between my home territory, steeped in the knowledge of my family, matriarchs, chiefs, immersement in cultural practice, and the city, a setting of institutional academic knowledge and disciplines that my mom, and later I, attended. Doing so I have a unique grasp on the contrast between the two. Gaining knowledge from an Indigenous perspective is spiritually grounding, physically practical, and fulfills the psychological need for connection; a freedom not aways available through colonization. In contrast, Western/European understanding that offers the possibility of stability can also create feelings of displacement. Making the move to seek this the freedom that is promised through knowledge gained in University is not always afforded to Indigenous individuals, and for those who do manage to take this route it can also come with a loss of Indigenous self-identity[15].

Education is a practice of freedom in two ways. On the one hand, it grants freedom; education can be a ticket beyond the home, opening minds to many different perspectives and countering the previous colonial attempts to limit Indigenous visibility. On the other hand, accessing education requires financial freedom, which is a privilege. Several factors affect one's ability to access post-secondary, including, but not limited to:

[15] Through the Indian Act, attending post-secondary risked enfranchisement (relinquishing “Indian” status), through physical, emotional and cultural abuse in Residential Schools and Indian Day Schools, and currently, feelings of displacement (Armstrong, 3.) through urbanization (Carli, 2.) to attend post-secondary.

- ï Financial support (Family, scholarships, jobs, savings.)
- ï Location of origin (High school quality, opportunities, travel for as m program.)
- ï Time (ability to take time from work, family, and life events.)

Education opens many doors and creates economic freedom, but current economic freedoms determine one's ability to attend in the first place. An article *The City as a "Space of Opportunity": Urban Indigenous Experiences and Community Safety Partnerships*, Vivien Carli, an ICPC analyst and project officer, describes the "phenomenon of urbanization and its effect on marginalization and victimization of Indigenous populations in cities" (Carli, 2). For many Indigenous people, the opportunities that come with urbanization, won by the determination of our loved ones and ancestors despite many colonial efforts to withhold these freedoms (autonomy, identity, cultural practices, specifically identity within academia), empower us to face these disparities head-on. Carli notes the growing disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations and the negative and positive effects of increased migration to cities, all the while acknowledging that many Indigenous innovators, governments, activists, organizations, and entrepreneurs are actively creating solutions, services, and culturally appropriate connections. She does not continue the victimization of Indigenous people but demonstrates an approach that is open and transparent.

As an Indigiqueer creative - my means of response

Meddling with Time

My work is a call to action, a counter to the value of appropriated or romanticized 'Vanishing Indian' tropes, highlighting the duality of my practice and revisits different periods. I imagine a world where Indigenous practices and relational ways of being are not just recognized but valued over universal narratives dominated by Western colonial capitalism. This is not a distant dream, but a pressing need for our global community.

Growing up, I was captivated by the stories of my loved ones, and I envisioned worlds where they could enjoy the freedoms they rightfully deserved. I became aware of the potential within me, and the unfulfilled dreams of my loved ones for my future- I began to imagine worlds where I could realize those dreams. Today, I dream of a world for my unborn children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. A world where they don't have to work so hard for the freedom to be autonomous, competent, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 68.) to all four of their senses of self (Armstrong, 3). My work, meddling with time, is the physical manifestation of these imagined worlds, a gift to my loved ones of past **and** future in thanks for all the freedoms (Maracle, 117.) I have been afforded, wish to gift back, and ancestral dreams realized despite the ones still as-yet (Demos, 29.) to be.

> “Holding out hope for the future-as-disruption has not been entirely extinguished,” even if “it’s reduced to what Yarimar Bonilla terms “hopeful pessimism,” … what John Berger earlier called “undefeated despair,” … carr(ying) on in the “imperial debris” of modernity, including… the as-yet unfulfilled hopes of past struggles… It even leads to bold

> pronouncements of persistence, as in the public artwork of Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, and Lakota) … announcing "we survive you," against a background populated by figures from his 2021 "Future Ancestral Technologies" series, preemptively stakes an indigenous claim for post-colonial futurity" (Demos, T.J. *Radical Futurisms*, pp. 28-29. Sternberg press 2023).

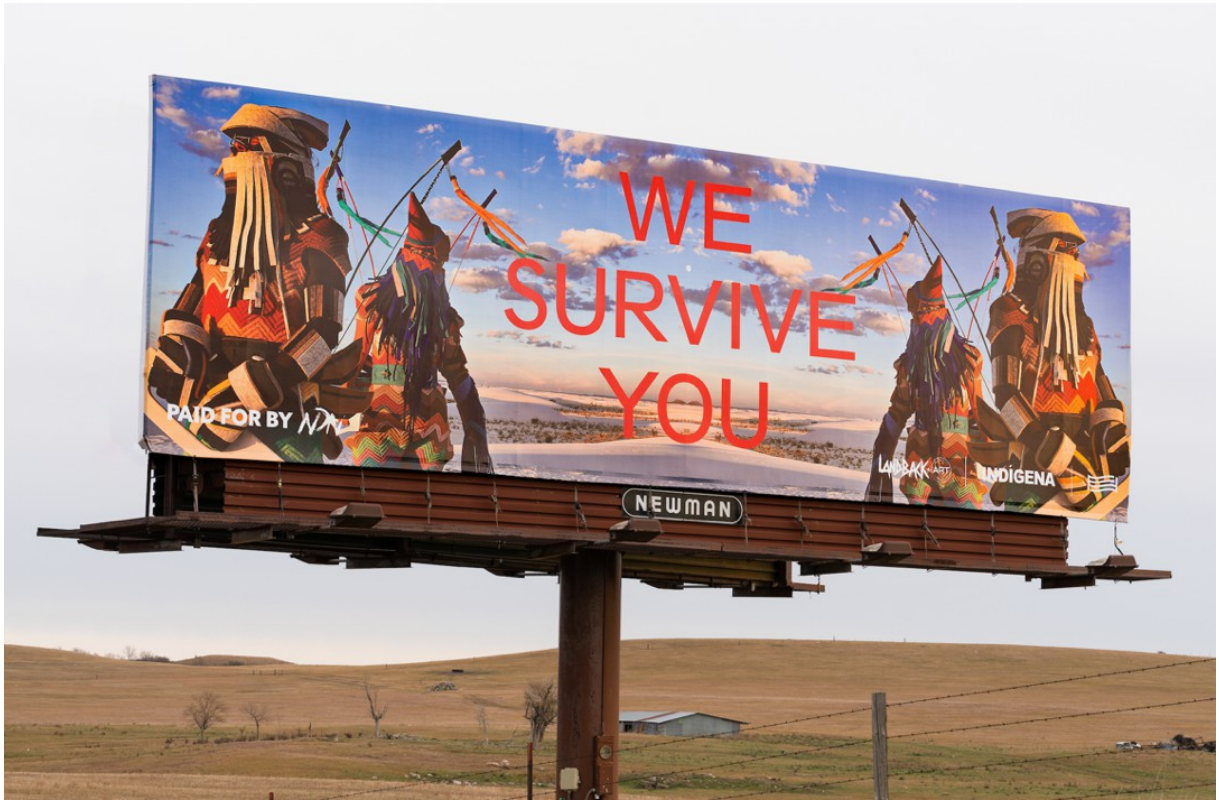


Figure 2. Cannupa Hanska Luger, Future Ancestral Technologies: We Survive You, Mandan, North Dakota, 2021 For LANDBACK.Art, in collaboration with NDN Collective, INGÍGENA, and For Freedoms. Courtesy of For Freedoms. Photo: Justin Deegan. Original photo: Gabe Fermin

When I think about disruption, persistence, and especially survival, I think of my mom. I also dream a world, close to my own (achieved by my mom, Gigi, family, and ancestors) but with still yet more-fulfilled hopes, freedoms, and safeties for my mom. One where concerns like MMIWG2S+ and authorities lack appropriate redress, didn't also result in Indigenous women like my mom experiencing heightened fear and predisposal to physical and sexual violence.

T.J. Demos furthers the discussion of pre-emptive claims and billboards, as,

> "Given the widespread anguish, our forlorn present has triggered blunt expressions of time resistance". Alisha B. Wormsley's *There Are Black People in the Future* (2019) statement asserts itself in halting white letters, all caps, against a black background on a Detroit billboard, as well as on various artistic objects, sculptural pieces, installation, and films. Wormsley's revolt against the de-futuring of Black people, elaborated in a proleptic tense of the present-impeding—a chronopolitics of prefiguration—resonates with the ongoing battles over public monuments and their removal. Highlighting the otherwise suppressed violence of colonialism and slavery and their unreckoned-with status in the present, these conflicts over heritage and commemoration are inextricable from the very social production of the future. As such, they index the stakes of aesthetic practice more widely today, asking: Who has the right to produce the future?" Demos, T.J. *Radical Futurisms*, pp. 34-36. Sternberg press 2023

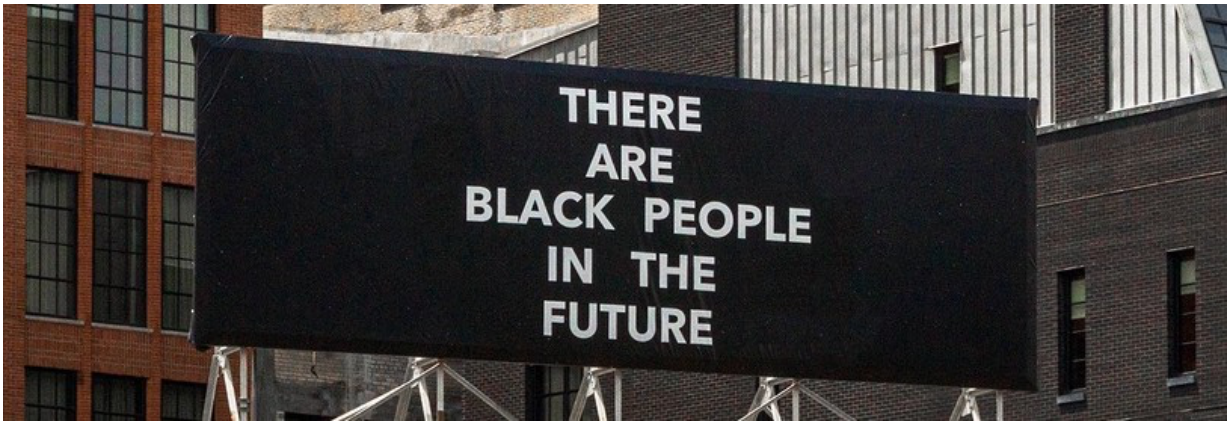


Figure 3. Alisha B. Wormsley, There Are Black People In The Future, 2018. Installation view, "Manifest Destiny," curated by Ingrid LaFleur, Library Street Collective, Detroit, 2019. Photo: Alessandra Ferra. Courtesy of Library Street Collective

My Gigi Shirley, the person I love most, was affected by colonization's consistent and repeated attempts of de-futuring through academic and medical institutions, and her right to produce a future for herself. And yet, through her my mom, and I have gained our own persistence, freedoms, safeties, carrying on the role of holders of the as-yet unfulfilled (Demos, 28). I dream of achieving for my future children, and of gifting back to my loved ones in their youth.

Figure 4. Shaina Richelle, '70s Gigi / '90s Mama. 2024. Created with support from YVAF Emerging Artist Award 2023 for exhibit in YVR 2024 and ECUAD MFA 2024 graduation exhibition, "A Piece of Sky." In collaboration with: Sarah Bowman (photography).

'70s Gigi / '90s Mama

'70s Gigi / '90s Mama is a work made up of two large billboard panels (56" high x 38" in size for the YVR Art Foundation, and a larger version of 184.5" x 184.5" for the MFA grad show with Emily Carr University of Art and Design). Referencing: Alisha B. Wormsley, There Are Black People in The Future, 2018. And Cannupa Hanska Luger, Future Ancestral Technologies: We Survive You, Mandan, North Dakota, 2021 For LANDBACK.Art, in collaboration with NDN Collective, INGÍGENA, and For Freedoms the work responds to Demos, T.J.'s call "Who has the right to produce the future?" It is also a nod to Cree and Métis visual artist Michelle Sound's work *Seventies Mama*.

Sound notes that her work "Seventies Mama is a tribute that celebrates the style" of her own mom as a young mother in the 1970's. Comprised of a "series of drums made from jackets, rabbit fur dyed in a seventies aesthetic, and fringe stretched across drum frames" they are both a "tribute and portrait" of her birth mom (Sound, 2021).

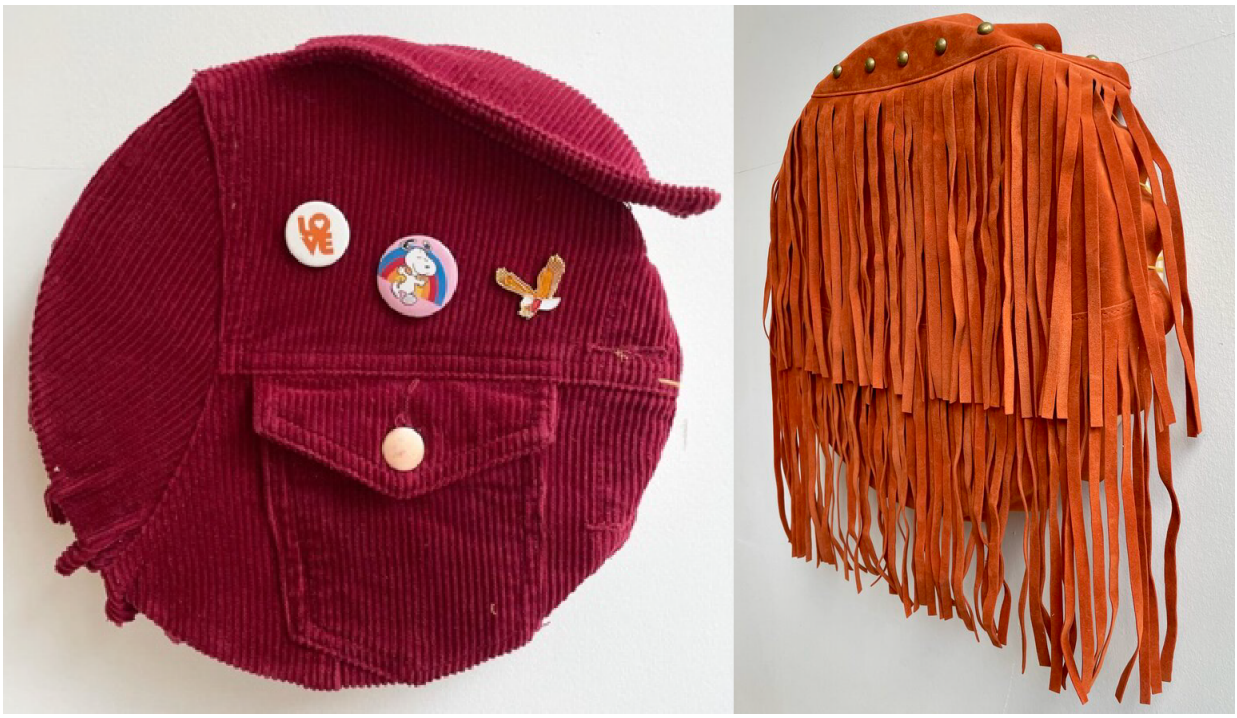


Figure 5. Michelle Sound, Seventies Mama. Nine-piece series. MichelleSound.Art, 2021.

Inspired by Sound's approach my own work ***'70s Gigi and '90s Mama*** is a likewise a tribute to my mom Marsha and her mom, my Gigi Shirley. My Gigi Shirley is a hard worker, and a self-proclaimed hippie. In the 1970's she was a newlywed, young mom with children (my mom and her three older brothers). Two decades later, in the 1990s my mom, Marsha was an athletic teen who enjoyed being both masculine and feminine. Gigi Shirley and my mom Marsha are the most inspiring and incredible women I know; in the core of my being there is a need to show my gratitude and honour them. My persistence and success in academia and my artistic career are hard-won freedoms that I have thanks to their tenacity and support. I want to gift these freedoms and safeties I have back to them because I know their stories and how much more they deserved.

My Gigi Shirley, my mom's mom, went to Indian Day School and spent an unusual and unwarranted amount of time in an Indian hospital as a child. Despite this, My Gigi would go on to pursue and achieve all her ambitions; athletics, academics, finding a great love, breaking generational cycles while raising a family, and establishing a business of her own. I think of the many times and different ways colonization sought to defuture my loved ones, ancestors, me, and my not-yet-existing children. I think about how much will, strength, pain, trauma, healing, crying, laughing, fun, love, and spirit had to be felt for me to exist, and for the future to exist, despite it all.

By all accounts my mom was a disrupter in high school; she channelled this energy into basketball, then later in adulthood to academia and her work professionally. Due to her admirable work ethic, my mom was incredibly skilled in each. I am always inspired by her will; as a young adult, she went to school and raised me despite doing it amidst domestic violence. My mom has

taught me a lot about the world, in educative detail about my brain and bodies' development, social dynamics as an Indigenous woman, the dangers, the doors that open through academia, how to stand up for myself in institutions, experimentation and staying safe, all to protect me through informing my decisions. One of the things she taught me when I was young was consent. She knew too young why it mattered, and like my Gigi Shirley, and myself also (in advance of the experience of motherhood) wished for a world where our daughters are safe. Despite the darker part of our stories as Indigenous women and the far too familiar and frequent reality of feeling and experiencing danger, some of us survive. The more of us that do, wish, and work toward a world where these disproportionate dangers are remembered as a past moment in time – and not an active reality - the closer/ sooner we will come to achieving this.

As I envisaged and created outfits for their past selves, I imagine a world that didn't seek to limit their vibrancy. Taking on this act meddling and reclaiming, I also had fun trying to embody them. I am alternatively awkward, artsy, and weird. Trying to portray the badass energy of my matrilineal lineage was freeing. Reimagining my Gigi and my mom's favourite fashion decades with a twist that included our own Nisga'a fashion heritage, I created garments that I imagine them picking out for themselves in the 70s (my Gigi), in the 90s (my Mom). Making and wearing the outfits became a way of connecting to them while I am away from home for school and other artistic endeavours.

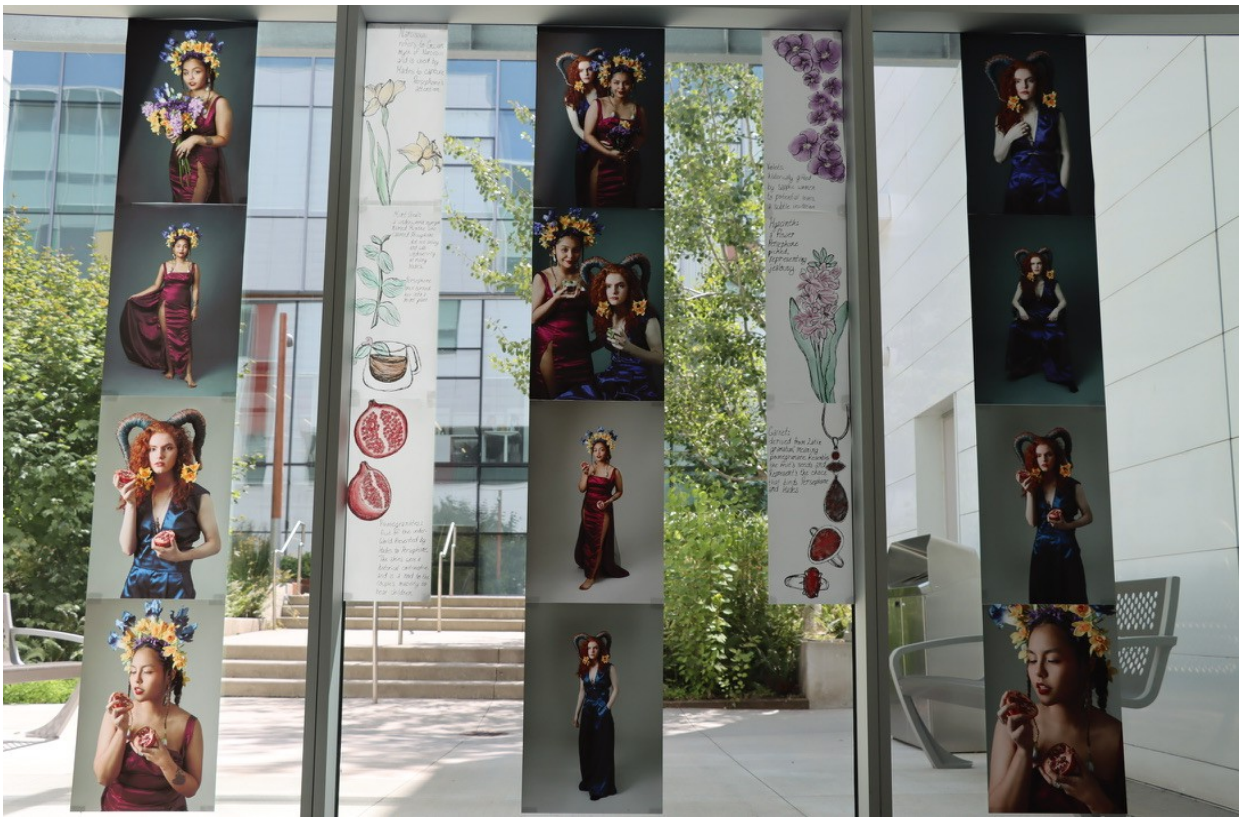


Figure 6. Shaina Richelle, Persephone + Hades: An Homage to Sappho. Installation View - state of practice exhibition, "Converging Realities." ECUAD 2023. In collaboration with: Sarah Bowman (photography), Brianna Lee Gray (Headpieces, Hades), Cassandra Gray (accessories.)

Persephone and Hades: An Indigiqueer Homage to Sappho

Persephone + Hades: an Indigiqueer Homage to Sappho is another artwork of mine that seeks to time-meddle; an installation project made up of images of photographs of handcrafted garments, headpieces, and props. Coded flora and accessories reference elements of the myths of Persephone and Hades, highlighting the use of the myth-famed narcissus, and violets; a historical reference to sapphic[16] women. Gifting potential lovers' violets was a subtle code, an invitation. Tarot-card-like sketchbook panels allude to access to witch's books of shadows, which are filled with the spiritual qualities of plants and herbs. The viewer is provided with floral coding so they

[16] "Sapphic" is an umbrella term to describe sexual attraction/activity between women, the Greek poet Sappho, and her works.

may "read" the visuals while gaining the sense they are within my sketchbook. The following will first describe the wider context of my inspiration and then turn to a more fulsome discussion of the artwork:

When I was little and my mom was in post-secondary (Early Childhood Education, to raise me, and then Child Protection) we lived away from the Nisga'a Nass Valley during the school year. We spent a lot of time together, I'd colour in her classes, and before reading to me at night she taught me about astrology. We would read our horoscope together (sharing a sun sign) in magazines and on yahoo. I learned how to take what resonates and leave what doesn't, which felt very similar to home in the way our ethics include take only what you need and leave the rest, give back what you can. It was also reminiscent of our and many other creation stories involving the sky. The natural connection to astrology was heightened by my neurodivergency, it was an aid in expressing myself. As I became an adult, astrology doubled as an avenue for queer connection. Through my mom I knew that Persephone's sign is linked to signs prevalent in my birth chart. When I started studying for my B.A. in Visual Arts the deity turned up in the Classical Grecian Art section of my Western Art History courses. Persephone embodied duality as the personification of Spring and ruler of the underworld. No surprise, this resonated, I admired how she remains empowered in two contrasting spaces. Being empowered by duality is a means of survival in institutionalized academia, and is the tension that my work is created in.

PhD and Founding Director at Seven Sisters Mystery School, Marguerite Rigoglioso links Lake Pergusa in Sicily to Persephone's Abduction by roman poet Ovid, suggesting that Persephone predates Greek colonization and relating colonial violence against nature to violence

against women (Rigoglioso, 6). She references Sicilian scholar Giuseppe Martorana, who suggests that Persephone was an ancient, 'pre-Greek' goddess who "embodied the totality of the life and death cycle" (Rigoglioso, 11). Rigoglioso further explores this notion through Giinther Zuntz, who provides archaeological and literary evidence confirming Persephone's role as an ancient, 'pre-Greek' goddess; The late Paleolithic and Neolithic Sicilians placed great spiritual emphasis on death and rebirth, as evidenced by the centrality of tomb wombs in their sacred life (Rigoglioso, 12). Persephone is a child of the Harvest, the goddess Demeter. Her matriarchal lineage relates her to the natural world and, in my mind, Indigenous plants (land). She embodies both life and death and represents the earth's decomposition cycle; Plant's ability to die, break down and regrow in its remains. Raised Nisga'a and believing in reincarnation and rebirth, I relate this natural process to the human soul and the soul of a culture—soft, breakable, but unmatched strength in its ability to re-grow.

Based on Rigoglioso's essay, I wrote about Persephone informed by Western Art history, and both Indigenous and queer resilience to the widespread of Christianity, to turn to the story of Persephone as a possible an analogy for colonization. I was interested in finding means to signal the duality embodied by Indigenous peoples who have adopted and adapted aspects of the dominant culture while resisting cultural assimilation and the colonial mythologization that "allowed" its inclusion in Western Art. I used Western Shapes for the Persephone (the leg panels inspired by Catholic-themed, Atelier Versace dress[17]) and Hades (the colonial pantsuit) garments to reflect the way I received the story before researching further; filtered through Western Art

[17] Worn by Blake Lively for the "Heavenly Bodies" 2018 Met Gala. I used the form to reference to role of organized religion and colonization, condemnation of Other cultures and homosexuality. The specificality of the leg panels to emphasize the hips, a nod to Persephone being fertility goddess.

education, long after the spread of Christianity, and before that, Grecian (Polytheist) colonization from a pre-Greek variation of Persephone. I sought to reimagine the story without Western bias and instead from a Indigiqueer perspective, rather than attempting to represent the Grecian, or Sicilian roots.

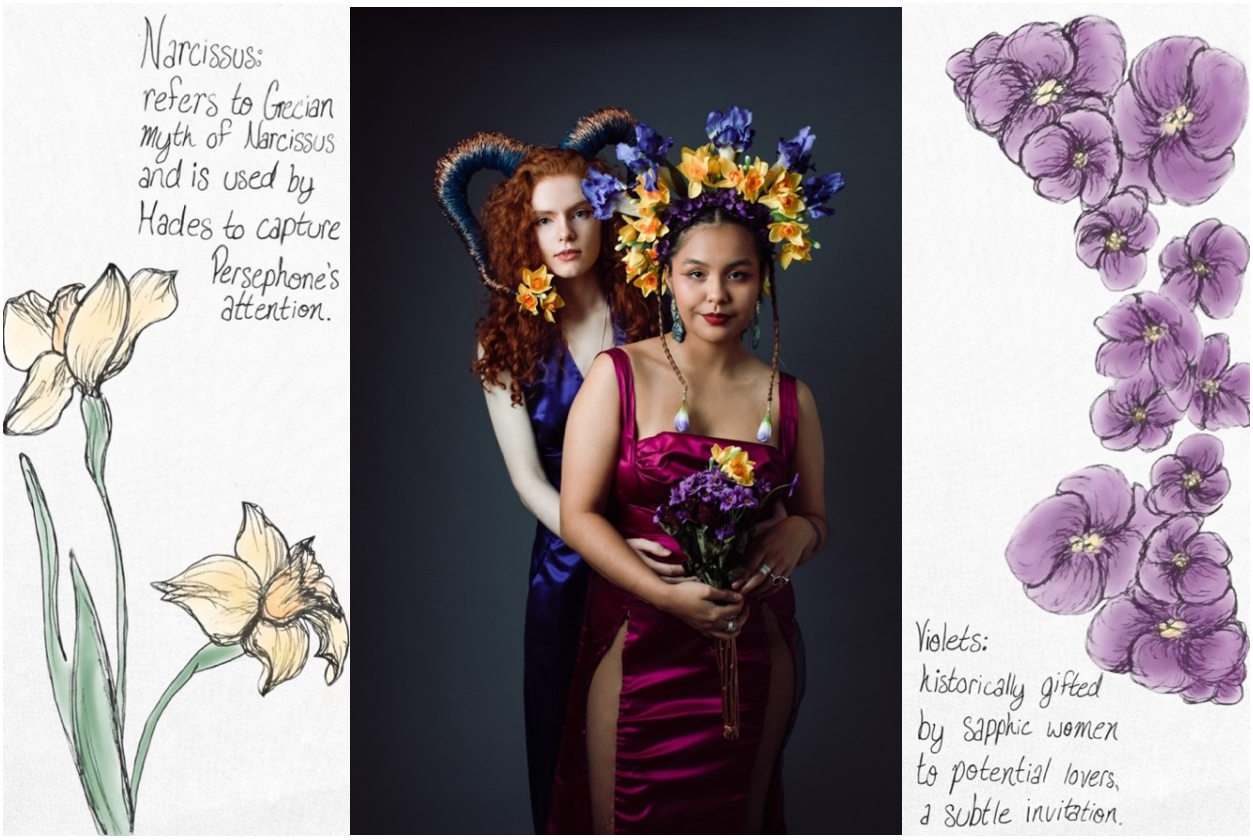


Figure 7. Shaina Richelle, Persephone + Hades 2023. In collaboration with: Sarah Bowman (photography), Brianna Lee Gray (Headpieces, Hades), Cassandra Gray (accessories.)

An homage to the poet Sappho by presenting Hades as an androgynous woman, there is a spin on pomegranates, the skin a historical contraceptive; in the case of Hades, it is a symbol of the God of death being barren, in this project, it instead is a nod to the sapphic couple's inability to procreate (though questioned, given Persephone's status as a fertility goddess.) I furthered this intersection of queerness and colonization by adding a sound element to make this an installation; a cover of Take Me to Church by Hozier, as a nod to the Church's role throughout

colonization; the condemning of homosexuality, other cultures, and religions to force assimilation. The act of appropriating elements of pop culture, stories and methodologies gained from academic assimilation is an intentional counter to the phenomenon of mythologization or appropriation of other cultures, by the dominant culture, before inclusion in the scope of Western art. I designed the headpieces based on the flora included in the myth, and my partner Brianna Gray built them with my method suggestion. The horns for Hades, referencing black rams sacrificed to the god, were created with craft wire, (found) plastic for volume, garden wire, spray paint, two Narcissisus, and a headband. The Persephone headdress was a more straightforward process of attaching coded flora to the headband.

Persephone + Hades: An Homage to Sappho is about my desire to be all of myself and not be restricted to a romanticized, pre-contact native. Additionally, it illuminates what I have learned in school regarding contemporary Western Art and its history of stealing artifacts from Other cultures, criminalizing cultural customs, especially spiritual ones, before absorbing and claiming the practices, specifically art, for profit. Persephone is a deity that predates Grecian colonization and is Indigenous to Sicily; she was worshiped through Grecian colonization and then became a figure of "mythology," and Western Art as the spread of Christianity made the worship of pagan gods illegal. Persephone's story counters the feeling of displacement as embodying duality allows her to find a connection and empowerment in two contrasting spaces- as I do, carrying my heritage in academic areas that have pushed me to assimilate in winter months while also bringing back assimilated methodologies and materials to my home in the summer.

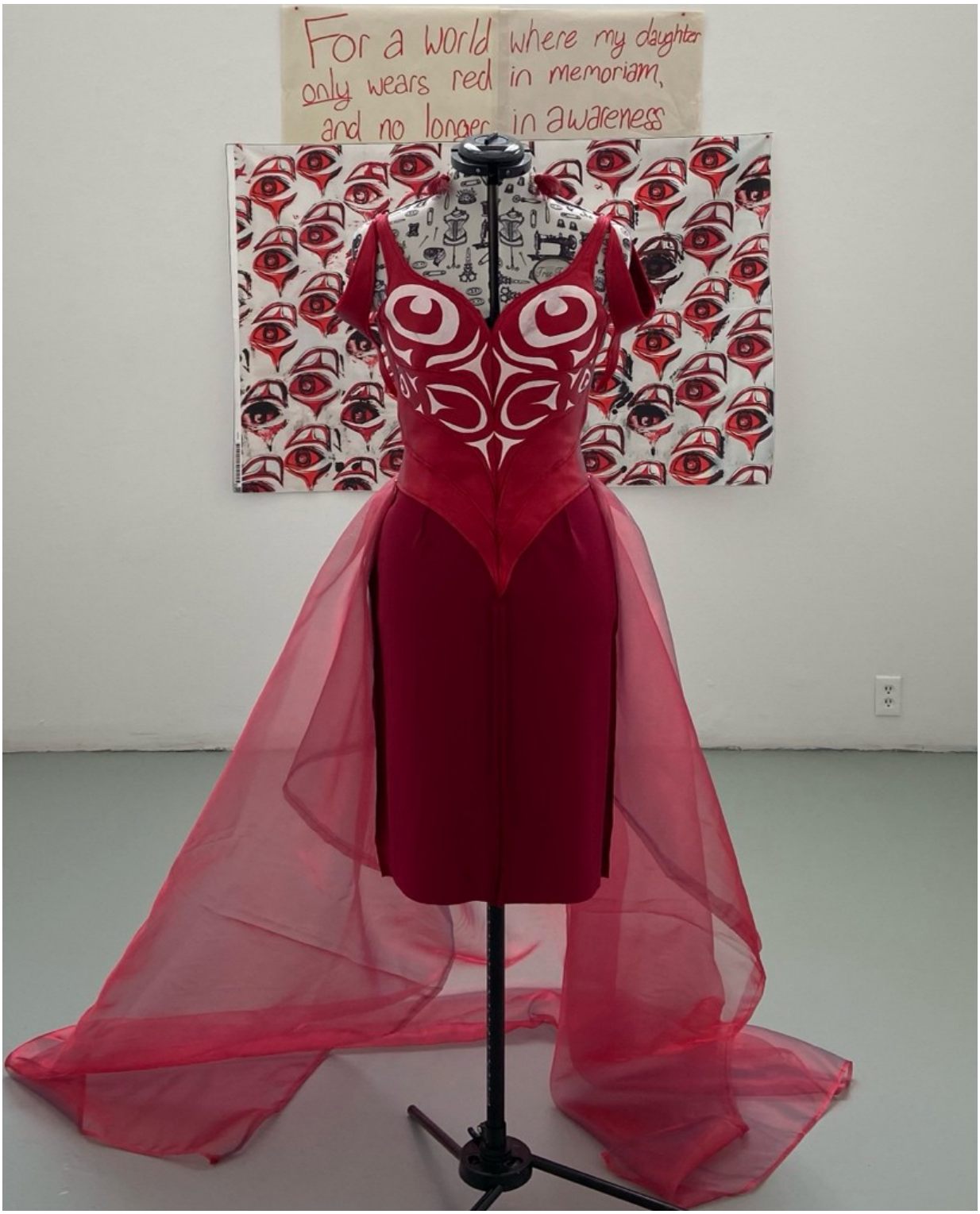


Figure 8. In-progress: Hummingbird / Ascendant Dress 2024. Created as part of Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity's Indigenous Haute Couture Residency : Digital Embellishments 2024.

The Future: Hummingbird / Ascendant Dress

Created for a world where my daughter only wears red in memoriam, not in awareness, the hummingbird/daughter/descendant/ascendant dress is an imagined future, a hope, a motivation, and gift for my children to come and descendants to follow, and a memorial for ancestors and loved ones lost.

Nisga'a culture is matriarchal. One of the ways this manifest is our tribe system. We have four tribes: wolf, eagle, frog, and killer whale, our link and belonging to these tries is passed down from our mothers. I am a wolf, like my mom, my Gigi, and my brother. I am also in a queer relationship, and when we eventually have children, they will inherit both tribes of two moms. My partner Brianna is not Nisga'a, and has not yet been adopted into the culture; so, she lacks an official tribe. Thanks to my family however, she has been unofficially assigned her own, a hummingbird; Whenever we return home, my family gifts my partner hummingbird motifs because she is so vibrant and quick and brings an air of healing that is (ironically) grounding. When we have children, they will be both wolves and hummingbirds.

The hummingbird motifs and inspired fabrics are part of my act of imagining a decolonized world where my child does not wear red to call awareness to an active - present - danger, MMIWG2S+, but rather wears it only in memoriam of people lost in colonial time. I am sure my mom and Gigi wished the same for me. Like them, I am unsure if this as-yet unfilled hope of past struggles (Demos, 28.) will be realized for my children. For my part, with every intentional dip I make into the past and future to disrupt the timeline, I am staking a claim for a future that is safe - has left the ravages of coloniality behind.

I create alternate dimensions when I meddle with time, particularly the past. These alternative timelines are alive and create an alternate past, present, and future to the one we inhabit; I wonder if I meddle enough and, through my eccentricity (Bowie, unknown.), disrupt the past to give my loved ones and ancestors their rightful freedoms (Maracle, 117.) and continue to create these worlds staking pre-emptive claims for the future, for my as-yet fulfilled dreams- my children (Demos, 28.) if these alternate dimensions will bleed into our own; a cause I intend to spend my life working towards, with as much time, care, and meticulousness as the works of Toledo or Ancestral couture (O'Brien, 2019).

… and “A Piece Of Sky”

July 2024, ECUAD MFA Low-Res Graduation Exhibition

It’s the first two weeks after losing my mother-in-law, and I am setting up for grad show. Grieving someone close while in school is a culture-shock that never loses its punch. I disassociate to complete administrative tasks and find meditation in my craft. Tension builds between my emotions and public presentation of self, masking again, and I spillover in private because my sanity is reliant on the release- I prioritize it. There are labels and window panels to print, a dress to finish, display to put up, thesis to finish and defend. There are things that I remember, like labelling, citing sources – adamantly ensuring that this information is included in addition to the tile of each of my exhibited pieces, materials and dimensions (as per usual gallery protocol), and sewing, sewing, sewing. There were other things that slipping my mind; like requesting a defense extension, or posting about my work in our grad show. The eve of our

opening night, traveling into Vancouver on the bus I swiped through social media posts only to realize I should be promoting our couple years' of hard work together. I quickly posted a video and a few pictures of my installation, tagging collaborators and… forgetting to tag the direct references I was so adamant about citing in both my thesis and exhibition labels. It would take an embarrassing amount of time for this to be pointed out to me, and to be therefore corrected.

At the onset of this thesis support document, I observe that "I am disturbed by the disproportionate value that has been given to appropriated works over the culturally authentic ones of my people." I also note my interest in better understanding how the body of work (my artistic practice) that I have discussed above "can act as sites of reclamation, adoption, and adaption, how it can counter colonial-capitalist cultural appropriation?" My research aimed to explore the nuances in colonial power dynamics that inform cultural appropriation vs exchange vs assimilation, but more specifically, how I can counter this dynamic through blended expressions and well-cited sources. I anticipated tricky territory to navigate, particularly around ***Persephone + Hades***, as the story I inherited through western curriculum and astrology, not by my heritage or directly from the cultural source. What I didn't anticipate, was the most-pointed conversation to arise from a mistake I made in a representation of my work, rather than my work itself;

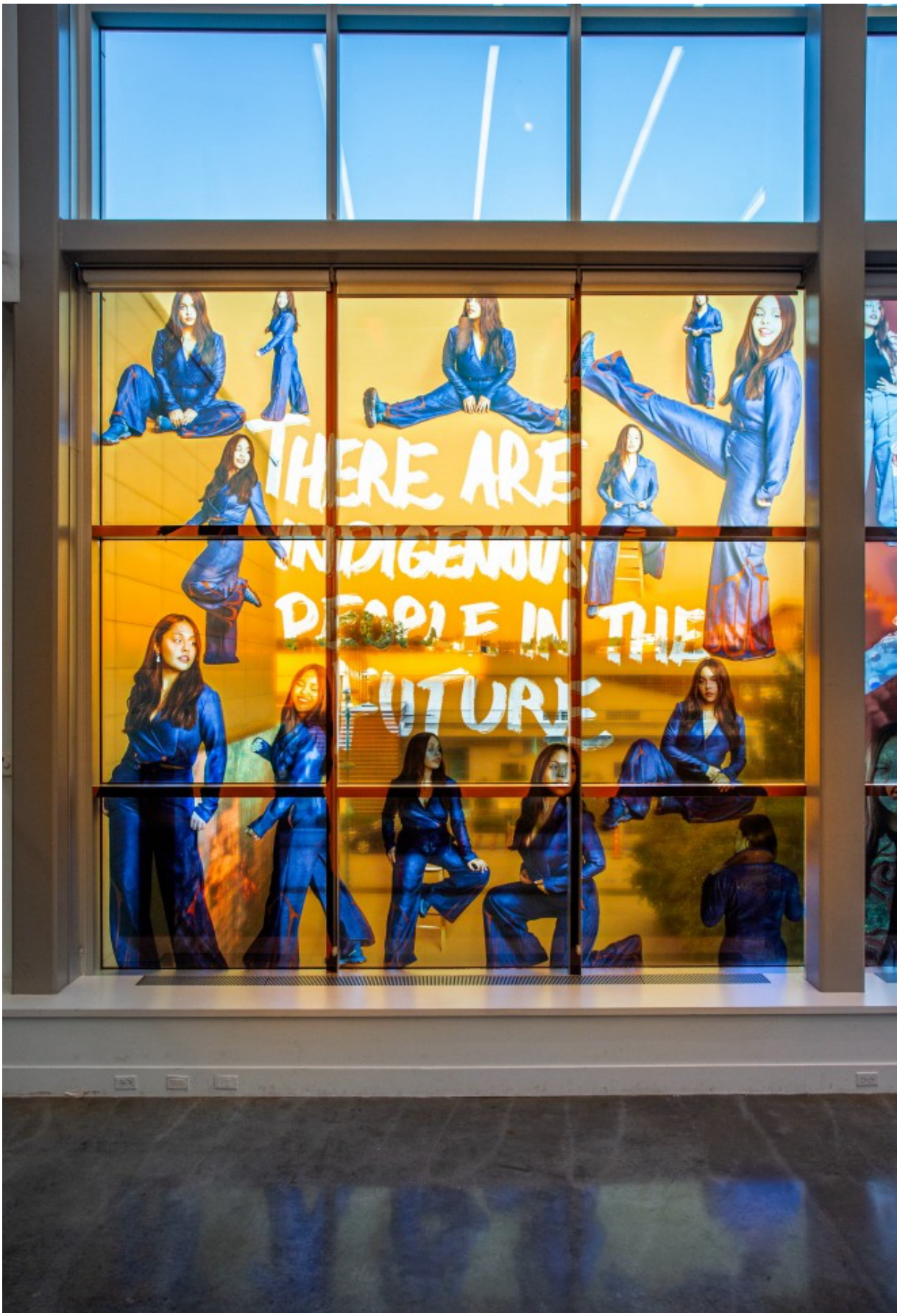
A month after the exhibition had come down one of the artists I've cited but forgot to mention in my social media post reached out to my school with concern. I understood; especially as an Indigenous artist, to see your words, your work, in an institution and out of its usual context- it's both jarring and pointed at the same concerns I've discussed about colonial history,

cultural appropriation, and the disproportionate value placed on Carr's representation of works over the original Indigenous Artists' whose work she represented and (eventually) profited from. Similarly, seeing your words, on social media brings the same jarring feeling, but in a very different way.

Social media, much like and in connection to pop culture, can be an accessible venue for a broad range of content, including art and activism, but has an apparent double edge. When art, aspects of culture, or both are brought out of context, within the institution, pop culture, online, without proper credit and citation, it is harmful to the storyteller, and if done inconsiderately in the first place, to the story itself. I dislike marketing my creative work in the best circumstances, and it is one of the many aspects of colonial capitalism that I detest most; that the freedom to pursue intrinsic motivations is constantly impacted by the pressure to survive economically and therefor physically. The potency and consideration constantly impacted by the pressure of the colonial-capitalist idea of time.

Early on, I asked, "What new dimensions are created when meddling with time, countering colonial capitalism, and ensuring an Indigiqueer, neurodiverse future?" and "what would the globe look like if Indigenous practices and relational ways of being was recognized and valued over universal narratives dominated by Western colonial-capitalism?" Through my research I realized that time as I am currently experiencing it, would change. Creating art is a deeply intrinsic motivation; my commitment to my practice fuels both my autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 68.) to all senses of self (Armstrong, 3.), and feels like a direct counter to the recently attempted genocide on my culture and loved ones. However,

with that same, colonial, capitalist system responsible still in place, I also must consistently work through extrinsic factors, including societal standards around immediacy, the capitalist demand to market, deadlines and grading systems to "validate" my work, and the constant worry of letting others down, and trying not to assimilate these factors to my sense of self; a constant practice, with slow improvement for deep grooves. The intent for this project—which I bring up to illuminate irony rather than for justification—was to leverage the politics of my citation to select references for transparent, diverse, and inclusive representation. My goal was to reference other BIPOC time meddlers who's work touches on colonial history's desire to defuture our loved ones and ancestors, and simultaneously their perseverance despite it all. More specifically, to reference directly my first exposure to chronopolitics; Radical Futurism by TJ Demos, which references both public works Alisha B. Wormsley's "There are Black People In the Future" and Cannupa Hanska Luger's "We Survive You," in connection with the meddler introduced to me by my cohort member, Savanna Todd, Michelle Sound's Matrilineal tribute, "Seventies Mama." I reemphasize that I understand referencing public works within an Institution is jarring, loaded, and intentional. My meddling with time includes a transparent critique and pressure point on institutions, for their recent attempts at defuturing my still-present loved ones, the violence my loved ones have been consequently further predisposed to, seeking to simultaneously honour their perseverance of will and softness, resulting in my undying desire to return some of the future they fought for me to have, and the one I fight for my yet-to-be children to have. This dreamed future bleeds into and for my loved ones in the afterlife; Afterall, they all deserved to see it in this one.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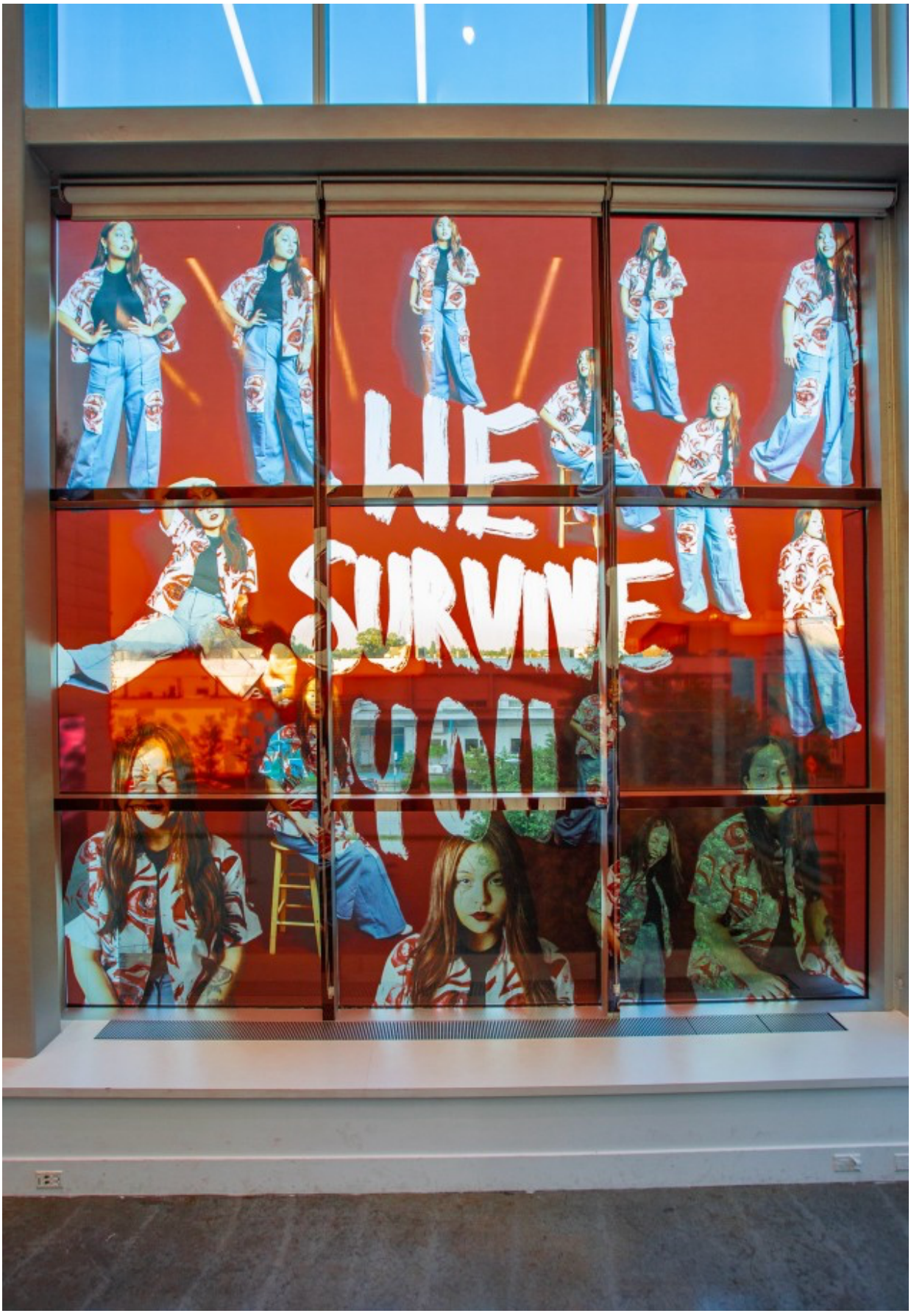
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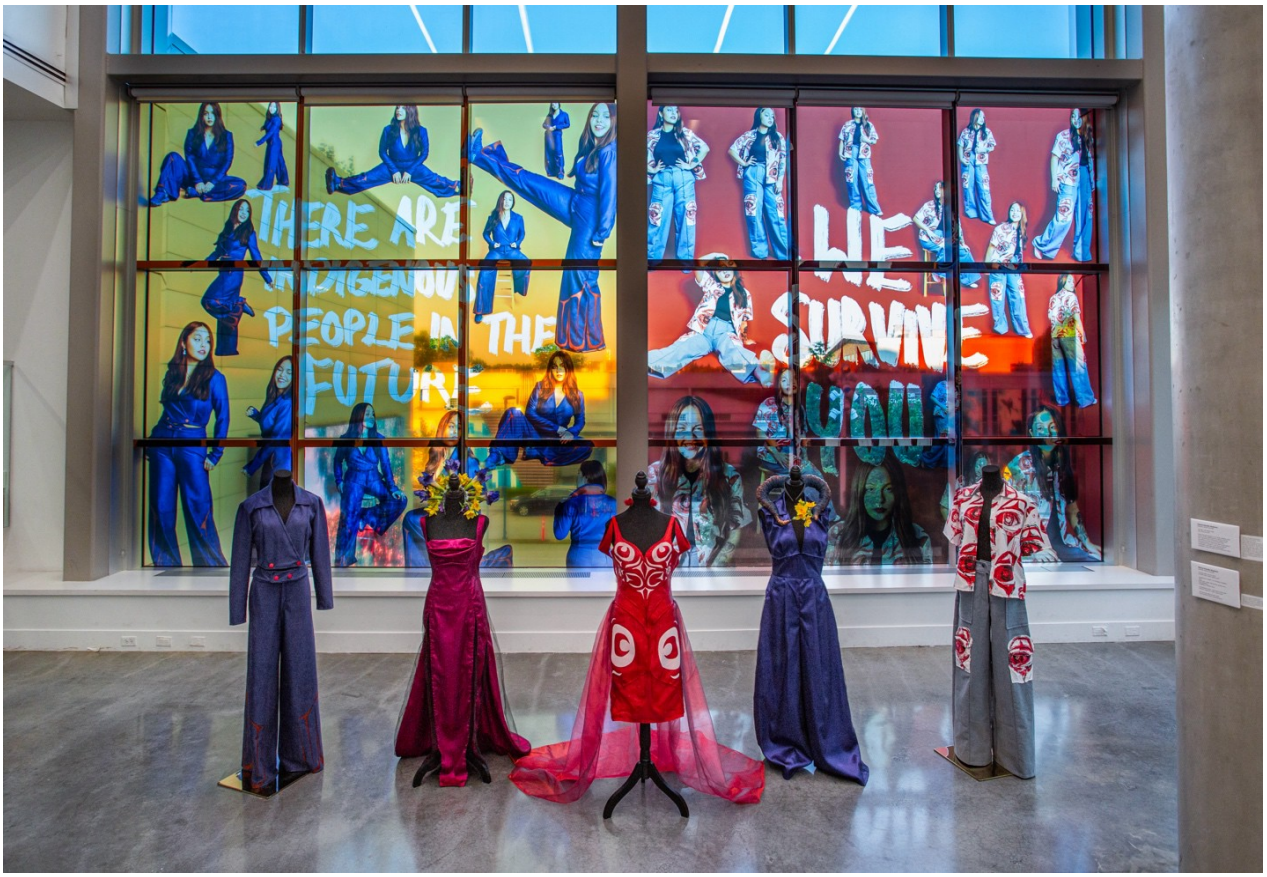

Figure 9. Shaina Richelle, "A Piece Of Sky" ECUAD MFA 2024 graduation exhibition - installation view. Photos by: Andrew Ina.

You walk in a student, you leave a colleague, but what do you find in-between? Fruitful conversation of course! Michelle Sound, my external reviewer eased me into the discussion by asking me to clarify about terminology: Chronopolitics as described by TJ Demos and Time Meddler is my own, a reflection of my understanding of the prior. Hélène, my supervisor, had observations about my grad-show's window-posters, and how the figures overlooked the formality in lined up-garments, along with the light from the windows washing over, and a question about my meddling with time through different mediums. With a multi-media background, the windows expanded on my work in "State of Practice." Light had role in exhibition as the time-of-day affected the way it shined through, and onto the garments displayed on mannequins. The light reminded me of the way creating work feels; the Nisga'a language lacks a word for "art" but has

a term applied to artists, describing the process of connecting to the spirit world, which in turn communicates through the creative - a loss of ego. Art in this cultural context has many purposes. The process conveys what those of us in the physical world may need to take in, whether it be stories or medicines. It feels like something comes over you, in a gentle, and warm, way. For me it makes me feel connected to my spiritual self (Armstrong, 5.) something which I believe to be core to wholistic wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 68). Playing with light, a new medium, added perspective to my making-experience.

Michelle asks that I locate my ancestral draw to making; what is that draw, and what makers in my family and community have influenced me? My Background before school, and interest in institutions stems from a different kind of institution: museums. I worked at the Nisga'a Museum near the end of high school and through most of my Bachelor's, surrounded by ancestors' works. With a lack of glass concealing the artifacts in the Nisga'a Museum the ancestral energy is very present. With my connection to my ancestors also comes my need to communicate myself. I am neurodivergent, so naturally, this plays a role in how I communicate. Being an Indigiqueer person in a colonial capitalist world also makes getting my perspective across difficult. For my culture and many Indigenous cultures art was never for art's sake. Rather, it was a form of language, storytelling, expression, medicine, and meditation. I am drawn to art making because it is one of the only places I feel I express myself adequately. It also, importantly, makes me feel safe, provides space for me with in academic institutions. Hélène asks me to reflect on the making of my garments and how it links, potentially, to thought processes. She also asks about the role of refinement of craft in my garment making (my hummingbird dress as example) and the complex connection to both care and resistance. I recognize that my work seeks to show the ways my family

members have modeled resistance-as-care. I immediately think of my Gigi. Her drive, her need to establish herself, be independent, a counter to the role she was raised in. '***70s Gigi*** pays tribute to her drive and commitment to living as she loves. She greatly models how resistance, when it's against systems that impact and harm your loved ones, is an act of care. This was furthered by my mom as reflected in '***90s Mama.*** My mom embraces my duality, she also prides herself in "doing both" in high school (in the 1990s), finding empowerment for herself in terms of masculinity and femininity. Her own form of resistance, little to her knowledge at the time, would create space for myself, her at-the-time unborn queer child. The ***Hummingbird Dress*** is my attempt at doing the same for my unborn children. It is a red dress, a means to resist the current world that seeks to de-future my loved ones and create a world that doesn't do the same to my children, and theirs. And my making, is it an intellectual *thought* process? Reducing the intellectual self to the spark that ignites (Armstrong,4.) is a comfort to myself. Working this way, reducing my intellectual self and making it a small part of the making process is important to me. I have an initial thought, a spark that creates a cascading flame igniting my other selves (Armstrong, 4).

Chairing my defense, Ingrid Koenig, was interested in materiality of works, in relation to both time, and connectivity. She asked about my perspective on the differences between western-capitalist time that is gridded and time that is understood as cyclical and seasonal, also about ancestral storytelling and the symbols and materials used by my ancestors and my own choices here, now. In addition to the construction of 3 dimensional forms (garments), I use varying methods such as screen printing, and hand painting to convey my thoughts and concerns. This is a meticulous sort of making that often takes a long time. I am aware that the tiny details integral to my making and my bigger end-outcomes often get a little lost to the outside viewer. And yet these

meditative little tasks are so important – they feel like actions of care - particularly in terms of/for my family members. The tiny steps, the small things, in my making process take over when I am creating - I lose track of time when I engage with them. And then there is movement and story in my work. Apart from the Persephone dress (the first project I created) all my garments have elements of movement. I have added this intentionally to my clothing creations, very aware of my peoples' regalia culture and the stories we perform - moving and communicating in them is important. I see the Nisga'a adapted Hudson's Bay fabric in creating regalia as evidence of how cultures are living, growing, and adapting. In light of this, I choose to work with a lot of contemporary fabrics geared to the comfort, functionality, and expression of my loved ones in the past, present, and future. The fabric choices in the '70s and '90s projects are based off conversations with my mom and Gigi and include fabrics they like wearing.

So, future works? With aspects of costume and futurisms, and in relation to regalia and performance? While I have a memorial component in my work, Meaghan O'Brien's analogy between couture and Indigenous works has got me thinking about costume design's detailed, difficult nature, as well as the connection between regalia and costumes to perform story. I think because of these parallels I would enjoy learning more about this sort of garment creation. In terms of futuristic works and memoriam, my work is and will continue to be about largely about protection: Colonial attempts to defuture my loved ones are calls for transparent recognition, and remembering those who are actually lost, but also about recognizing the hard-won safeties that my loved ones have earned to me - and wanting to extend some of those safeties, sending them back because they deserved them in that time too, and to create more for my as-yet children.

Appendices

Persephone + Hades

I conducted the collection of props and did the makeup and hair for the shoot, and Sarah Bowman shot the photographs in collaboration. The headpieces were built by my partner (pictured as Hades) Brianna Gray. The garnet accessories for the shoot were advised by and acquired by Cassandra Gray. I drew the sketch panels and then adapted them to a digital format through ProCreate. I recorded a rough demo of the cover with my laptop and GarageBand to re-record with proper equipment before installation. I imagine this project in a gallery space, pictures and panels enlarged and backlit by light boxes with the cover playing in the area, making the project an "installation", and centring the photo documentation of the work as the work. This idea becomes versatile, as the flora panels can double as a backdrop and cover as music for a runway where models can perform the garments as the work themselves.

The creation of the Persephone gown included creating a pattern before sewing, a form meant to exaggerate femininity because of her regard as a fertility goddess. The Hades suit is intended to be more masculine and androgynous, created by adapting pre-made patterns before sewing. Fabric choice is a physical manifestation of the original sketches, with bright coloured fabric under mesh nodding to my method is scribbled black lines creating depth overtop solid colour blocked underneath. The colours reference pop culture, Lore Olympus, and highlight the use of violets, a historical reference to sapphic women gifting potential lovers' violets as a subtle code, an invitation.

I imagine Persephone felt displaced initially, heightened by Minthe; an underworld nymph telling her she was unworthy of and did not fit into Hades because of her lineage opposing death. I also imagine the feeling of displacement leaving as she turned Minthe into a

mint plant, realizing that even in a place of death, she has the power to create and change life. I had some fun with the retelling of the myth, too, by turning Minthe into mint tea in the photos.

Glossary

The British North America Act, 1867. The first and perhaps the most literal example of how British colonizers tried to divide and conquer Indigenous nations, lands, and families, claiming authority over their freedoms. Despite how colonization was marketed and justified with a false notion of terra nullius, North America was already home to thousands of diverse nations with trading systems spanning two continents. The BNA Act is what we are celebrating on July 1st, Canada Day. The BNA Act "established" Canada, conquering Turtle Island, and divided this dominion into four provinces. This was also the beginning of our government system, which granted the crown all executive and legislative power. It also gave them power and authority over whom they deemed "Indians."

The Global North: the nations of the world which are characterized by a high level of economic and industrial development and are typically located to the north of less industrialized nations.

The Global South: the nations of the world which are regarded as having a relatively low level of economic and industrial development and are typically located to the south of more industrialized nations.

The Indian Act, 1876; Defined "Indians" as any male of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band, any child of such person, and any woman lawfully married to such person. Indigenous women without a husband or children without indigenous fathers were not recognized as Indigenous or people. This Act is also responsible for forcing Indigenous children into residential schools. The Indian Act allowed for enfranchisement, where individuals or whole bands can release their Indian status and cultural identity to enjoy the "privilege" of full citizenship. To be a full person, you must let go of your culture. Many Indigenous peoples were enfranchised for serving in the military and receiving a formal education (something I am now free to do without being enfranchised), and women were automatically for marrying out of their culture (another freedom I have, now). The exclusion of unmarried women under the act cuts the European-defined "Indian" population in half (and would have applied to me too, if I had existed then.) Dehumanization, in the future, will contribute to internalized racism within communities. Alongside deciding who is included as Indigenous, the Indian Act also decided their way of life.

The Potlatch Ban and cultural practices; the Indian Act, banned the cultural and ceremonial practices of Indigenous peoples from 1885 to 1951, believing the engagement in both prevented assimilation; and of course it did, as colonial capitalism seeks to create poverty to profit from, hoarding seen as a display of wealth. Potlatching in opposition displays wealth through caring for and sustaining and entire community and doing it well. Among many issues created, Indigenous peoples were not allowed to have large gatherings together, and the ban exacerbated the interruption of Indigenous Arts. In 1951, Indigenous artists could practice, but were pressured and expected to assimilate.

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