

“In My Blood”: Memory and Remembering as Contextual Framework for Faye  
HeavyShield’s *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis, and body of land*

by

Sharon E. Humphrey

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
The University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIVE STUDIES

Department of Native Studies  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg

Copyright © 2006 by Sharon E. Humphrey

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
\*\*\*\*\*  
COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

**“In My Blood”: Memory and Remembering as Contextual Framework for Faye  
HeavyShield’s *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis, and body of land***

by

**Sharon E. Humphrey**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of  
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree  
of  
Master of Arts**

**Sharon E. Humphrey © 2006**

**Permission has been granted to the Library of the University of Manitoba to lend or sell copies of this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and to University Microfilms Inc. to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.**

**This reproduction or copy of this thesis/practicum has been made available by authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research, and may only be reproduced and copied as permitted by copyright laws or with express written authorization from the copyright owner.**

## Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without help, support and encouragement from many people. I would like to acknowledge the advice and guidance of my advisor Dr. Jill Oakes, committee members Amy Karlinsky and Dr. Renate Eigenbrod; I have learned so much from all of you, I am forever indebted. Funding from the J. G. Fletcher Research Award is gratefully acknowledged as it allowed me to conduct the fieldwork portion of this research. Thank you ever so much for that opportunity.

I cannot go without thanking my family, whose constant encouragement and love I have relied upon throughout my time in researching and writing my thesis. My partner Ted (I Love You), who lent me the title of his painting *In My Blood* (2003), to my thesis title; my son Dakota (you make me a strong woman); my sister Emma (for putting up with my nagging questions and for the hours of editing she did for me); my parents Bryan and Carol (for never-ending support and love); my Nana (who always inspires me); my best friend Janet (a strong and inspirational woman); and my 'mother-in-law' (and on-call babysitter) Marion Oster.

I would also like to thank those who I discussed this work with Joseph Anderson at the SAAG; Candice Hopkins, Lita Fontaine and Melissa Wastasecoot your insights and professional advice will always be with me. MA cohorts Trish Logan, Jocelyn CheeChoo - without our constant brainstorming and witty banter this would have taken much longer.

Finally, I would like to thank the artist on whom this thesis is based, Faye HeavyShield. Without her advice, encouragement and participation in this project it would not have turned out to be the extraordinary journey that it has been. Thank you ever so much, it has been a great pleasure getting to know you.



My Grandmothers: Nana Nellie Redford (L Figure 1) thank you for loving me as you do and sharing your stories with me, I wish I could hear more. Grandmother Elsie Humphrey (R Figure 2) I wish you wanted to know me (as well as my sister); I am sure we both could have learned a lot.

## Table of Contents

Copywrite Page	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Illustrations	v
Abstract	vi
<u>Chapter One: Introduction</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Chapter Two: Positionality</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Chapter Three: Methodologies and Methods</u>	<u>18</u>
Participants	20
Methodology and Methods	20
Interviewing	24
Archival and Historical Methods	26
Edmund B. Feldman Method of Art Appreciation	27
<u>Chapter Four: Memory and Remembering in Aboriginal Art and Literature</u>	<u>29</u>
Memories and Remembering as a Means to De-Colonize	29
Aboriginal Art and Literature	33
Brief History of the Kainai	55
<u>Chapter Five: Findings</u>	<u>61</u>
<u>blood</u>	62
<i>Untitled</i>	65
<i>North End</i>	70
<i>Kutoyis</i>	75
<u>A Question Of Place</u>	78
<i>body of land</i>	79
<u>Chapter Six: Conclusion</u>	<u>85</u>
Works Cited	90
Appendix One: Artist Profile	100
Appendix Two: Ethics Forms	101
Appendix Three: Interview Questions	102

## List of Illustrations

Figure 1- My Nana, Nellie Elizabeth Redford. England 1933 Age: 18

Figure 2 - My Grandmother Elsie Humphrey. England 1952/53

Figure 3 - My Father Parkview Rd. Welling, Kent, England 1947/48 Age: 9/10

Figure 4 - My Mum Steps of Tate Gallery, Trafalgar Square London, England May 1957 Age: 18

Figure 5 - My Pre-K school picture Springbrook Elementary School, Orangeville ON 1977 Age 4

Figure 6 - Ted Oster Unity Acrylic on Canvas 20"x26", 2004. Image Courtesy of Artist.

Figure 7 - Treaty 7 Map. The True Spirit and Origins of Treaty 7, McGill-Queens UP, 2003, p.

Figure 8 - Floor Plan Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge Alberta April 2004

Figure 9 - HeavyShield Untitled string, cloth, paint, 14', April 2004 SAAG

Figure 10 - HeavyShield Untitled string, cloth, paint, 14', April 2004 SAAG

Figure 11 - HeavyShield Untitled string, cloth, paint, 14', April 2004 SAAG

Figure 12 - Kainai Sweat lodge at Sundance grounds, Alberta, Glenbow Archives NA 2313-25

Figure 13 - HeavyShield North End graphite drawing, 9-10'x20-25", April 2004 SAAG

Figure 14 - HeavyShield North End graphite drawing, 9-10'x20-25", April 2004 SAAG

Figure 15 - HeavyShield North End graphite drawing, 9-10'x20-25", April 2004 SAAG

Figure 16 - Kainai surface burial near Standoff Alberta 1880-1883, Glenbow Archives NA 1376-4

Figure 17 - HeavyShield Kutoyis 10'x16'2" cloth, paint, April 2004 SAAG

Figure 18 - HeavyShield Kutoyis 10'x16'2" cloth, paint, April 2004 SAAG

Figure 19 - Floor Plan Walter Phillips Art Gallery, Banff, Alberta 2004

Figure 20 - HeavyShield body of land digital photographs tape, dimensions variable, April 2004 WPAG

Figure 21 - HeavyShield body of land digital photographs tape, dimensions variable, April 2004 WPAG

Figure 22 - Kainai camp Southern Alberta 1893. Glenbow Archives NA 668-2

Figure 23 - My son Dakota when he was a just over a months old, August 2002

The author Sharon E. Humphrey took the exhibit photographs. Old family pictures are courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Humphrey. Photography of Dakota Humphrey-Oster is courtesy of author. Archive photographs used with permission from the Glenbow Archives.

## Abstract

Through an analysis of HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land*, memory and the process of remembering materialize. The methodology of both contemporary Aboriginal art theories and Aboriginal literature provides a contextual framework that explores the occurrence of memory and remembrance as a means of decolonization. The act of remembering both painful and positive memories goes against the colonial mechanism of assimilation and of forgetting. Remembering through cultural, historical, family, or individual memories, HeavyShield abstractly demonstrates her strong connections to family, her culture and her individual strength.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

This research is an investigation of how memory and the process of remembering appear in Faye HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End*, and *Kutoyis* from her solo exhibit blood, as well as an installation titled *body of land*, which is a part of the shared exhibit A Question of Place. This research has grown out of a desire to understand the relationship between remembrance and contemporary Aboriginal art. In putting this thesis together, and through personal discussions with Faye HeavyShield, this work has also provided me with a means of looking at how remembering works for myself as a writer and artist. This exploratory journey has provided me with an opportunity to examine how I am place myself within my interests of Aboriginal art, as well as my future work in the discipline of Native Studies.

Since moving to Winnipeg, I have been fortunate to be surrounded by peers and colleagues who have both supported my research interests and who have aided me in my learning process through guidance and critical advice. I have had, in the last couple of years, while pursuing my Masters degree, the opportunity to write about contemporary art exhibits at the Urban Shaman Contemporary Art Gallery. This experience alone has provided me with the start of a tremendous wealth of knowledge in writing about Aboriginal art.

When I first began this project, I could never have imagined that it would be a growth experience for me as a person and the various journeys that this research would take me on. This research has touched many areas in my life including my family, my research interests (both present and future), how I look at myself as a woman, mother, friend and academic.

My intention with this thesis project is to understand in a deeper and reflective manner the storytelling that goes into Aboriginal Canadian contemporary art. Through my research, I

have found that, the use of 'memory and remembering' is often an unconscious and/or conscious factor in Aboriginal art in whatever medium, and in varied degrees and methods. 'Memory' as I have seen in Aboriginal works of art is an interrelationship of personal memory and experience, historical memory and cultural memories. Whether it is clearly visible or within the process that creates the final product, it is present.

'Memory/remembering' in art is a means of storytelling that goes beyond the oral and becomes what I call the 'visually oral' or visual storytelling. It is a method of telling stories of both the past and the present, while changing ever so slightly depending upon the circumstance, experience or the person. As author Lenore Keeshig-Tobias states about the importance of storytelling, "Stories are not just entertainment, stories are power; they reflect the deepest, the most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of a people, stories show how a people, a cultural thinks; such wonderful offerings are seldom reproduced by outsiders" (71). 'Visually oral' storytelling also works as a type of history lesson, for those willing to look closely and to learn. I have learned many varied Aboriginal histories by looking, questioning and investigating further what the artists have often placed within their work.

My Master's research is built on my previous Anthropology and Native Studies interests and training (at Concordia University in Montreal and University of Manitoba), where I investigated the method of storytelling and how it is placed in Canadian Aboriginal art particularly the work of artist Faye HeavyShield, a renowned Canadian sculptor. As Robert Houle has commented, HeavyShield "maintains her cultural and individual identity through her use of memory within her art practices" (154). By incorporating her memories, both those of her ancestors and from her own writings, she produces work that is connected to the Kainai/Blood (Clarke 3). By taking ideas learned from a Western art tradition, and combining these with her own experience



and her natural sense of design, HeavyShield has developed a distinct aesthetic form that can be identified as hers alone. Critical issues such as land title, residential school, issues of self-determination and her role as an Aboriginal woman are felt throughout her art.

Through the merging of cultural, historical and personal memory and the act of remembering, memory extends beyond one's own lifetime and experience and enters into the contemporary world, often embedding itself through creative means. In this respect Faye HeavyShield transforms her artwork into a vehicle of storytelling and visually oral narrative. Taking examples from previous research undertaken Julie Cruikshank (1990) and Robin Ridington (1988), both of whom created a new direction for academia (venturing into and bringing forth recognition and importance on the collection of oral narratives in research), I take this area of research further by discussing and showing how oral history and storytelling through visual expression is a valid avenue of academic research, as well as a viable method of recording a culture's history. Memories of past experiences become a lived experience through artistic realization. HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis*, and *body of land* are seen through a glaze of cultural memory and they are often a part of a larger deeper story that drifts timelessly in the Kainai imagination.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how memory and remembrance materializes in Faye HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land* by remembering cultural, historical, family, or individual memories of family, home and land. Through these selected works a visually oral way of storytelling emerges sharing with audiences an aspect of the artist's life and history. The parameters of my research are as follows: I focus on two of Faye HeavyShield's art exhibits that occurred in April of 2004. These exhibits include a shared exhibit A Question of Place (Walter Phillips Art Gallery in Banff, April 3 - May 23, 2004) and her piece in

that exhibit, *body of land*. The second is her solo exhibit blood (Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge, March 13 - April 25, 2004). Pieces studied from this exhibit are *Untitled*, *North End*, and *Kutoyis*. These particular exhibits were visited on the weekend of April 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004. I will also mention briefly her past and other present work if it applies to relevant themes that are discussed in personal conversation with HeavyShield.

I have chosen HeavyShield's work as the basis of my research because it presents a unique opportunity to investigate how cultural and personal memory function within art. This analysis is important because the concepts of memory and remembering are not expanded upon within discussions surrounding art, although for many artists they are present either visually in the final production or are intertwined in the construction process. The use of memory and remembering has a material component that resonates in particular works of art that is specific to individual artists. This research will contribute to the growing development of theory in regards to Aboriginal art as well as place a varied perspective on the experience while viewing art.

Throughout this discussion I use the term "Aboriginal" as an umbrella term to include all of those whom fit into the First Peoples of Canada, including Métis and Inuit. If knowledge of a person's community is known I provide it after their name in brackets. Since my research involves one Aboriginal woman who is Kainai (Blood), I refer to her in this manner using the proper Blackfoot usage.

As I am by no means a fluent or even a beginner speaker in Blackfoot, I will only use the basic words that I have learned to define a people or place. For example Siksikaitstapi means 'the Blackfoot speaking people'; this term and the Blackfoot names for the confederacy members will be used. For a language guide, I consulted with Faye HeavyShield, as well as using Blackfoot Dictionary and Grammar books and Betty Bastien's book Blackfoot Ways of Knowing.

The layout of my thesis is intended to enable the reader to construct an understanding of one aspect of Aboriginal art. This is seen through my personal experience as I observed *Untitled North End*, and *Kutoyis and body of land*, reading creative literature that relates to memory and remembering, as well as material used from public and personal discussions with the artist. Throughout my study of HeavyShield's work and the Kainai, I have come to understand a unique piece of Canada's history that I may not have realized if not interested in the art and literature of its Aboriginal peoples. I have included the images (archival and exhibit related) within the text so that the reader is able to see what is being discussed as they read instead of constantly referencing to an appendix.

Because of the reflective manner to which this thesis project had transformed itself, I dedicated a chapter to my own position within my research and to how it fits into the larger picture that is Native Studies as a discipline. I felt that it was important to acknowledge and own my position throughout this research project because it is an honest stance on where I as a non-Aboriginal researcher am placed.

Chapter Three provides a discussion of the methodologies employed for this thesis as well as the research methods that were used to obtain my information. Included is a substantial gathering of Aboriginal art critical theory and creative literature as well as a discussion on the qualitative methods of 'data' collection.

I further discuss into my chosen theoretical methodologies within Chapter Four, as I attempt to explain memory and remembering in both contemporary Aboriginal art theory and writing and Aboriginal literature. Personal reflections of my interpretative journeys concerning HeavyShield's art will be examined in Chapter Five.

## Chapter Two

### Positionality

In this chapter I will discuss my own position within my research as well as my position in the field of Native Studies as a non-Aboriginal researcher and academic. I discuss how I developed both my academic interests and my interest in this particular project. To look at ones “positionality is not just a question of self-identification in terms of one’s race, gender, and class, but is also linked to procedure, process, and protocol” (Eigenbrod 65). What Eigenbrod is saying is important for me as an active participant in the department of Native Studies because it is how I approach my work and interests with integrity and honesty that will effect me more so than my class or race. If I am to continue in this stream of research and working within this field of academia I must be able to look at myself as well as how I do research in the field. To not recognize where I fit in to this particular research and to not take ownership of my motives and intentions when researching, as a non-Aboriginal scholar would go against what I feel the Native Studies Department stands for as reflecting sensitivity to an Aboriginal perspective. Having been a student in both the Undergraduate and Graduate programs in this field at the University of Manitoba, I have learned a specialized way of looking at Aboriginal cultures and lives.

As Eigenbrod explains concerning her own path within Native Studies, “it was not Western but Aboriginal thought that made me rethink my notions of truth, objectivity and scholarship” (4). Having previously been schooled in anthropology, which places emphasis on observational or statistical mechanisms for research, I have learned many lessons concerning my own objectivity and subjectivity while being educated in a Native Studies focused department such as critically looking at what has been written about Aboriginal peoples, how I am placed within that critique, and diverse and varied worldviews within the many Aboriginal cultures in Canada. It is

important to acknowledge where I have developed my 'subconscious' positions from as well as stand behind or support in the most honest and truthful manner possible. As Peter Kulchyski believes, Native Studies presents a sometimes different journey for those who are interested as it presents an ethical challenge for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers that is never easy (24). Being a part of this field "will involve demanding and sometimes exhaustive constant self questioning and a constant process of being questioned" (Kulchyski 25).

My positionality in relation to my own notions of Aboriginal culture come from a time that is earlier than that of my own knowledge of the culture and that is from how my parents raised me and the knowledge that they instilled in me. I am of English decent and I am first generation in this country. My parents moved here from London, England to Montréal, Quebec in 1966 and I was born seven years later in the spring of 1973.

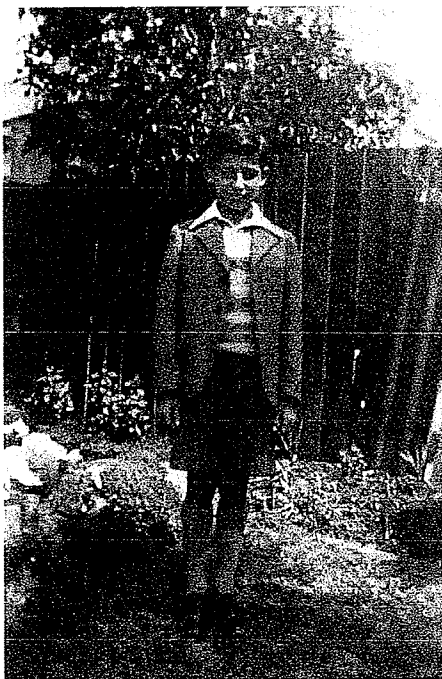


Figure 3: My Father Bryan in 1947/48 Kent, England. He was nine or ten in this photograph.

Before they had even made their way to Canada, my parents, mainly my father (Figure 3), stated that he had read considerable amounts on North American Aboriginal people, in romanticized novels of the western expansion or in historically based books and of course watching the old Roy Rodgers films. He as a child would play the all too familiar game of 'cowboys and Indians' with his friends.

My parent's first up-close understanding of Aboriginal art was seen through the Aboriginal pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal, where my mother worked, as well as seeing totem poles in Vancouver's Stanley Park on a trip that they had taken soon after arriving in Canada. When they arrived in Quebec they come down through the St Lawrence Seaway into Montréal, and my mother recalls hearing the ship crew telling of their new surrounding histories, including the settlers' and the Aboriginal people's battles and trading routes.

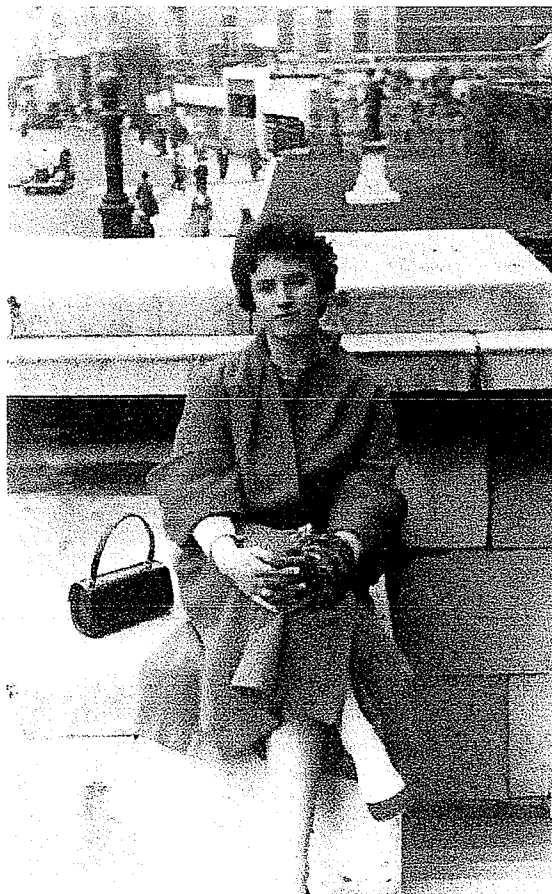


Figure 4: My Mother Carol in 1957 Trafalgar Square London. She was almost eighteen in this picture.

My mother (Figure 4) had a woman friend who she worked with who was from Kahnawake. Her name was Juanita Delisle and she would tell my mother about the poverty on the reserve and that the community members would have to come into the city of Montreal to get jobs because there were none in the community.

My interest in Aboriginal cultures came at a young age and came from two different avenues. First, during summer vacations as a family, we would often take road trips through the Eastern parts of Canada and through the United States. My father was interested in the history of Canada and its inhabitants prior to European expansion, and in the fur trade. So each trip included history lessons with a practical touch. This involved visiting historic towns and forts that housed both colonial and Aboriginal pasts. We also travelled to powwows throughout Ontario on these family trips. This I believe is how my father would teach both my sister and myself the various pasts of Canada.

In this family exploration of the historical past, we would also attend 'Rendezvous', where we and other families would participate in historic re-creations of the past, where we would dress as people did during the fur trade of the 1700 and 1800's. This often included camping for weekends at various locations in Canada and the United States. These experiences, as I now remember, are hard to swallow in some respects because they were based on the appropriation of a culture viewed as static. My interests in the representation and appropriation of Aboriginal Canadian cultures today make the participation in this type of event questionable. Although we did not dress as Aboriginal people and were more representative of early settlers, the experience nevertheless makes me critical of its intentions.

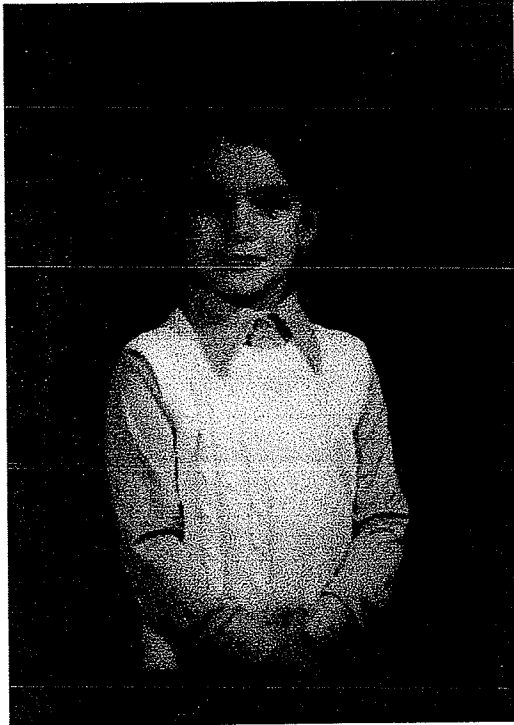


Figure 5: My Pre-Kindergarten picture in 1977, Orangeville Ontario.

The second connection to Aboriginal culture was created due to my appearance. Although I am English, I am darker skinned (Figure 5) than the 'typical' English skin tone. Even now, although I am much lighter skinned than I was when I was a child, I still do not hold typical English features. I have often, I think because of associations in the department and with friends, been mistaken for being Aboriginal.

I became interested in art at a very young age, probably before I could properly read or write. My father taught me, sharing a skill and passion that he also possesses. Through time I also became interested in writing, through short narratives and poetry. A lot of my own process of remembering occurred in this time as it worked well as a means of therapy for situations I went through or experiences I had. That is perhaps why I feel such a strong connection to the themes of memory and remembrance in this thesis, because it is so often present in my own work.



I often place elements of memory within my own work. I am interested in how 'remembering' works in my art and writing, and how I often reflect upon things, places or people that have entered my life or are still an active component in it. I have always had a camera on me since as long as I can remember, and it is often through my viewing of old photographs that my memories come alive and I feel the way I did when I was there.

My parent's memories of family history are of great interest to me as my only relatives here in Canada are my immediate family, my parents and sister and I am curious about my ancestors. My parents lived through WWII and the depression, and tell stories about their childhood experiences. Since they also grow up in different areas in Southeast England (my Mum from East London and my Dad from Kent), their lives and stories are different as day and night and at the same time there are similarities. I pull from their memories and build on them with my own. I wish that I could talk to my Nana, who just turned 90 this year. I wish she could share her stories and lived wisdom with me; I would learn so much from her. I thought about her a lot as I researched this thesis and carry her relentless spirit with me wherever my journeys take me. Unfortunately, she lives too far away for me to see her regularly.

My understanding of Contemporary Aboriginal art come from various people in my life as well as my readings of Aboriginal art history found in exhibit catalogues, books and articles. This personal interaction includes my partner Ted who is an artist, as well as from my discussions with artists such as Faye HeavyShield and Lita Fontaine, Steve Loft (also the Art Director of the Urban Shaman) to my participation in events such as Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Artistic Expressions Art Forum and writing reviews on shows that appeared at the Urban Shaman.

My post secondary education started as more of a “let’s see if we could actually get in” idea. I honestly had no interest in attending university at all in my life; finishing high school was a large enough challenge for me to get through. I was accepted to the department of Anthropology at Concordia University in Montréal, Quebec. My intention when applying to this school was to focus on Native Studies, but many courses had been dropped by the time I enrolled and anthropology was the only department that carried any Aboriginal related material. There were two classes in my final year at Concordia that were turning points for both my academics and my interests. The Fine Arts Department at Concordia offered a Contemporary First Nations Art class taught by Dr. Joan Acland. This is where I was first introduced to the work of Faye HeavyShield and the work of other contemporary artists in the field. I was fascinated by the art that was produced, covering so many various mediums but all in some manner being connected with the process of remembering. At the same time I was taking a First Nations Film course; it was here that I saw the medium of film used in the same regards. Examples of filmmakers were Shirley Chee Choo, Alanis Obomsawin, Loretta Todd, and Dana Claxton. It was from these courses that I began to see how the use of memories and the process of remembering occurred in the creative arts.

I moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and transferred my Bachelor’s degree to the University of Manitoba. I majored in Native Studies and minored in Anthropology. Once completed, I began my Master’s in Native Studies. This was important because I would be able to concentrate my interests in storytelling, literature and contemporary Aboriginal art, as well as, explore and expand new discursive spaces in the arena of contemporary Aboriginal Art. It was during this time that I began writing art reviews for the University newspaper *The Manitoban* and for the Urban Shaman Contemporary Art Gallery. It was also during this period that I was given with

the opportunity to create and teach my own course for the Native Studies Department at the University of Manitoba for the 2004 Summer Session. I incorporated my own interests of memory and remembering in contemporary Aboriginal art in many of the lessons, studying many artists and their works as well as exploring Winnipeg's art galleries in the context of these themes.

There are few who have written about Faye HeavyShield's art. In art writing, her work has been written about in exhibit reviews, interviews, and essays that accompany her work in catalogues. HeavyShield has participated in published interviews, generally inline with an upcoming exhibit. In an academic sense I am currently the second person to write a Masters thesis on her work. The previous thesis, written by Candice Hopkins, was written on a different subject matter<sup>1</sup> and was for completely different, although somewhat related disciplines. Aboriginal curator Candice Hopkins uses HeavyShield's work for her dissertation from the Centre for Curatorial Studies in 2003. She in turned curated a show of HeavyShield's at the Kelowna Art Gallery for '*body of land*' in 2002. Her thesis was in partial fulfilment of obtaining a degree in curatorial studies. My project comes from a Native Studies perspective and will fulfil partial requirements for a Master of Arts degree.

How do I, as a non-Aboriginal academic who is educated by a Native Studies department fit into the writing and teaching that pertains to Aboriginal art or Aboriginal matters? This is a question that may not be easily answered. My training is sensitive to Aboriginal people and is conducted in a manner that is acceptable to the mandates for the Native Studies Department. In a paper written by Blackfoot artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert for a conference at the Banff International Curatorial Institute in 2003, she discusses matters that pertain to the access that Aboriginal

---

<sup>1</sup> Candice Hopkins MA thesis focused on the identity construction of two artists, Faye HeavyShield and Elaine Reichek; looking at Aboriginal placement in museums and galleries, as well as how their art works as a means of storytelling. This thesis was produced in collaboration with her MA exhibition Migrating Motifs at the Bard College Centre for Curatorial Studies April 13-27, 2003 in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY.

people have to view art produced by her and other Aboriginal artists in art institutions (41), such as “viewers, organizers, volunteers, managers and patrons” (41). She also states that it is the Aboriginal community that “Aboriginal artists are interested in communicating with, in raising the spirits of and the people they really do the work for...” (41). It is the various cultures and communities that people come from that give artists the inspiration in their work. As Kulchyski states the knowledge needs to come from within the Aboriginal culture and not outside it (14). Cardinal-Schubert acknowledges that the art has been around for a long time, but what is need it the text that goes along with it, which compiles Aboriginal art history and is written from within the Aboriginal art community (41). In my ‘outsider’ position I do not want to be tolerated because of my academic background and be what Eigenbrod states about a character in Emma Lee Warrior short story ‘Compatriots’, “tolerated by the community out of commitment to a culturally requested hospitality” (qtd. In Eigenbrod 40).

I faced three limitations in my thesis project. The first limitation is being a non-Aboriginal involved in academic research that concerns Aboriginal peoples. I am part of the dominant society and I am privileged as an academic and placed in an authority position on my chosen subject matter. The second limitation is that I do not speak Blackfoot although this skill was not exclusively needed to do my research. The third limitation was that I am not formally art educated. This limitation created challenges for me in writing and critically viewing the works of art; however, my research was not held back as I did learn visual art methods while studying HeavyShield’s work and accepting criticism from my peers.

In the same way my place of authority or privilege has its benefits on how I can participate in the Aboriginal arts community, it presents limitations for me as well. Being non-Aboriginal and therefore an outsider to the particular area of research that I am interested in is a

position that I accept and I must from this location, approach my work with “integrity and intent” (Rose 21). I must acknowledge from my position as a non-Aboriginal person that I come from the side of the coloniser and may not be able to partake in situations that I would like to be a part of. As Eigenbrod has previously stated in her book Travelling Knowledge’s: Positioning the Im/Migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada, in “reading ‘as an outsider’, not only is openness required but also the realization of being excluded from knowing fully” (43). In my thesis research I participated knowing that I would not be privy to all information concerning it or occurring within it. I realize that I will only have limited access to particular people and knowledge. Curator Charlotte Townsend-Gault states, “what emerges is that there is more than one kind of knowing: that there exists knowledge that can be shared, knowledge that may be intimated, and knowledge that should be withheld, to control translatability, in respect for the final untranslatability of the essence of cultural difference” (Townsend-Gault “Kinds of Knowing” 86). Faye HeavyShield shared with me a lot of information pertaining to the selected artworks. We also talked about our families and subject matter that had nothing to do with my study; it was about two people getting to know each other. Some parts of our conversations were discussions that were not appropriate for this project. I know that because it was our first meeting I did not expect her to unload her life and she did not. What HeavyShield states about *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis*, and *body of land* is referenced as her telling me about it in her words. In my research I do not wish to take the voice of HeavyShield and do not want to be guilty of “theft of voice” (Keeshig-Tobias Borrowing Power 71). I also did not tape record her on her request<sup>2</sup>. I

---

<sup>2</sup> I was not able to tape HeavyShield because she had a previous negative experience with an interviewer who taped her and did not share the recording which contained a lot of personal family reverences and material that was meant to be part of the general conversation at that moment and not to be saved for future possible use.

appreciated this conversation greatly because it made me comfortable interviewing her as an artist and talking to her like a friend. Townsend-Gault states it eloquently when she says that:

Knowledge is willingly being shared, but a point is reached where translation stops. This point should mark the beginning of a more broadly encompassing, necessarily humbling, appreciation of the knowledge of other cultures—of cultural difference. (99)

Other limitations that I experienced in this thesis project were that I do not speak Blackfoot, outside of the use of a dictionary and grammar book. I did not feel that it hindered my particular research as HeavyShield speaks and writes English. The only Blackfoot vocabulary I encountered was in the piece *Kutoyis* and in poetry in HeavyShield's previous exhibit books. In these instances I asked Faye HeavyShield questions in regards to the mythical character and their meanings and by looking through the written language aids. Another resource I found useful was from the Glenbow Museum which offers three languages (English, French and Blackfoot) on the Blackfoot historical portion of the website which helped me considerably in pronunciation and the feel of the language. Having taking Cree for many years and also being the Teachers Aid for the University of Manitoba Cree language course, I know that language holds meanings that are not necessarily translatable, often dealing with situation, region and time. The creative literature that I chose for this project had portions that were written in Cree such as Louise Beatrice Halfe's work and I found myself looking through my own books and past to understand the environment.

The final limitation that I felt in this research was not being formally educated in the visual and historical arts. The main concern was that this limitation would hold back my writing styles and critique of the material. Participating in this particular research project, I have learned

some invaluable tools for writing about art. Specific art analysis mechanism such as the Edmund Feldman approach was used and I now feel more confident in my techniques. This factor works as an advantage as well because approaching an art-based research project in a Native Studies manner provides a new theoretical direction and shines a different and new light on the way Aboriginal art is looked at and dealt with on a professional level, whether it is through writing critically on art shows or working within a gallery or museum setting.

Although there are limitations present in my work and my future work, I do not think of them as hindrances but rather methods needed to be examined in order to appropriately work within a culture that is not of my own.

## Chapter Three

### Methodologies and Methods of Research

Traditionally, research pertaining to the art of Aboriginal people was pursued and carried out within a non-Aboriginal framework. The study of Aboriginal art was generally regarded as a subset of anthropology, ethnography and collector curiosity. Art items were collected, stolen or bought, in order to collect an exotic piece of the past and of the 'other'. Very often the artist's connection to the piece or work was not presented and not seen as an important facet of a culture that was soon to vanish. Countless pieces lay in glass cases in many country's leading museums. Michael Ames, Director at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, states that a typical objective of early anthropological displays was to present the artefacts of Aboriginal cultures, or, as they have been classified, of 'primitive societies'<sup>3</sup>, as if they were similar to those items categorized in natural history (51). This natural history approach associated Aboriginal peoples with nature, like the flora and fauna (51), and therefore, as Ames points out, "their arts and crafts were to be classified and presented according to similarity of form, evolutionary developments and geographical origins" (51). These collections of Aboriginal life would be kept in 'Cabinets of Curiosities' (50).

Aboriginal art often did not find itself in art museums because Western art historians felt it was 'primitive' and did not fit with Western art. Critics also "avoid writing seriously about Aboriginal art because what they consider to be 'universal art values' are actually twentieth century Eurocentric art values" (Walkingstick 15). Art that was generally associated with Aboriginal people was considered craftwork and used mediums such as beads, quills, weaving and bas-

---

<sup>3</sup> James Clifford in his paper *Histories of the Tribal and the Modern* states that the use of the word 'primitive' has in many instances, transformed itself into 'tribal'. He argues that it is also not an appropriate word when describing Aboriginal people's lives in any respect and that it is another "product of historically limited Western Taxonomies" (191).



ketry. On the flipside, if an artist of Aboriginal ancestry creates work that is abstract in form and not visually 'Aboriginal', the artist then runs into issues that surround her/his work not appearing 'authentically Aboriginal'. This double edge sword effect creates a hard position for Aboriginal artists to be placed in. Artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert has stated that "we are creating works of art that are cultural signposts that we have to put up; even though our artists have degrees from ivy league universities and colleges, we are still Native/Indian artists - a category somewhat like the category of women artist or folk artists - not to be taken seriously" (127).

In order not to repeat imperialist impositions on Faye HeavyShield and her artwork, this research was done in a manner that was approved by her. This thesis was not done from a distance; it included input from the artist on all aspects of its construction. This chapter will look at the methodologies and research methods used in order to complete this research topic. As a non-Aboriginal student in an Aboriginal focused degree, it is important to produce a work that is completed in accordance with the mandates of the Native Studies Department, the local and national Aboriginal arts community and most importantly with Faye HeavyShield.

Native Studies creates an arena that deals directly with Aboriginal cultures. The position of researcher takes on a different meaning within this field. Peter Kulchyski, former chair of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, states that the department holds a "two-fold responsibility: having to meet the demands of the academic community as well as meeting the demands of the Aboriginal communities" (15). This provides the department and researchers within the department with an opportunity to create written work that challenges boundaries and creates a new voice within academia.

## Participants

The primary participant in this research is artist Faye HeavyShield. Secondary participants include other curators and artists who have worked with Faye HeavyShield and myself as an observer. I did not interview the secondary participants but information gained from this correspondences and discussions was used for background on the artist.

The interview for this research took place when HeavyShield was in Winnipeg, Manitoba participating in a Mentor-in-Residence program at the Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), which took place from October 11<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The interview took place on Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup> over the course of five and a half hours at Decanter's Winery and Restaurant in the Exchange District. Along with this interview I attended her public lectures at the MAWA on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2005 and the University of Manitoba's School of Art on October 19<sup>th</sup> 2005.

## Methodology and Methods

A qualitative research framework was best suited to for this research. This section discusses the various practical methods that were used in order to construct and conclude my final research. My research is based primarily within the contemporary Aboriginal Art Theory, contemporary Aboriginal literature and historical narratives for illustrating the themes present in this thesis regarding memory and remembering. These methodologies also work as practical methods of research. It is from Aboriginal art theory and Aboriginal literature that an overall conceptual framework was constructed to better analyse Faye HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis and body of land*. Other methods include interviewing (semi-structured and unstructured modes), archival research, and a modified Edmund B. Feldman Method of Art Appreciation. All

resources are valuable contributions by Aboriginal artists and writers and Aboriginal-focused material is best suited for the reasons stated above.

The theory relating to Aboriginal art will begin with a brief discussion of the Woodland School of Art movement. It will then move to Aboriginal artist Robert Houle who wrote a phenomenal exhibit paper in 1982 entitled "The Emergence of a New Aesthetic" for the exhibit New Work for a New Generation at the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan. In 1992, two major Aboriginal exhibitions took place in very well known art galleries in Canada, creating more provocation and theory. These were Land Spirit Power (curated by Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle, and Charlotte Townsend-Gault) and Indigena (curated by Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin), both of which fell on the 500-year anniversary of Chris Columbus 'discovery' of the Americas. These two exhibits, among many others, have time and again asserted the "interconnected relationships between Aboriginal art, political structure, and philosophy" (Rickard 115). Many Aboriginal artworks carry several meanings from the artist's memories and experiences, to their statements on politics and society, and sometimes include the artist's world-view.

Since 1992 there has been a large amount of material written about Aboriginal art by both Aboriginal writers and artists and non-Aboriginal people. Much of what is written is in the context of museum and gallery representation. This is mainly because contemporary Aboriginal art and artists have had to struggle with their acceptance and presence in the gallery and museum space. My art-related material ends in 2005 with a collection of papers that were a part of a conference that occurred in November of 2003 at the Banff Centre for Continuing Education entitled, "Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community". I will end

here, as this was the most recent collection of discussions concerning Aboriginal art history and theory at the time of this research's completion.

Publications such as gallery catalogues for shows that HeavyShield has been apart of (e.g. Land Spirit Power) as well as her recently published catalogue for blood, and catalogues where essays were presented discussing Aboriginal art (e.g. Indigena, Reservation X and The Trickster Shift), will be frequently consulted for this study. There is a wealth of information pertaining to Aboriginal art and its placement within the discourse of art history found in the pages of these catalogues. Other written resources will include conference papers, articles pertaining to Aboriginal art, exhibition reviews, curatorial narratives and artist statements.

I have chosen to use the creative literature of North America's Aboriginal peoples because it has been told, sung and written for generations, and it is very much a critical look at their lives just as theory is, only creatively constructed and written differently. If academics have these resources available, through the authors themselves or in the public libraries, then we should make use of what has already been written by the people we are interested in writing about. Aboriginal (North American) literature will look at the concepts of memory and remembering, as these themes are very prevalent in the writing. Aboriginal critic and curator Guy Sioui Durand believes that "in the Aboriginal view, the use of orality takes on the trappings of a full intellectual 'area' ... finding its Aboriginal uniqueness outside official structures" (130). The First Peoples of Canada (and of North America) have always had a verbal tradition, whether it is found in speeches, myths, legends, stories, songs, and poetry and have always been a large part of Aboriginal life. Memories and the process of remembering allow the continuation of oral and (as well as the written) material to be produced and reproduced.

Using creative literature as a theoretical base is not seen as a 'conventional theory' in the academic sense. Writer Lee Maracle supports the use of creative literature as theory because she believes that "words are not objects to be wasted; they represent the accumulated knowledge, cultural values, and the vision of an entire people or peoples" (87). She further believes that 'theory' often allows itself to be understood to a selected few only using "different words in order to prove an idea rather than showing an idea" (87). The style that is used in theoretical writing is often complicated and as Maracle stated, it is used to prove a hypothesis of some sort. Creative literature is written in order to provide the reader with an all-encompassing idea of what the author is trying to communicate. The language and writing style is not academic as in theory, and ideas are put forth in an imaginative way, which should be understood in more than one level. Renate Eigenbrod, in reviewing Beatrice Culleton-Mosionier's *In the Search for April Raintree*, in her book *Travelling Knowledge's* has stated that "although the interdisciplinary nature of many texts by Indigenous writers lends itself to other than literary approaches, if critical interpretations disregard the complex layering of a work, they simplify not only a style of writing but also a way of thinking" (xv). This being said, creative literature illustrates how memories and the process of remembering those memories work. It also illustrates that important material is not just written from the professional and academic viewpoint, that creative writers also provide theory and that creative writing is not a 'simple' way of writing. Eigenbrod states, "the literary value of Aboriginal literatures shows the multiple perspectives of its richness, diversity and its complexities" (36). Guy Sioui Durand states that using Aboriginal 'orality' accomplishes three things:

1. It defines a theoretical Aboriginal body creating ideas that renew the stakes and practices in the broader field of [art]. 2. It breathes life into my critical work on Native Art. 3. Finally it becomes a vehicle for the ideological struggles to change the preconceptions, prejudice, and ways of the 'soft censorship' that often riddles the world of highbrow culture and, which, more often than not, discourages Aboriginal thinking from blossoming forth in splendour. (129)

Theory is often presented in a manner that only a certain academically trained few can understand and place into contextual situations. Oral stories and the use of creative literature whether it is in a narrative, play or poetry, reach a larger audience due to being presented in more readable mediums. This allows for a better understanding of Aboriginal histories and experiences.

For this study I chose to look at material that concerns the process of remembering. As many writers bridge the gap between creative literature and 'theory', I will use writers such as Lee Maracle and Jeanette Armstrong's writings as both creative and theoretical as they do both. For literature purposes I chose works by Louise Bernice Halfe, Margo Kane, Beverly Hungry Wolfe, Maria Campbell and the creative writing of Faye HeavyShield.

### **Interviewing**

Semi-structured and unstructured interviewing was used in this research. As I was only able to interview Faye once because of time and commitments restraints on both sides, we spent a Saturday (November 12<sup>th</sup>) together eating breakfast, drinking coffee and walking around downtown Winnipeg. The semi-structured style benefited my interviewing when I needed to discuss a certain matter or to fine-tune a topic that we were discussing. Semi-structured interviews involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas I wanted to cover. The open-ended na-

ture of the question defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss topics in more detail. The semi-structured approach to interviewing presents a relaxed method that “offers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher” (Reinharz 19). An interactive research process allows HeavyShield to be a full participant in the research. This method allows the interviewer to use cues and prompts to encourage the interviewee to consider questions further if s/he has difficulty answering questions. In a semi-structured interview the interviewer also has the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee.

Unstructured interviews have very little to any structure at all. The interviewer goes into the interview with the aim of discussing a limited number of topics, sometimes as few as one or two, and frames the questions on the basis of the interviewee’s previous response. Although only one or two topics are discussed they are covered in great detail. This method of interviewing can be long and seems unfocused but may produce interesting side topics to the interviewee and gives them the opportunity to discuss material at great length (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte 135). This method creates an atmosphere of good conversation and can ease the process for both myself as the interviewer and for Faye HeavyShield as the interviewee. This method worked as a better approach to my research, considering the setting of the interview. It was helpful to have my questions for the semi-structured portion available, as I was able to maintain an open conversational approach, while still sticking to questions at hand. Through having some knowledge of the Kainai, the Standoff community and HeavyShield’s artwork, my interview direction was better informed.

## Archival and Historical Methods

There are thousands of archives in North America that are maintained by a number of unique organizations such as federal, state/county and municipal governments, churches, businesses, historical associations, universities, and military branches. An archive is a repository for unique records of enduring value. Records that are housed in archives are often one-of-a-kind or at least are very difficult to replace if lost, stolen or destroyed. It is not necessarily the age of the records that give them their value; rather, it is the content and research potential of the documents that warrant their preservation in an archive. Archives are designed to provide users with access to the records while maintaining a stable environment for their protection.

I gathered historical information from the Glenbow Archives in Calgary, Alberta when studying *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land*. The material on the history of the Kainai and the Siksikaitstapi came from history books written by Aboriginal writers and historians, as well as early ethnographic documents on that region and people.

I will use archival methods of research, such as photographs and historical writing to place a historical framework onto various pieces of HeavyShield's work as well as providing a brief history of the Kainai people and the Siksikaitstapi (Blackfoot). In many of HeavyShield's artworks, historical material appears in a visual manner. I will use historical text in either the form of oral stories (that have been written down by historians and/or anthropologists) or in ethnographic literature that illustrates the connections to historical remembering. In Native Studies, the historian's role is not always separated from the material that s/he is researching or writing about (Kulchyski 21). This is because much of what occurred in Aboriginal history is still occurring today such as poor living conditions and racism. On the positive side, past occurrences and cultural survival are still remembered in contemporary life in the form of oral traditions, storytel-



ling and cultural traits. In the same way those memories can also carry the history of abuse, neglect, and unhappiness. So for the Native Studies scholar it is important to recognize that all of these elements are present in the fabric of the person who they are researching. Many of Faye HeavyShield's creative works contains memories that have historical material embedded within them that was passed to her through stories and her family.

### **Edmund B. Feldman Method of Art Appreciation**

The Edmund B. Feldman Method of Art Appreciation is a structured way of observing and investigating art. His method provides a set of practical procedures that are used in order to arrive at a final interpretation of the artwork. It consists of four steps: 1) description, which looks at the objects that are found in the work and describes the elements found such as colour, line, shape and form; 2) formal analysis, which looks at the relationship among elements in the art; 3) interpretation, dealing with discovering the meaning of the piece of art and can involve establishing the mood of the work, the setting in which it is placed, the context that surrounds the work, as well what the artist's possible intentions were in the art; 4) evaluation, which is the final assessment of the artwork and which involves critique, assessment, and deductions (Feldman 471-494).

For research in visual arts, there are elements having to do with discovery and interpretation that can be used to extract data dealing with personal ideas, observations and interpretations. Edmund B. Feldman believes that although these four steps of art critique can easily and often overlap, they are fundamentally different operations (471), "moving from the easy to difficult and to the specific into the general" (471). In visual analysis this information may bear on practical issues or underlying theories, on matters of intention (the imaginative concepts that lie be-

hind the work), ways of assessing what is done, or the process of actually handling materials and techniques.

I modified Feldman's approach for observing and analysing *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land*, to include HeavyShield's voice, both in discussions of her work and her memories, concerning iconographies of Kainai, Aboriginal art history, archival and historical material that related to the Kainai, and previous experience in post-modernist and post-colonialist readings. The main purpose behind looking at art in a formal way is to show how the intended or not-so-intended meanings are communicated in an aesthetic object.

## Chapter Four

### Memory and Remembering in Aboriginal Art and Literature

This chapter creates a contextual framework in which Faye HeavyShield's *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis* and *body of land* can be examined. As well, this chapter discusses how remembering and memory occur in the contemporary art and literatures of Canada's Aboriginal population. Themes of family, the land and home will be expanded upon as these are visible in HeavyShield's *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land* and appear in her discussions in both her public and private discussions. There is a lack of specific Aboriginal theoretical writing on memory and remembering as it appears in contemporary Aboriginal art and literature, so I pulled many examples from art exhibit catalogues, creative narrative and poetry for this study.

---

#### **Memories and Remembering as a Means to De-Colonize**

For Indigenous peoples the process of remembering means to de-colonize. The processes of forgetting for Aboriginal peoples appear in many levels and that can involve the larger community and the smaller family units within that community. Generations of Aboriginal people have internalized the assimilation process and families are born into forgetting. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith states that, as:

Families were torn apart, extended families separated through displacement to reserves and over national boundaries, and children were taken away for forced adoptions...the aftermath of these pains were borne into individuals or smaller family units and sometimes were unconsciously or consciously destroy through alcohol, violence and self-destruction...turning their pain inwards and letting their suffering give way to the desire to be dead. (146)

Smith furthers that it is “this form of remembering is painful because it involves remembering not just what colonization was about but what being de-humanized meant for our own cultural practices” (146). Assimilation was a colonial mechanism intended to destroy the Aboriginal culture and people. By disconnecting families, either in adoption or through children being placed in the residential school system, family life was greatly changed by this upheaval, affecting not only the initial generation but also the generations that followed. The definition of home changed as well as Aboriginal people were forced onto Reserves without adequate family structures, houses or appropriate living conditions. The aggressive move of the settlers and colonizers to take over Aboriginal land was, as well, a part of the larger picture of Aboriginal assimilation into dominant culture. HeavyShield’s constant evocations of family, home and land are integral to the decolonizing process of remembering. All three factors of family, home and land carry a lot of traumatic memories but they also carry positive individual and culturally confirmatory memories as seen in HeavyShield’s *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land*. These can be seen in HeavyShield speaking her Aboriginal language, her strong connections to traditional ways (i.e. the burial rite and ceremony) and stories from and about family members.

The decolonizing process can be seen in the works of Aboriginal artists and writers in the refusal to forget and in remembering of both the good and painful memories that go against the assimilation of colonization. For writers, the colonizers took away their language and their use of orality or oral stories and taught them English in order for them to forget who they were as Aboriginal people. In their resistance (whether it was known as such or not), they began to tell their stories again in the English language and in writing so that it would not be forgotten and people could read and re-read these histories. In art, a similar process occurred but in this respect it was in the adoption of western techniques and art forms. Aboriginal visual artists trans-

formed their memories and remembering into art, created with the colonizers tools, and refused to forget. Linda Tuhiwai Smith believes that, “both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously to forget” (146). This act of remembering and not forgetting are both positive and/or traumatic and is a transformational process, which and can be seen as a form of resistance.

Resistance in this instance is what Bill Ashcroft in Post-Colonial Transformations (2001) describes as a feature that “manifests itself as a refusal to be absorbed” (20). In other words, resistance is contained in what is already present and created by the colonizers, and puts them in such a position so that they work as tools for the colonized (20). Ashcroft furthers the definition of resistance to be transformative, where the “real changes occur with ordinary people” (20). In regards to Aboriginal art, many artists have refused to abandon their cultural history when making their contemporary art. Artists place their histories and experiences within the art using memory, tradition, and contemporary mediums to present their work. Ashcroft goes on to say that post-colonial transformation is more powerful than violent resistance because it is “relentless and becomes so intertwined into everyday life and imagination that it reaches people living in the lowest levels of policy making or active rebellion, to encourage a change in their cultural existence” (20-21). This transformation can be seen in a quote from Joane Cardinal-Schubert, when she explains how Aboriginal people have carried with them the memories of their histories and culture:

We were the first campers on the land. Our travois were our trailers and RV's. We were the first astronomers and environmentalists. We used pigment that has survived on rock faces for thousands of years and had our own stone tablets – the mountains and the cliff faces – where we recorded our history. We made ceramics. Our installation sculptures of Sweat lodges and Sundance have stood for many years before they went back into the earth after their use. Our rock rings and medicine wheels are every bit as remarkable as Stonehenge or the Pyramids. We were the first performance artists and maintain that dance tradition. We have evolved into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as a people with our culture intact, and it is our reference to these traditional ways that continues to teach us and strengthen us. (Cardinal-Schubert "In the Red" 127)

---

Joane Cardinal-Schubert explains above that it is the process of remembering and the memories that are carried with each culture and individual, that provides strength and creative inspiration for the present and future generations. The carrying forward of traditional knowledge in the form of storytelling and art strengthens identity, cultural and individual, and shows that Aboriginal people have continued. Cardinal-Schubert's quote illustrates the staying power and use of oral traditions and the visual arts in the Aboriginal culture.

Throughout history human memory has been seen as an archive from which specific items can be retrieved in the process of remembering. In order not to forget, people have memories. Memories stem from experiences that a person or group of people have throughout their lives. Every individual has unique memories of places, people, sounds, and smells that are personally significant. Memory is intensely personal, intensely powerful. For each of us, our memories establish where we have been and who we are.

Memory and the process of remembering is something that all humans share, experiencing it in varying degrees. In the past, oral cultures used memory as a storage device as a “place where cultural material gets placed and is usually in the form of stories; it is these stories that tell people who they are and who they have always been” (Ballenger 792), transmitting entire bodies of knowledge (Schöler 134). Today, Aboriginal cultures, who in the past were primarily oral, use methods such as literature and art to transmit cultural material. Aboriginal writer Lee Maracle agrees and states that “memory is significant, we are who we are by what we remember and what we do not” (Preface i).

### **Aboriginal Art and Literature**

The literature of North American Aboriginal people is an example of how memory and remembering is integral to the human spirit and as Aboriginal writer Wendy Rose believes, the literatures “provide information about the culture of both writer and subject” (17). Many stories that I have read both for this project and out of interest appear to be fictional autobiographies. Each story, poem, or novel speaks of experience through the character’s lives and can be a part of the writer’s own memories or memories of people they know. “I remember...I remember” (Preface xxviii), writes Métis writer Emma LaRocque. She believes that this insistence on reminiscing for Aboriginal writers comes from a shared experience of dispossession (vixiii) and a “haunting and hounding sense of loss that drives one to reminisce” (vixiii). In a poem entitled “Nostalgia” written by LaRocque, the capturing of memories is felt in another way through the ability to remember detail rather than through photographic film or paintings in order for memories to be recalled. As she writes:

Where does it go?  
the log cabins,  
woodstoves and rabbit soups  
we know  
in our eight year old hearts?  
I tried to hold it  
with my Minolta  
As Sapp stills it  
with paint and brush.  
I ran out of film  
and Sapp out of brushes. (Native Writers and Canadian Writing 132)

---

Memories and remembering cannot solely be captured in an art form, as there are elements present in memories such as emotion, smell, touch that cannot be properly reproduced. The process that occurs when creating the work of art can bring forth many memories. As HeavyShield has stated in lectures and personal conversation, the action and the time it took to make the cloth bundles for *Untitled* and *Kutoyis* placed her in a position that was meditative. This provided her time to remember her ancestors and her family (2005). This does not necessarily transform the memories in a way that is translatable as obviously as it would be if she were just to create photographs or paint pictures as Sapp did (in LaRocque's poem). There are only so many memories that can be captured for others to know and experience.

Siksikaitstapi educator and scholar Betty Bastien believes that "decolonization entails remembrance, specifically remembering the teachings of kaaahsinnoonika, the ways of the ancestors and the ancients" (47). She further states that:



Remembering is an obligatory ingredient for the completion of the past in a manner that is respectful and honours the losses, as we honour the strength of the ancestors and acknowledges their gifts to our present generation. Remembering means drawing on the strengths of my own past from which I can carve a future. It is the past that carries us into the future and contributes to the journey of the present. (47)

As Bastien describes, it is in the memories of the past and their remembrance that strengthens an individual's and a culture's identity. Remembering gives the person or people ownership over their experiences (i.e. against assimilation) and provides them with the power to move into the future. Artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert comments on this process in relation to art when she says:

We must continue our process (of waking our spirit and examining our own art theory), which begins from inside our own cultural contexts, to further examine our art forms in relation to the existing repositories of this cultural knowledge and acknowledge it as a contemporary continuum of the people we come from-the people we still are. ("Flying with Louis" 34)

Cardinal-Schubert's goal is to find a place within contemporary Aboriginal art discussion that acknowledges the ancestors through the memories of cultural knowledge, which made it possible for the present artists to be where they are today. She further states, "in order to survive on this planet we must go back to the knowledge of the past" (34). This remembrance occurs in the way that she wants it to be known that this land is Aboriginal and that Aboriginal artists have always been here (34).

This process of remembering occurs because Aboriginal peoples have been “accustomed to remembering their histories and their ways of life through intricate time-proven processes of storytelling” (Hobson 2). Hobson further states that remembering the relationships that Aboriginal people have with the land and the past that a renewal in strength will create a cultural continuance as a people (11). The artworks of HeavyShield’s that have been selected for this study, *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land*, all show that remembered Kainai traditions have created a renewal of her cultural identity and solidifies where she came from and where she is going. Writer and theorist Lee Maracle states, “In our memory is housed our history, we are an oral people: history, law, politics, sociology, the self, and our relationship to the world are all contained in our memory” (“Preface” i). Aboriginal American author Anna Lee Walters states in her poem, “Come, My Sons” that:

It is important to remember.

It is in remembering that our power lies and our future comes.

It is the Indian way. (24)

In this quote the indistinguishable line between past and present and the act of remembering is invested with the power to see and to shape the future. Many of the writings I came across in examining this concept made the point that the past has great influence over the future.

In the past one hundred years and specifically since the 1960’s, Aboriginal artists have produced a substantial body of work that addresses aesthetic, cultural, social, and political issues that are of relevance and concern to the Aboriginal community. Their efforts parallel those of Aboriginal writers, scholars and rights activists who have revealed the pleasure and pains of contemporary Aboriginal life in order to effect change. Aboriginal artists hold an important place

within society in that both Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people see their work, allowing for viewing by a larger audience.

Political activism in the 1970's had helped politicize the Aboriginal artist (including, but not limited to writers and visual artists), bringing questions of identity, both individual and collective into play. Within theoretical spheres, shifts of modernism to post-modernism and post-colonialism gain greater popularity, which aided in the "breaking down of institutional canons and acceptance of pluralism that had weakened the ethnocentrism of the art establishment" (Nemiroff 35-36). However, this 'breaking down' was not of a fundamental scale. For example, in 1988 an exhibit in Calgary, *The Spirit Sings* exhibit, created large amounts of controversy<sup>4</sup>.

The contemporary arts in Canada, including those of the visual arts and various literary circles, is made distinct by questioning the nature of art and its surroundings and what art has been about historically, what it should to be about, and the intended audience. This questioning of how art works in today's world has been accompanied by experimentation and originality. Canadian Aboriginal contemporary art and literature are questioning history in its own terms and producing works of monumental importance.

Artist Doreen Jensen (Gitksan) has stated that "art is a holistic thing, it tells the history of the people and it is a way of communicating that history from one generation to the next" (*My Home as I Remember* 140). She further believes that "in my language there is no word for art,

---

<sup>4</sup> The exhibition *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* opened at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta, on 14 January 1988. This exhibit proved to be the "most controversial museum representation of Native art in Canadian history" (Phillips 13). The exhibit was controversial on various levels. First, the controversy occurred with the Lubicon Cree and their supporters. They stated that Glenbow had taken a political stand because it had accepted money from Shell Oil, which had drilled on land claimed as part of the traditional land of the band (Phillips 1990, Young Man 1990, Vogel 1990). A second debate was with repatriation of sacred articles from museums as well as the "question of authority in the museological interpretation of Native cultures (Phillips 13). A third issue was the lack of contemporary representation of the Aboriginal arts population. As Alfred Young Man points out, "why didn't the Glenbow Museum in Calgary show the work of living, producing, contemporary artist of Native ancestry and include them in the book as well? There are at least a few that are noteworthy and technically proficient as any currently producing modern artist!" (72).

this is not because we are devoid of art but because art is so powerfully integrated with all aspects of life; we are replete with it” (Hands of History and Give Back 17). Art was incorporated into daily life and it may have had ceremonial uses as well as having been practical uses and aesthetic character. Examples of these art objects are woven baskets, pottery and beadwork. She further states that, “when European people first arrived, they found Aboriginal people creating beauty, culture, and historical memory” (17). Hundreds of years ago, as settlers started to stretch across Canada there was already a system of remembrance and a continuum of historical and cultural memory occurring within the arts.

In regards to visual, oral and written storytelling, remembering and memory is an active participant. The storyteller has the responsibility of carrying the oral traditions and the oral histories of a people in order to make certain that they are passed on to the next generation accurately and that the contexts of the stories are not lost (Crowe ix). Julie Cruickshank learned while researching the stories and life histories of three Athapaskan and Tlingit women elders that it was important to the women to have their stories placed both in their languages and in English so that their grandchildren could read and know them (16). In Aboriginal culture for example, “stories are not just stories, they are told and retold so that they resonate in the present, not as myths and legends but as a vital piece of history” (Hopkins How to Get Indians in the Art Gallery 196). Hopkins goes on to say that these stories are important in that they “teach critical lessons and cultural values” (196).

In researching blood and *body of land*, which occurred in the shared exhibit A Question of Place in Banff (2004), three themes seemed to run through each. These themes are of family, home and connections to the land. Sometimes these are clearly separate but usually they are all worked together as one movement. Often it is very hard to disconnect family, home, and the

land because all themes seem to be entwined with each other and if one is not working the others begin to weaken. Writer Sandra Laronde states that “home is at the centre of our lives; it is about people, land, culture, and what we dream; the way in which we remember ‘home’ is crucial” (iii).

Many catalogue essays written by and about Aboriginal art and artists contain discussions that concern memory, and remembering is clearly a part of the art and of the process, if not by mention specifically, then in its contextualization. It is seen in art productions such as bead and quillwork, basket weaving, totem and mask carving and painting (to name only a few) and it connects to the ‘contemporary’ arts of mixed media, sculpture, installation, oral storytelling, performance and painting.

A movement in Aboriginal art that reflected the placing of memories and the remembrance of stories is seen in the Woodlands School of Art. This ‘school’ grew out of Norval Morriseau (Sandy Point Ojibwa) and then was expanded by with Daphne Odjig (Wikwemikong Ojibwa/Potawatomi), Carl Ray (Sandy Lake Cree) and Jackson Beardy (Garden Hill Odji-Cree) among others (ROM 1977; Berlo and Phillips 1998; McLoughlin 1999; Rushing III 1999). This style of work injected the legends of the artist’s community on to painted surfaces. These artists used both their own experience and their communities’ oral legends making them come alive visually. For many Canadian artists, the recollection and the “creation of visual art was inseparable from the task of recording an endangered heritage of Aboriginal spiritual belief, oral tradition and history” (Berlo and Phillips 229).

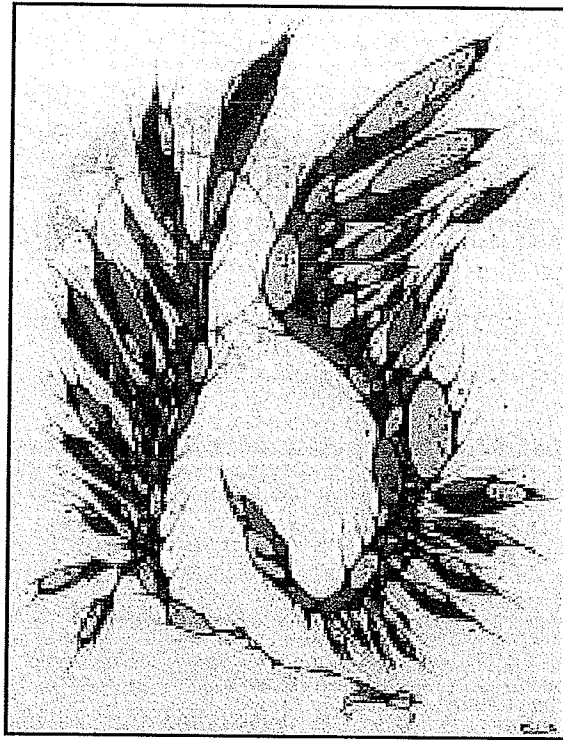


Figure 6: Ted Oster *Unity* 2004 Acrylic on canvas 20x26in. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

The Woodland School still produce artists who are associated with this stylistic mode and a recent example of this can be seen in the art of Winnipeg artist Ted Oster (Garden Hill). His work invokes his memories of his childhood, pulling ideas from his home and the land that surrounded him in his youth. He grew up in Northwestern Ontario in the 'bush' and spent a great deal of time getting to understand and know his outside surroundings. In Figure 6, '*Unity*', he presents the viewer with an image that he saw quite regularly, as many types of birds populated the area where he lived. Although the image is simplistic in its display of a bird and a forest, the remembering process is what is important here. Shown abstractly, the bird is seen in autumn colours. Living beside the water, Oster often saw a variety of birds in his daily routine. He uses the image of the bird regularly as well as the circular movement of the trees to show beauty, elegance and ties to both home and land. This is how he visually reproduces his memories, creating

images that give him strength and build upon his relationships to animals, birds and to the land, all of which he considers to be home and a part of his family (Oster).

Memory and remembering is present in Robert Houle's exhibit paper "The Emergence of a New Aesthetic" for the exhibit New Work for a New Generation (1982). This monumental paper is a first of its kind to appear in the pages of an exhibit book because it illuminates the changing face of Aboriginal art in the contemporary art sphere. It highlights the work of artists who come from two different aesthetic traditions: the North American Aboriginal and the Western European (2) and were trained in the visual arts, art history, and art education. The exhibit showed imagery that was both traditional and contemporary, using Aboriginal signposts with western mediums and techniques, which is different from what has previously been seen within the walls of art galleries and museums. What is also changing is the artists are becoming more involved in the development of their art – in the creation of exhibits and in the writing about their art. As Houle states:

it is reassuring to see that these native artists are committed to involvement in the polemics of modern art. For such a commitment is crucial to the reconstruction of cultural and spiritual values eroded by faceless bureaucracy and atheistic technology. It is an opportunity to regenerate pride to a segment of society too often subject to gross neglect and unfortunate indifference. (3)

As well, at this particular historic moment, is a direct political engagement, through artistic production, aimed to create a better life for Aboriginal people, in order to heal and to inform the public of the particularity of being colonized peoples (Houle 2).

Aboriginal artists have always been trained in methods, aesthetics, traditions, and technology according to the traditions of their respective nations. Many artists choose not to abandon

their cultural history when making their contemporary art. Artists place their histories and experiences within their art using memory, tradition, and contemporary mediums to present their masterpieces. As Doreen Jensen explains:

Our elders have nurtured the important cultural tradition against tremendous odds. It is time for us to sit still, and let these powerful, precious teachings come to us. Our elders bequeathed us a great legacy of communication through the arts. (Jensen Give Back 18)

Doreen Jensen is an example of an artist who is remembering her ancestors and their skills through her work and it can be understood in the above quote from her. She produces contemporary and traditional clothing, performance art, including songs and dancing, as well as carved masks (Hands of History and Give Back 25). She describes herself as a “‘traditional Gitksan artist’, noting that the designation includes all of her roles as mother, historian, teacher, grandmother and political activist, as well as a visual artist” (25).

Nineteen-ninety-two was a busy and monumental year in the field of Aboriginal Art, both artistically and theoretically, creating what Huron-Wendat art critic Guy Sioui Durand (Huron-Wendat) states as being “an intellectual trail of Indigenous orality on Aboriginal art that has blazed out of an interesting critical mass” (141). Two examples of exhibits that have come out of this critical mass occurred in this year: Land Spirit Power and Indigena.

Land Spirit Power was the first exhibit of its kind to house an internationally recognized all Aboriginal exhibit at a National gallery. In the introduction of the exhibit catalogue, all three curators state that “art is a form of cultural capital and it must be a locus of shared knowledge and history. Native artists carry in them the memory of the land – place at its most primordial - as a spiritual and political legacy; being a part of this legacy, in all its richness and its moral re-



sponsibility, is the subject of this exhibition” (Nemiroff, Houle and Townsend-Gault 13). Faye HeavyShield participated in this exhibit and in her piece *Untitled*<sup>5</sup>, she looks at the placement of the teepee and the fort. *Untitled* (1992) is the sculptural resolution of the artist's exploration of the conflict between Aboriginal and European forces, represented by the images of the teepee and the fort. The circular arrangement projects a sense of a sacred, enclosed space and at the same time a feeling of openness and clarity. The journal writings from which this piece emerged explore the idea of the fort. The artist's intention in the sculpture is to redefine this image. As such, the traditional heavy, wooden barricade has been shaved down to a skeletal form, and rearranged into the shape of an open and inviting circle. The image of the fortress also symbolizes colonial barriers. Its pared-down, almost ghostly form is then a visual metaphor for the freedom to move through traditional barriers.

Memory of the land, where both architecture and the body work together, is seen in HeavyShield's work *body of land*. HeavyShield's "sculptural metaphors of the human body and architecture come from her earliest and strongest recollections of her childhood as a Blood in southern Alberta" (Houle Faye HeavyShield 154). As curator Charlotte Townsend-Gault explains "a different way of 'knowing' appears in the artist's working through of her spiritual relationship to the land, to show that 'land' and 'spirit' are not really separate terms" (76). The themes of 'family' and 'home' are terms that cannot be only understood as separate entities.

The process of remembering creates a new way of knowing; instead of highlighting historical battles or figures such as chiefs, or military peoples, there is a move towards more social and community-based histories (Townsend-Gault 88). Taking for example *Untitled, North End*,

---

<sup>5</sup> This piece is not the same as the studied *Untitled* in the blood exhibit. This particular piece consists of twelve carved, wooden poles that are placed in a circle, resembling the wall of a fort or the support beams of a teepee.

*Kutoyis* and *body of land*, HeavyShield incorporates her own personal histories, both in social traditions (seen in *North End* and the process of ceremony and ritual in *Untitled* and *Kutoyis*) and in familial ties (through her parents burial ritual and her memories in *Untitled* of her brother) into her art works creating her own sense of 'home' within the gallery walls. As Betty Bastien states, it was "in coming home that I remembered the context for making sense of my personal past and our tribal past" (49), where "coming home begins with the self" (48). Taking an example from Rebecca Belmore's discussion of *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* from Townsend-Gault's exhibit article in Land Spirit Power:

My heart is beating like a small drum. And I hope that you mother earth can feel it. Someday I will speak to you in my language. I have watched my grandmother live very close to you, my mother the same. I have watched my grandmother show respect for all that you have given her... Although I went away and left a certain kind of closeness to you, I have gone in a kind of circle. I think I am coming back to understanding where I come from... (97).

In this opening address by Belmore, the act of remembrance is clearly evident. She remembers her cultural identity and acknowledges her family's close ties to tradition and knows that the only real way for her to be whole is if she remembers. Her contribution to the Land Spirit Power exhibit also provided a recollection of family and cultural memory, in particular a piece entitled *For My Kokum*, where she had a box wrapped in soft pelt made of masonite (the action of unwrapping resembles the opening of the Ojibwa medicine bundle) – once unwrapped it contained another box that was decorated in Ojibwa beadwork, accompanied by her grandmother's voice speaking the language that Belmore does not speak (Townsend-Gault Rebecca Belmore 115).

For the Indigena exhibit in 1992, the second of the monumental Aboriginal exhibits during this year, the artists involved were asked to remember, re-construct and re-write the last 500 years of history from an Aboriginal perspective. So as both McMaster and Martin point out in the introduction, art then “functions as an expressive outlet for ideas of change, with a re-evaluation of history as the artist’s primary objective” (19). Siksikaitstapi (Kainai and Piikani) artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert creates work that is, according to Janet Berlo a “politically charged, powerful body of painting and installation art that confronts the viewer with the historical violence done to Aboriginal people’s bodies, their connections to land and their cultural heritages” (232). This can be seen in Cardinal-Schubert’s *Preservation of a Species: DECONSTRUCTIVISTS (This is the House That Joe Built)* in 1990. Her work, accompanied other Aboriginal artists’ who presented remembering in context with 500 years of colonial dominance.

Cardinal-Schubert’s piece “reveals an aesthetic and symbology gleaned in part from the historic past and in part from the artist’s life and experience; this has enabled her to create work that is created from a historical, personal and culturally significant standpoint” (McMaster and Martin Indigena 130).

Cardinal-Schubert’s piece examines memories that came from the residential school experience. As an installation piece, it persuades the viewer to experience those memories alongside the artist, either invoking recollection in viewers who shared similar experiences or showing those who did not partake in it to feel what it is like to be in another’s shoes. Remembering history (whether it took place two hundred years ago or twenty years ago) plays a large role in the memories of Aboriginal artists and can be seen in the artwork examined in this research.

Language is an important factor in the retrieval of memories, whether the artist or writer knows their language or not, as we will see in Louise Beatrice Halfe’s Blue Marrow, when she

interjects Cree into the text and talks in the tongue of her family members. In the exhibit catalogue for Nations in Urban Landscapes (1997) in Vancouver, British Columbia, Faye HeavyShield is quoted as saying that “fortunately for her (in regards to her residential school experience) that she had choices of an ‘other’ (vs. Catholic religion) way of seeing that was strengthened by my parents and grandparents, by the land and by my language” (qtd. in Crosby 15). Halfe’s book Blue Marrow contains expressive and powerful poetry, written in several tones, such as English, Cree and broken English. She uses these significant levels of dialogue to tell an Aboriginal history that her ancestors experienced and of her own contemporary encounters. As Faye HeavyShield pulls strength and creative inspiration from her grandmother, so too does Halfe in this book. Halfe acknowledges the importance of remembering her grandmothers and passing on their varied knowledge when she poetically states:

Grandmothers hold me. I must pass all that I possess,  
Every morsel to my children. These small gifts  
To see them through life. Raise my fist, tell the story.  
Tear down barbed wire fences.

(Blue Marrow 5)

Louise Halfe incorporates her language of Cree (Plains dialect) within the text. The use of injecting Cree words and phrases throughout the text aids her remembrance process, as she states, “these crumbs of memory serve me with deep affection and fear, my Nohkomak (grandmothers), the four of them. How will I remember them?” (5) She remembers them in producing a historical account of Aboriginal and white relations during the fur trade era, re-writing history from an Aboriginal perspective, honouring their memories and experiences, and speaking their language. As is stated on the back cover of the book, it is a piece of literature that “celebrates the

inheritance from generations past” (Back Cover). The incorporation of language is part of the remembering process.

HeavyShield incorporates Blackfoot in her poetry and in her art. The installation *Kutoyis* is created from a Blackfoot word and is about the mythical character that is a large part of Blackfoot storytelling. HeavyShield through her memories creates her telling of Kutoyis and in turn generates a visually-oral way of storytelling.

The contemporary arts in general, and the Aboriginal arts in particular, encourages the viewer to explore possible mental and emotional levels not usually provoked. As I witnessed when observing HeavyShield’s work, my own memories and my own process of remembering was triggered when I placed myself amongst her creations. I am not Aboriginal but I was able to pull from a commonality of home and family, which when discussing this with HeavyShield was very much what she hopes her art can do where it does not matter what culture the viewer is from (HeavyShield Nov. 12).

Playwright Margo Kane’s one-woman show Moonlodge is an example of a literary and artistic piece that illustrates how remembering works within one’s own consciousness – pulling and bringing forth memories that have disappeared through her layers of lived experience. It is the story of Agnes who is snatched from her home as a child and placed in the foster care system in an attempt to assimilate her into the dominant culture. The story of Moonlodge is “framed as a memory” (Eigenbrod 176), using the characters’ “perception of events as they happened or are remembered” (Kane 176). Through her writing, Kane emphasizes the thought process of Agnes’s journey as she is remembering. For example as Agnes “struggles with a sudden memory” (Kane 326) of her family she “stands and relives” the memory of a bird flying in her mother’s house and “pieces more memories together” (326) as they flood her mind while she

remembers her father, games she used to play and eventually the moment when she and her siblings were taken from her parent's home, and it is the last time that she ever saw her mother (Kane 327).

Kane's process of recollections begin with the young woman's discovery of her identity, starting with her memory of her new sedentary lifestyle where she remembers "moving and moving until I didn't know where I was or where I was going or where I came from" (327). Her connections to home and family are displaced and replaced through the foster care system. The lack of a stable home and positive familial connections as well as the gradual erasure of her culture (identity) sets the stage (no pun intended) for the remainder of the play to flow through a series of historical glances of Aboriginal displacement and loss of self. Agnes "transforms herself at various stages into her parents, her foster mother, a biker, 'wannabees', and Native people who become her friends and her guides" (Eigenbrod 174). An example of this is seen when Agnes as a young teen at school develops a crush on a Aboriginal boy, who both intrigued her as well as scared her to death because Agnes believed that "he could see the Indian in me, he looked right in and touched it with his eyes; he knew me but I did not know him" (Kane 332).

Agnes's character in Moonlodge goes through a journey coming to memory that does not start until the character is much older and reflects on her life. The story is created through the act of remembrance and creates an atmosphere of re-establishing memory. For the character Agnes it is a journey 'home'. Home for Kane includes family and identity (both cultural and individual). At the start of the play Kane explains the importance of the Moonlodge and is acknowledges its importance in knowing where you come from and where you go back. She mentions that her relationships with the other women who share the lodge with her are compared with her aunts and her sisters, and she acknowledges the women of her community as being a part of her

family and therefore a part of her sense of home. It is at this point that she lays herself down on the blocks that are on the stage and begins to reminisce.<sup>6</sup>

This eventually leads to the awareness of particular memories. It is through remembrance and reflection that Agnes is able put together the events that occurred in her life. Kane's use of interjecting cultural signposts in her play parallels HeavyShield's use of Kainai cultural-specific modes in her work. In Kane's *Moonlodge*, she fuses memory and its connection to identity through storytelling as the dialogue of the main character of the play. HeavyShield creates a dialogue with the viewer through her artwork in *blood* and in *body of land*. Installation art allows the person viewing the work to become involved in its meanings and interpretation, which is harder to achieve in a painting.

---

Although Faye's exhibits for *blood* and her piece *body of land* contain material that was of historical importance and provided contemporary evidence that her cultural traditions were still alive and not a thing of the past, I do not believe that this was the extent of the meaning for this exhibit. It was a personal journey for her that she graciously shared with the public, which intermingles the historical past and present.

The connection to home, if looked at through the lens of decolonization, can be seen in Maria Campbell's quote below. She has realized that the personal journey for her must start from within herself as she remembers the negative and positive memories that her home provided for her. She realizes that although her people were gone and the land had changed, she was still there and that her memories do matter and are apart of who she is:

---

<sup>6</sup> I have not personally seen Margo Kane perform her play *Moonlodge* in a theatre, but have seen a video of it that she has available for viewing on her organization website [fullcircle.ca](http://fullcircle.ca).

Going home after so long a time, I thought that I might find again the happiness and beauty I had known as a child. But as I walked down the rough dirt road, poked through the broken old buildings and thought back over the years, I realized that I could never find that there. Like me the land had changed, my people were gone, and if I were to know peace, I would have to search within myself.  
(Campbell 2)

This quote from the book Halfbreed by Canadian Métis writer Maria Campbell (1973) reflects a way in which remembering works to bring about particular memories, and shows that her past which is gone can at the same time take affect memories that cannot be retrieved. The use of my own memories and the process of remembering that invokes similar experiences to those stated in Campbell's quote and is a regular occurrence in my own work as an artist and as a writer. Much like Maria Campbell's opening quote, my going home, to the house where I grew up was far different from the memories that stayed vivid in my mind. The land that surrounded Campbell and the home that she once knew was gone, but it still remained a part of her mental and physical fibre.

Recognizing history, from either a personal or community perspective, is part of the decolonization process. History attaches itself to a person's life and has many effects that can manifest itself in negative or positive ways. Knowing and acknowledging history and building from it in a positive manner is power, and it can be used to rebuild and transform communities and individuals.

Faye HeavyShield is from the Standoff Blood reservation in Southern Alberta. She was born in 1953 and is one of twelve siblings. Her family lived at the north end of the reserve on a cattle ranch. Use of memory and recollection in *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land*



involves many variables such as family, the land and home. Aboriginal artist and curator Robert Houle, and curators Lee-Ann Martin and Janet Clarke have stated that memory and remembrance are key elements in Faye HeavyShield's work. HeavyShield's art transforms the space of the gallery into a vehicle for experiencing, her memories but also creates an arena for triggering the viewer's memories, and for HeavyShield memory is the most important factor in the creative process (Clark 4).

Other factors that are apparent in *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis, and body of land* are the noticeable environments that surrounded her as a child and as an adult, all of which have a tremendous influence on her productions. The formal quality of her work is "balanced by a strong sensitivity to materials, both in her understanding of their physical properties and within her consideration for the cultural associations that they convey" (blood Exhibit Statement 2004). In 1992, Aboriginal artist and curator Robert Houle stated that HeavyShield's "use of those cultural signposts, such as language, ceremony, and animals, work as a mnemonic devices that bring into visual being objects that are to her, fragments of reality as they appear without the traditional and familiar conventions of perception" (Houle 154). In 2004, the same can be said about *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis, and body of land*. Each work contains signposts such as storytelling, family, tradition and ceremony, all of which are created through abstract means that are personal to her and not perceptually obvious. Her inspirations come from her intense epistemological placement of the self, as well as her ceremonial connection to remembrance.

HeavyShield's artistic production challenges Western notions and classifications that have surrounded Aboriginal art for decades<sup>7</sup>. She creates work that is open-ended, inviting many

---

<sup>7</sup> The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period in which museums and institutions established their immense ethnographic collections. Both anthropologists and ethnographers objectified Aboriginal cultures by placing their everyday items into categories to better understand them. This perpetuated the category of the 'other'. The exotic allure of far off peoples remained a priority in the minds of many that have studied

interpretations and resisting potentially limiting categorizations. The raw natural materials she places in *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land* are a part of her reality and the meanings in these works are often as raw and natural. Her use of basic design evokes the viewer to look deeper into her work and “consider the deeper aesthetic issues, perceptions, information and meaning” in the work (Archuleta 56), resulting in a powerful relationship between “forces, forms, space and meaning” (56).

*Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land* carry multiple meanings and layers and this can be a part of carrying so many various roles: such as mother, daughter, sister, friend, artist, Aboriginal person and the various editorial processes that occur when producing art or written material. HeavyShield “records important aspects of her own history as a Blackfoot woman, in residential school, in the city, on the Blood reserve, and on her land” (Crosby 16). Stating in an interview in 1992, HeavyShield believes her sculptural insights come from memory and not just her own (Baele A11). They also come from “my father’s memories, my mother’s memories and from stories my grandmother told; when she used to tell me these stories I felt I could close my eyes and I was there” (Border Crossings 49). HeavyShield states that much of her information comes from “my grandmother’s stories, which were full of magic” (Border Crossing 52). Her grandmother’s stories come alive in her exhibit blood in the work *Kutoyis*, where she remembers the stories that her grandmother, Spotted Eagle would tell HeavyShield of Kutoyis’s

---

them as Theorist James Clifford points out, “intensive fieldwork, pursued by university trained specialists, emerged as a privileged, sanctioned source of data about exotic peoples” (24). Anthropologists, such as Franz Boas, collected and documented Aboriginal articles in the name of preservation and education. “They sought out the oldest and the most authentic pieces; observing that the Aboriginal culture was in peril and that they should save its vestiges for its science” (Berlo 3) and that the ethnographic museum “of the 19<sup>th</sup> century validated colonial collecting and conserving as a reinforcement of a particular system of values” (Acland 90). This process is what James Clifford has coined the ‘Salvage Paradigm’ (121). Another example of the salvage paradigm can be seen in the work of photographer Edward Curtis. His photographs of the ‘North American Indian’ were carefully posed renderings designed to convey a particular view of the Indian” (Francis 41). Robert Berkhofer Jr. has also stated that Curtis reconstructed the “past when he could no longer find the disappearing Indian way of life” (102).

adventures (HeavyShield). In an interview in 1992 with the magazine Border Crossings, she tells of an instance where her Grandmother shared stories:

Whenever my parents would go into town for groceries or something, she stayed with my younger sister and me. I think telling stories are how she kept us in line. Her favourite saying was, 'I'm not allowed to tell these stories until the sun goes down, otherwise I will go blink.' The stories themselves were scary and beautiful and sad. (Border Crossing 52)

Memory theorist Thomas Butler acknowledges that memory "is not only what people personally experience, refine and retain, but what people also inherit from past generations and pass on to the next" (13). Much of HeavyShield's remembrance it seems translates itself across the two worlds of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, mainly in her memories of residential school and of her surroundings. This is often seen in her art works and writings that are about her experiences with the Catholic religion and her Kainai upbringing, where she often juxtaposes iconography from both. As seen in this poem from the exhibit She: A room full of Women at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery in 1994:

nii tan nii koh she

My name is she

I pray to Natosi

My life is filled with ritual

The strand that fall when I brush my hair

Must be kept must be buried

I pray for strength I pray for my family

And I pray that when the solstice arrives

I am off my moon so I can dance with the others  
And not by myself on the hill  
My name is she  
I pray to Jesus  
My life is filled with ritual  
I dip my fingers in holy water before toughing myself  
I pray for salvation I pray for my family  
And I pray that when thy kingdom comes  
I am without sin so that I can dance with the others  
And not by myself in hell.

(She: A Room Full of Women 5 and venus as torpedo 12)

---

Although she has stated in the past that she does not practice any religion (Border Crossings 50), her experiences with religion in her youth still appear in her work, as is seen in the construction process of blood. In her public lectures HeavyShield explains that the process of weaving the string and making the cloth bundles is much like praying with the Catholic rosary, saying a prayer to each wrap or bead (HeavyShield). I understood this connection, but in relation to the Mala, the Buddhist prayer beads; in the same manner in which praying is done with each rosary bead in the Catholic religion, the Mala is used when repeating your mantras, by rolling each bead between your thumb and ring finger. This constant motion and focused-thought and reflection provide the same trance-like meditation that HeavyShield experienced as she weaved and constructed the materials for *Untitled* and *Kutoyis*.

Remembering her close connections to her family is also evident in much of her artwork through the years. "HeavyShield's installations masterfully integrate complex and intertwined

notion of family, home and history” (Martin Maps and Territories 8). This is apparent in the way that *North End* is created to represent both her parents, and situates her upbringing on a ranch at the north end of the Kainai reserve. For HeavyShield, home, family and her history are all very much connected. The public lecture that I attended of HeavyShield’s in Winnipeg included her showing images of her family, mainly her father’s mother, Spotted Eagle. During my interview with her, I showed her the stage I was at with my research, which included images of my own family for my positionality chapter. She was very pleased that I had included them, as many of the exhibits that I was studying had to do with family and remembering family. She also stated that it was especially good for my son, who would then have something to read in the future about my work, and that this was important (HeavyShield).

---

Her exhibit catalogue for blood also contains many family photographs that are shown before her poetry portion of the publication. In her artist acknowledgements for the blood catalogue, she thanks her family and very eloquently with conviction and strength states:

My parents blessed me with language,  
kindness, and strength, my bothers and  
sisters taught me loyalty and my children  
give me hope. This is blood. (48)

### **Brief History of the Kainai**

The Kainai are today situated in Southern Alberta just south of Lethbridge. At first contact by Europeans in 1691, the Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Speaking Real People) covered a large geographical area that went all the way north to the Ponokasi-sahta (North Saskatchewan River), west to the Rockies, south to the Otahkoi-tah-tayi (Yellowstone River) and east to the Sweet Grass Hills (Bastien 9). This territory also expanded far beyond Omahski-spatsi-koyii (Great

Sand Hills, which is now Saskatchewan) (Old Person, 4). The Siksikaitsitapi all speak the same language and comprise four groups or nations: Aapaitsitapi ('White Pelt Weasel People'- also known as Kainai or Blood); the Siksika (Blackfoot); Aapatohsippiikani (North Peigan, located on the Canadian side of the border- they are also known as Skinnii Pikani); and the Aamsskaapiikani (South Peigan, located in Montana and also known as the Blackfeet) (Bastien 9, Old Person 2-3). Old Man or Napi was the one who gave the Siksikaitsitapi their language as it is told in this story:

After the flood (in which the world was created), Old Man mixed the water with all different colours. He summoned all the people together by whistling. He gave one man a cup of one kind of water and said that he would be child of these people. To another man in the group he gave different coloured water, and repeated this process several times. He then told all the people to talk and each group talked differently. Those who were given the black water however all talked the same, thus forming the Siksikaitsitapi. This all occurred at Chief Mountain. (Wissler and Duvall, 19)

The creation of these three distinctive peoples (the two Peigan peoples possibly being counted as one larger group) within the Blackfoot-speaking group comes from a story about Old Man or Napi and his three sons (Wissler and Duvall 7). Within this story it states that when Old Man saw that his sons and their families were starving from the lack of game in the area, he decided to take the matter into his own hands and go searching for better sustainable lands. As quoted in Bird Grinnell's depiction of their early history:

There was an Old Man that had three sons, all were grown and had wives and families. Upon seeing his family starving, he called to his sons and their families to go with him to find new lands, which would contain an abundance of food. The travelling was hard and slow as the mountains were steep and the women had to carry the smaller children. After finally reaching the last peak, they camped near a small stream and rested. The next morning the three sons went out hunting for their people and were unsuccessful. Their father was a very powerful man so he made some black medicine and rubbed on his oldest sons feet. This medicine made the son run very fast and he was able to catch up to a cow and kill it. The people ate well and once again the children ran and played. Old Man gave his son the name Siksika, which translated to Blackfoot, and this name would be his children's name as well. The other sons became jealous after hearing of this and wanted their own names as well. Old Man agreed to give them names but only after going to war – one son went to the south and the other travelled east. It was winter when the one that went east returned. He had scalps with him as well as some of the enemies' weapons. His father named him Kainai. The other son did not come back till the middle of that winter; he also carried with him scalps and weapons of the enemy. However he was dressed much differently than they had ever seen and he received the name Pikani. (Early Blackfoot History, 156)

Before reservation times the Kainai, much like the rest of the Blackfoot-speaking people, were nomadic and regularly travelled back and forth from Southern Alberta and Northern Montana (Goldfrank 17). They were also were mainly made up primarily of warriors and hunters. As the buffalo/bison was their primary source of food and sustainability, they would move in

grouped family units and follow the herds (17). The land on which the Blackfoot nation of today live was not always their land, as this is due to other Aboriginal nations pushed westward (Bird Grinnell 159 and Science 457).

Anthropologist George Bird Grinnell in writing about the Blackfoot Peoples in 1892 argued that they were not originally from the land to which they now call home. In Grinnell’s discussions with the elders of that time, who he says, “had minds that are stored with the history of the past” (158). Grinnell states that in these discussions he learned that they had once lived north of the Red Deer River and very rarely travelled south, due to other Nations living in those areas such as the Crows, Snakes and some branches of the Dakotas (158). He further states that they were once a timber-inhabiting people, much like their other Algonquian language counterparts and inhabited an area around Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta (158).



Figure 7: Map of Treaty 7 (in grey highlight) as well as the Kainai land allotment (seen here in the mustard colour). Original map found in the book *The True Spirit and Origins of Treaty 7*.



On September 22, 1877, Treaty number 7 was signed between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Queen of England at Blackfoot Crossing in Alberta. The Siksikaitapiti members saw this treaty primarily as a peace treaty between the two large nations. It was intended to facilitate a means of peaceful co-existence with the newcomers, and to provide economic stabilization for the people due to the loss of the buffalo/bison (their major form of sustainability) and a recognition that the land was now shared by new settlers (Bloodtribe.org, 2005). This treaty demanded that the Blood people “give up their traditional hunting territories and in turn they would receive a reserve based on five persons per square mile as well as other benefits (these included monies, farming tools, cattle and ... education)” (Dempsey, Indian Tribes of Canada 21). Treaty 7 involved an area of 50,000 mi<sup>2</sup> (approx. 80,467 km<sup>2</sup>) of land south of the Red Deer River and adjacent to the Rocky Mountains, which can be seen in the grey area of Figure 7.

Just after the signing of the Treaty, reserve lands were placed alongside the Bow River for the Kainai, the Siksika and the T'suu T'ina. The Chief at the time, Red Crow, was not consulted on this decision and felt it was not appropriate for his people and felt that their own lands further south would be better (Bloodtribe.org, 2005). Red Crow selected for the Blood the land between the Waterton River and the St Mary's River, back to the Rocky Mountains and as far south as the Canada - US International Boundary (2005). It is said by Louis Cropped Ear Wolfe that Red Crow would only settle when his people would get that specified area (Kainayssini Imanistaiswia 10min).

In 1882, J.D. Nelson surveyed a reserve for the Kainai Tribe, comprised of 708.4 mi<sup>2</sup> (approx. 1140 km<sup>2</sup>). The southern boundary was set at 9 miles from the international boundary (Bloodtribe.org). However, in 1883, the reserve was resurveyed, without explanation or consultation with the Blood Tribe. As a result, the reserve was reduced to 547.5 mi<sup>2</sup> (approx. 881 km<sup>2</sup>)

(2005). In 1883 officials approved that move and made up a new treaty with the Blood that created their reserve, bordered on the north and west by the Belly River, on the east by the St. Mary River and moved south between the two rivers - this is the reserve that the Kainai still hold today, having over 9400 members (both on and off reserve) and their current territory consists of 2000 km<sup>2</sup> (Bird Grinnell Blackfoot Tales 22), making it the largest reserve in Canada. (Dempsey Indian Tribes of Canada 22). This area, seen in Figure 7, includes the main settlement that is the community of Standoff, Alberta, and the other communities within this nation include Moses Lake, Levern, Old Agency, Fish Creek, Fort Whoop Up, and Bullhorn.

## Chapter Five

### Findings:

#### Examining the works *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* (blood exhibit) and the *body of land* (A Question of Place exhibit)

The focus of this research is with two exhibits of Faye HeavyShield's. The first is a solo exhibit titled blood (curated by Joan Stebbins and Joseph Anderson<sup>8</sup>), which took place at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG) in Lethbridge, Alberta from March 13th to April 25th, 2004. The second exhibit is a shared exhibition<sup>9</sup> called A Question of Place (curated by Candice Hopkins), shown at the Walter Phillips Art Gallery (WPAG) in Banff, Alberta. This exhibit took place from April 3rd to May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004.

Throughout my examination, I write from a personal position as viewer and researcher and as such, these are my interpretations. The artist's voice will be heard through her interjections or her discussions as learned through public lectures and personal communications. As Hopi writer and academic Wendy Rose states, "the reader should not be misled into thinking that they are reading, seeing or hearing a Native work; they must be helped to understand that they are being given an interpretation from another culture...the audience/reader should be told what the piece is and what it is not, who the performer is and who the performer is not" (23). I describe HeavyShield's selected artworks and interpret them from my standpoint, as well as placing them within contemporary, historical and cultural contexts.

---

<sup>8</sup> Joan Stebbins is the principal curator for the SAAG. She has worked at the gallery for twenty-six of the thirty years that the gallery has been open. Joseph Anderson is the librarian and assistant curator for the gallery and helped in the installation of blood (Anderson 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Other artists included in this exhibition were Jimmie Durham, Brian Jungen, Zacharias Kunuk, Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Truman Lowe.

blood

The SAAG consists of three gallery spaces, two on the main level and one on the upper level. The blood exhibit took place in the lower two galleries: the Main Gallery covering 2400 square feet (approx. 731 m<sup>2</sup>) with a ceiling height of 12 feet and seven inches (approx. 3.8 m); and The Alcove Gallery, which is 300 square feet (approx. 91 m<sup>2</sup>) and a ceiling height of ten feet and two inches (approx. 3 m). HeavyShield's exhibit is comprised of nine pieces: three in the main gallery (*Untitled, North End, and Kutoyis*) and five graphite drawings<sup>10</sup> in the Alcove gallery. For this discussion, I am only concerned with the material that appeared in the Main Gallery. Figure 8 shows the floor plan of the SAAG.

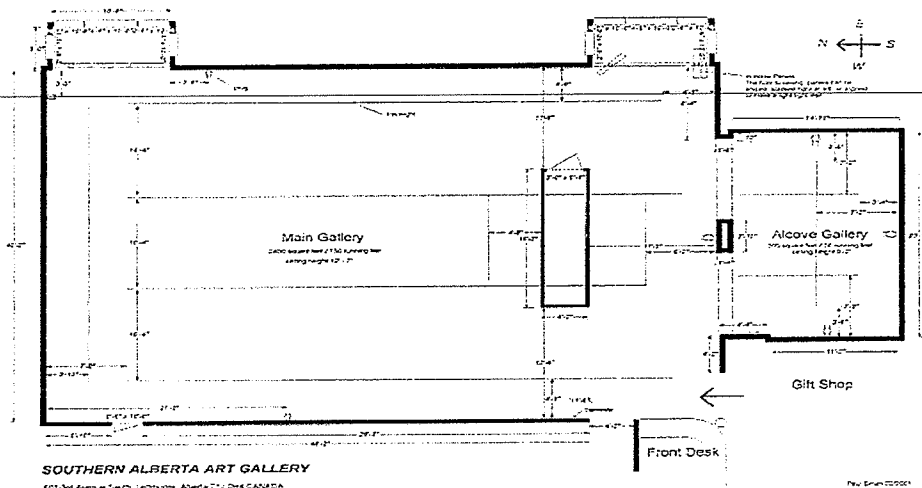


Figure 8: Floor Plan of the Main Gallery and the Alcove Gallery at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge, Alberta.

A catalogue, published after the exhibit in November of 2005, includes all of HeavyShield's artworks from the Main and Alcove Galleries, as well as an essay written by Comanche

<sup>10</sup> These five graphite drawings of blood were originally photocopies on transparency that were then drawn onto the walls of the Alcove gallery. All were 8 1/2 x 11 in size (in original format). The six images covered the East, South and West walls and ordered from East to West they are as follows: concept drawing (of exhibit) for Alcove Gallery #1 (East Wall), fax message for Alcove Gallery (South Wall #1), game score for Alcove Gallery (South Wall # 2), concept drawing and photograph for Alcove Gallery (South Wall #3) and concept drawing (of exhibit) for Alcove Gallery #2 (West Wall).

writer and curator Paul Chaat Smith titled *Stand Off in Lethbridge*. Black-and-white and coloured photographs are included in the catalogue, showing the installations<sup>11</sup>. Old family photographs of HeavyShield's are also shown in the catalogue and appear at the introduction of a series of eight poems written by the artist which ties in directly to the exhibit.

The title of the exhibit plays on the word 'blood'. It symbolizes familial ties as well as the name of the nation to which she belongs. In HeavyShield's public lectures, she describes her connection to physical blood as something comfortable and not necessarily associated with violence. HeavyShield's recollections of this come from memories of the birth of a calf on her family ranch and the force that is produced through childbirth (HeavyShield University of Manitoba<sup>12</sup>). She believes that this is "new blood, blood that carries oxygen to all parts of the body, like the stories that carry sustenance to the women who hear them, who absorb them through their skin, their bodies" (HeavyShield and Lemecha Venus as Torpedo 11).

HeavyShield's explosive poetry demonstrates another avenue of memory and her process of remembering. HeavyShield connects aspects of family, home and the land in this poem and includes her impressions of what blood means to her:

Blood is familiar  
It may be the name  
Of a colour red or rust  
According to time  
Or a place  
The blood reserve

---

<sup>11</sup> Three extra black-and-white images of the artist's exhibition are found in the catalogue that was not a part of the initial show. These are an artist's exhibition plan (8 1/2 x 11 graphite on paper), photographs and dates for *North End* (each 8 1/2 x 11, photocopies on transparency).

<sup>12</sup> I will be using the short form U of M to replace the full description of University of Manitoba from this moment forward in this chapter.

It may be for giving  
Birth            for girls each month  
It may be a site  
Of wounds    life  
Draining into the ground  
Dear brother  
Familiar. (45)

This poem demonstrates the various layers that appear in this exhibit and expresses how her memories are not just connected to one single event, but are a layering of many facets of her life. This poem in its entirety directly reflects the themes found within the installations that are included in the blood exhibit.

The exhibit blood is a personal and abstract representation of her family and of her parents (HeavyShield Manitoba Association of Women Artists<sup>13</sup> and U of M). For HeavyShield this exhibit is “about, and to her family” (HeavyShield U of M). This exhibit presented connections of her ancestral memories about ceremony, Kainai traditional values and rites and the continuance of oral storytelling.

I felt immediately comforted by HeavyShield’s work as I entered the main gallery space. Her artworks *Untitled*, *North End*, and *Kutoyis* are crisp, clear and non-intrusive. All three creations support HeavyShield’s visual autobiography, which is transformed through stories from her memory, as past events and current conceptualizations become the subject of the installation pieces.

---

<sup>13</sup> I will use the short form MAWA in place of Mentoring Artists for Women’s Art from this point on in this chapter.

### Untitled<sup>14</sup>

*Untitled* was the first work of HeavyShield's that I noticed when I entered the gallery. This sculpture, shown in Figure 9, is comprised of approximately forty lengths of string, hanging from the centre of the gallery's ceiling, and draping to the floor to a length of fourteen feet in total (4.2 m)<sup>15</sup>. Each string varied in length from twelve to fourteen feet long (3.6 to 4.2 m) and was painted the colour of red ochre. Small cloth bundles, measuring 1.5 inches (3.8 cm) in length with a diameter of a small adult's thumb, are tied to the strings that hang from the ceiling. Colour variations of the red ochre are seen in the cloth bundles. The original white colour of the string appears in segments where the paint did not saturate. The bundles are attached to the string at varying intervals and are also painted in red ochre. Each bundle is firmly secured to the string with a string tie and each has the extra end-string carefully trimmed, so that it is no longer visible, creating the illusion that the bundle is glued to the hanging string.



Figure 9: *Untitled* at SAAG, 14' in length. April 2005.

<sup>14</sup> At the time that I viewed this artwork, the informational label that accompanied the work had listed this work under the name *Untitled*, it was only after hearing HeavyShield discuss the work at her public lectures was I made aware that *blood* was also a name she used in describing it.

<sup>15</sup> Dimensions were confirmed with Joseph Anderson via email correspondence in January 2006.

This is an impressive sculpture. *Untitled* stands majestically, forming a cylinder that connects ceiling to floor. It continues its journey as it moves outwards across the surface of the carpet. String forms the outer cylinder and it fills the sculpture (Figure 10), creating the look of a solid mass. The vertical line resembles a solid funnel filled with blood that pours across the floor. The object is three-dimensional, allowing for movement around its base. The texture of the string and the bundles was rough and stiff from the paint, but each string was nevertheless moveable, although not enough that it contorted the original form.

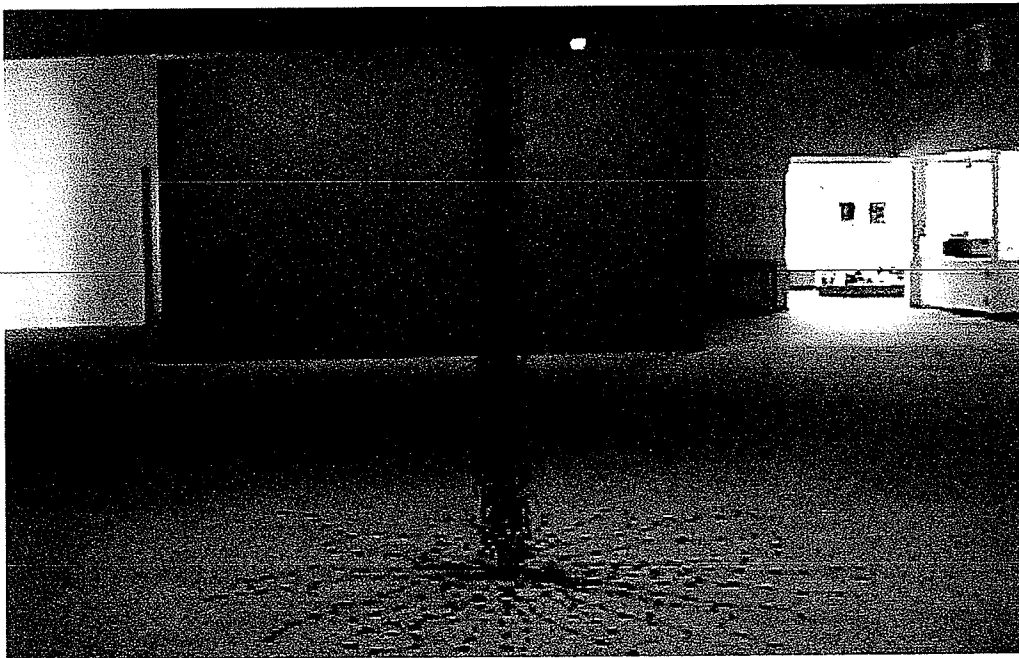


Figure 10: 'Untitled' at the SAAG, 14' in length. April 2005.

*Untitled* is the focal point of the room. It is placed squarely in the centre of the Main Gallery and is positioned in equal distances from *North End* and *Kutoyis*. The movement of the string on the gallery floor spreads towards the other two installations in the Main Gallery (Figure 11), connecting the spread of 'blood' to the other parts of the exhibit. The ceilings in the gallery appears to never end, as the sculpture disorientates the view and gives the illusion that the funnel starts beyond the boundary of the white ceiling.



The use of repetition occurs throughout this work: the hanging string, the countless bundles, the time, patience, and repeated action that HeavyShield experienced as she constructed *Untitled*. Aboriginal writer and theorist Paula Allan Gunn notes that, “repetition has an entrancing effect” (228), and repetition “refocuses attention to the central concerns” (228). The physical and mental process of binding and wrapping the cloth bundles, and the weaving and wrapping of the hanging strings creates an atmosphere that defuses and expands the mind. Its constant thought and meditative nature creates a state of consciousness that Gunn calls ‘oceanic’ (228). Gunn goes on to say that repetition:

Is hypnotic and the person’s attention becomes defused. Distractions from the ordinary life are put to rest so that the larger awareness can be put into full consciousness and function. It becomes a way of being one with the universe, for the person loses consciousness of mere individuality and shares the quality of consciousness that characterizes most orders of being. (228)

HeavyShield has commented that the experienced meditative process that happened during the weaving and binding of *Untitled* was tedious and entertaining at the same time (HeavyShield MAWA), and resembled the action taken when a person prays with a rosary, saying hymns for each bead (HeavyShield MAWA & U of M). This process can be understood as ceremonial, as HeavyShield took the time and worked through bundling and wrapping each single piece of cloth, thinking of family members both alive and dead and escaping into her unconsciousness.

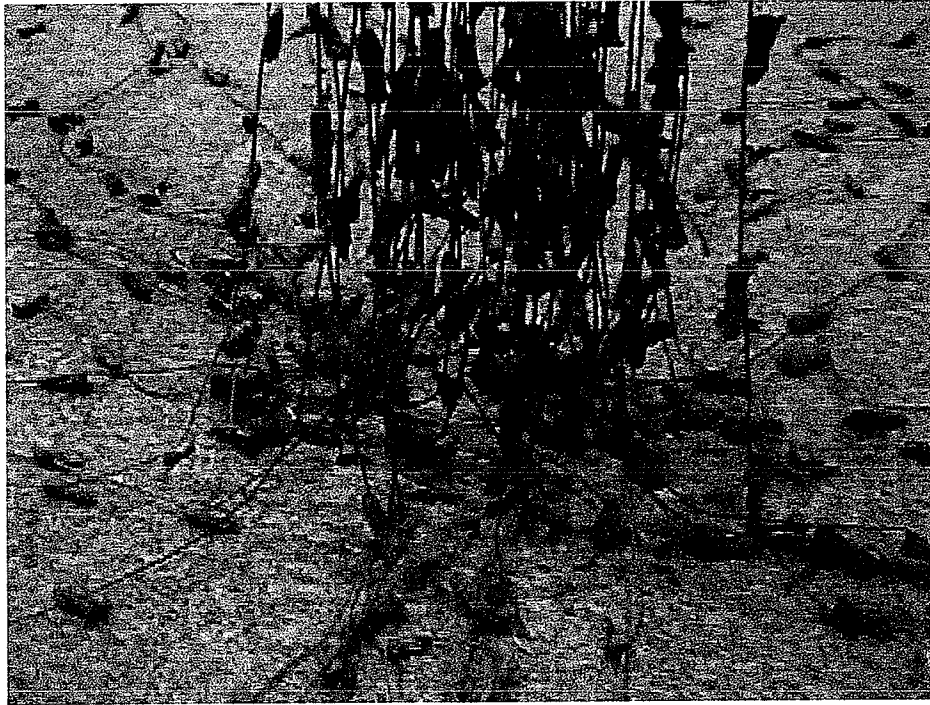


Figure 11: *Untitled* at SAAG, 14' in length. April 2005

As I considered this piece within the context of ceremony and ritual further interpretations came to mind. Having a life force such as blood coming down from the sky reminded me of a story that I had read about the mythical figure of Star Woman, and how she was sent down to teach the Kainai, among other Siksikaitstapi, the Sundance ceremony. Sebastian Chumak's collection of stories by various Siksikaitstapi in the early 1980's, titled The Wisdom of the Blackfoot, the Bloods and the Peigans of Canada: a Five-Year (1983-1988) Field Production<sup>16</sup> provides an example of Star Women's travels to earth and her distribution of the Sun Dance ceremony:

---

<sup>16</sup> This book is based on the stories of 48 elders on reserves, with archival research by Anne Hemingway, special collections research by James Baker, field research by Shelly Heryford (Blackfoot Reserve), Brian Maluta (Blood Reserve), Bruce Healy (Peigan Reserve), and written by Sebastian Chumak. The Canada Heritage Foundation funded this research in 1988.

Evening Star took Feather Woman to sky country. He brought her to the Sun (his father) and the Moon (his mother). For many moons she was happy with Evening Star and even bore him a Star Boy. Evening Star warned her against touching or going near the big turnip (Mother Turnip) because the great Spider lives there. One day her curiosity got the best of her and she began to dig the big turnip, she got the turnip out and stood down looking at the big hole in the sky. From far above she was able to see her people's camp and became very homesick. From that day on she was very sad and cried often. Her husband knew at once what she had done and told her that she had to now go back to the earth people. Evening Star asked the star-women to weave a big basket of red willow (that would hold Star Woman and bring her back to earth). The Sun then asked Great Spider to spin a long braided rope that would hold the willow basket with Star Woman inside. Then one night, Evening Star lowered her through the very same hold that she had dug up and she began her decent to earth. On her head she wore the holy headdress Natoas [that] Evening Star had placed onto her head and it was the Holy Woman's Sundance Headdress. Moon gave her the sacred turnip which was dug up as a gift to the Blackfoot. Star Women was then told to teach the Bloods the Sundance, Okan, the Sun had taught her. Evening Star then said that 'when you go back home, take with you these gifts and teachings to help our people, to unite your people. Bring them the songs of the Okan'. (179-182)

The string in HeavyShield's work is reminiscent of the long braided rope that the Great Spider spun for Star Woman's decent to earth, while the bundles of cloth relate to the woven red willow baskets, each descending down the rope to give the Siksikaitstapi their ceremonies and

teachings. As the teachings and journey come closer to earth they are spread to all Siksikaitstapi. This is seen through the movement of the red ochre string strewn across the floor.

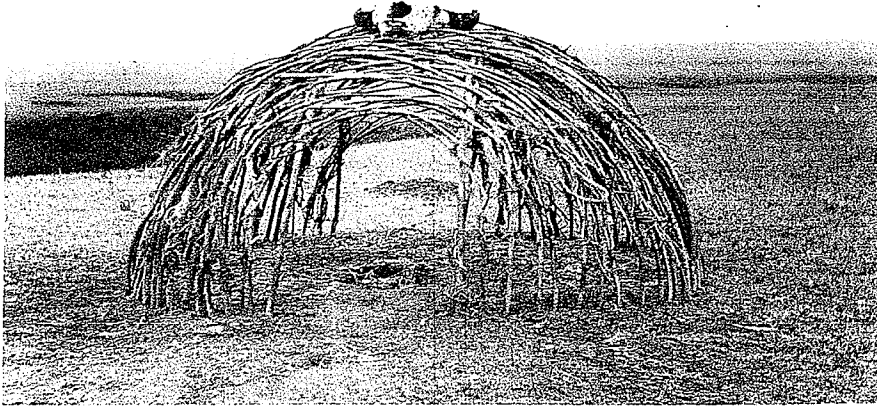


Figure 12: Kainai sweat lodge at Sundance grounds, Southern Alberta, 1903. Photograph courtesy of Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Alberta. NA 2313-25.

The string in *Untitled* reminds me of an old photograph that I saw while looking through images at the Glenbow Archives in Calgary Alberta, showing the remains of a Siksikaitstapi Sundance lodge (Figure 12). The image of the lodge shares similarities to the strings in *Untitled* that hang from the ceiling: The hard, coarse branches of the lodge resemble the texture of the paint-soaked strings and the lines are similar in their exposed and vulnerable forms.

The installation *Untitled* is about her brother who passed away at the age of twenty-nine. Faye HeavyShield wanted to show the beauty that she saw in his life and in him as a person (HeavyShield U of M). The work *Untitled* is a ritualistic memorial to those who have passed before her in her ancestral line (HeavyShield).

### North End

HeavyShield's *North End* (Figure 13) is a graphite drawing of two trees on the north wall of the Main Gallery. Each graphite-drawn tree has variable dimensions and stands at approxi-

mately ten feet in height and 20-25 inches in width<sup>17</sup> (approx. 3 m x 51-63.5 cm). There is no colour present in these drawings, only varying shades of grey and coal (monochromatic). The two images are illuminated by six track lights on the ceiling, highlighting only the trees on the wall. Other light comes from the slot windows at the east side of the gallery. *North End* is symmetrical in design, of equal weight, and the images vary slightly in the distribution of the upper branches.



Figure 13: *North End* 10' H x 25" W, SAAG in Lethbridge Alberta, April 2004

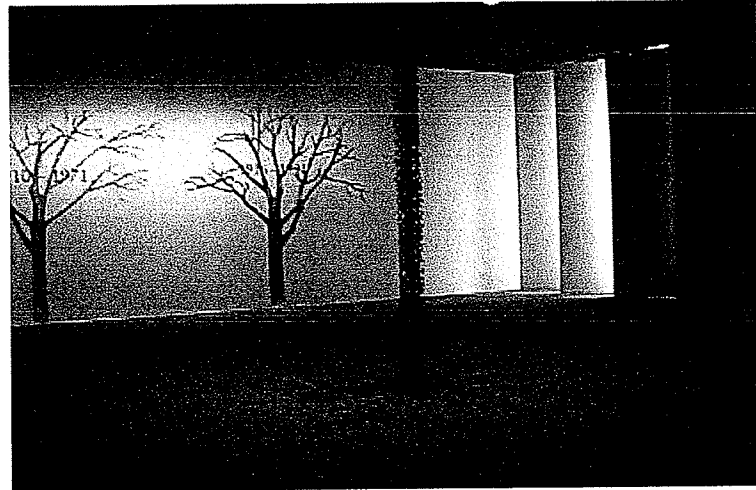
Both trees have two dates written into their top branches. The left tree has the dates 1910-1971 and the right tree has 1916-1991 in solid, stencilled numerals (Figure 13). The tree on the left has smooth and continuous tones. It is shaded in such a way that it appears as though the light source is coming from in front of the tree. The tree on the right (Figure 14) contains harder lines and darker shading, with less light movement in its trunk. The variance in tones and shading throughout the trunk of both trees creates an accurate appearance of bark. In the upper braches,

---

<sup>17</sup> Dimensions confirmed through email correspondence with Joseph Anderson in January 2006.

the lines are thinner and more fragile looking. The lighter shading occurs in the thin, upper branches at the centre of the tree just below where the dates are placed.

Figure 14: *North End*, 10' H x 25" W, SAAG in Lethbridge Alberta, April 2004



The two sets of dates that are seen in the trees (1910-1971 and 1916-1991, Figure 15) are the birth and death dates of HeavyShield's parents. Her father is represented on the left and her mother on the right. I became interested in their placement and significance in the trees. In further research, I discovered that this was a burial rite of the Siksikaitsitapi.

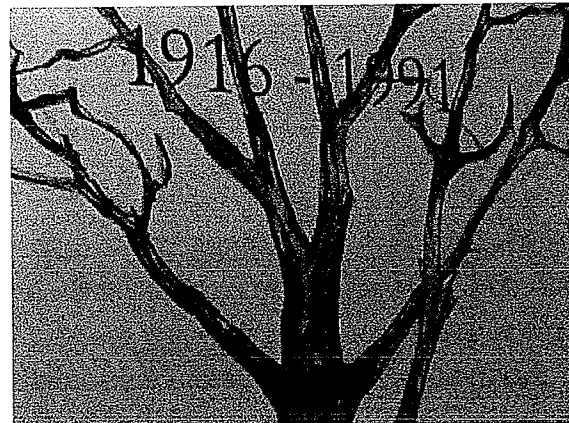


Figure 15: Dates in *North End*, 10' H x 25" W, SAAG, April 2005.

According to historical writer George Bird Grinnell, the "dead were often placed on a platform and could also be placed in a tree, lodge or even on the ground within a lodge for burial" (193). In the Kainai tradition, when a person was prepared for their journey in death, objects

that the person held close to them were buried with them to take into the next world, to aid in their journey (HeavyShield). Grinnell adds, “that upon a person’s death, the nearest female relations would immediately prepare the body for burial” (193) and it was the women that would participate in public wailings and mourning (Dempsey 21). Another part of the mourning process was that traditionally the women would slash their legs and rub charcoal into the wounds (Dempsey 21). The use of graphite in drawing *North End* can be taken to signify HeavyShield’s incorporation of this tradition within her construction of this work. Historical writer Hugh Dempsey has stated that death among the Kainai was “treated with the utmost respect” (21) and Kainai writer and historian Mike Mountain Horse also remembers this burial ritual (71-72). An example of this rite can be seen in Figure 16 from an archival photograph that dates to 1880-1883.

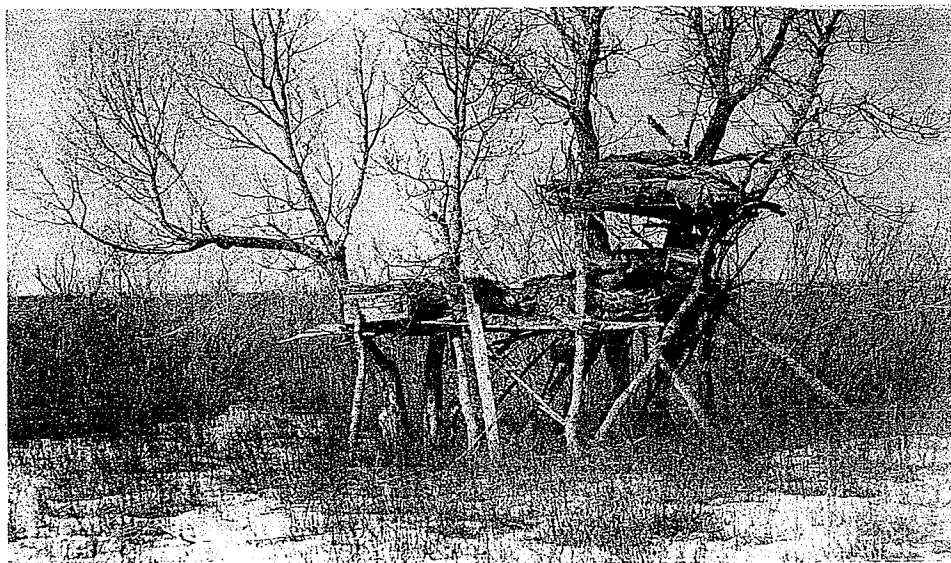


Figure 16: Kainai surface burial near Standoff Alberta 1880-1883. Photo is Courtesy of Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta.

Faye HeavyShield has publicly stated that she presented her parents in this manner in order to honour them in death as she did in life (HeavyShield). This method of burial allows the body of the deceased person to exist in its natural form and not one that is made up with makeup

and physically disturbed with embalming (HeavyShield). In a poem written by HeavyShield, which is included in the catalogue, she discusses the importance and significance of this cultural and traditional rite. She remembers the ritual in this way:

At rest

In the arms of this tree                      going home

Wrapped in your riches of good deeds

Bravery and grace

We sing piercingly so ahead they may know

It's you

In the arms of this tree                      coming home (39).

For HeavyShield, the connection to home goes beyond the walls of a house and reaches into her cultural background and her family. In this poem, coming home for her is about re-establishing cultural connections, strengthening her identity as a Kainai person and is an honouring of her parents. In our discussion of *North End*, HeavyShield told me that even the choice of tree is important and took her a long time to find the right one. She eventually found a tree along the Old Man River in Alberta and duplicated it on the wall for both her mother and father (HeavyShield).

The placement of *North End* on the north wall of the gallery is significant as HeavyShield and her family lived on the family ranch in the north end of the Standoff reserve (HeavyShield). It is historically significant because her family ranch is a cattle ranch. The Kainai were given cattle to herd in the late 1800's after all other agricultural means had failed (Goldfrank 20-22). By 1897 and well into the first decade of the 1900's, cattle farming began to make money and



there was an increase in cattle population (Goldfrank 23) , providing an income for the reserve and the families.

Kutoyis

The third artwork of HeavyShield's that appeared in the Main Gallery was an abstract piece titled *Kutoyis*, (Figure 17 and 18). It comprises both cloth bundles and red ochre paint placed on the south wall of the Main Gallery. The wall that *Kutoyis* was installed on is ten feet tall and sixteen feet two inches long<sup>18</sup> (approx. 3 m x 4.9 m). The sculptured installation faces *North End* and *Untitled*. This wall is not a part of the buildings foundation, as it is placed in the centre of the room and away from outside walls, and divides the Main Gallery from the smaller Alcove Gallery. This wall faces north and is painted in solid red ochre paint with no variations in tone, which covers the trim and does not move on to the sides of the wall. The texture of the wall is smooth and the bundles are coarse from being saturated with paint. There is no variation in tone in the bundles and no visible discolouration of the wall behind each bundle. It gives the impression that the bundles were attached after the wall was painted. The cloth bundles are attached to the wall and are the same design as those in *Untitled*. The bundles lay flat on the wall and are scattered over the surface in a seemingly organized pattern.

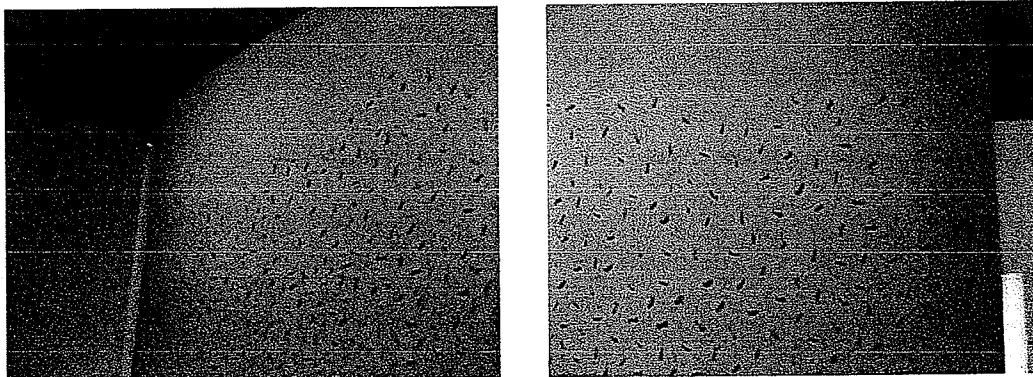


Figure 17: *Kutoyis* (top half of wall) 10' H x 16'2" W. SAAG in Lethbridge, Alberta April 2005

<sup>18</sup> Dimensions confirmed through email correspondence with Joseph Anderson in January 2006.

Three quarters of the wall in *Kutoyis* is covered in cloth bundles, leaving the top quarter uncovered. The line where the bundles stop is a distorted horizon line that moves across the wall. The fluid movements of the horizon line resemble the movements of the foothills in Southern Alberta, or the varied mountain ranges also seen in Alberta. The movement of bundles go all the way down to the floor and are attached to the trim that is also painted in red ochre, with some bundles placed so low that they touch the carpet.

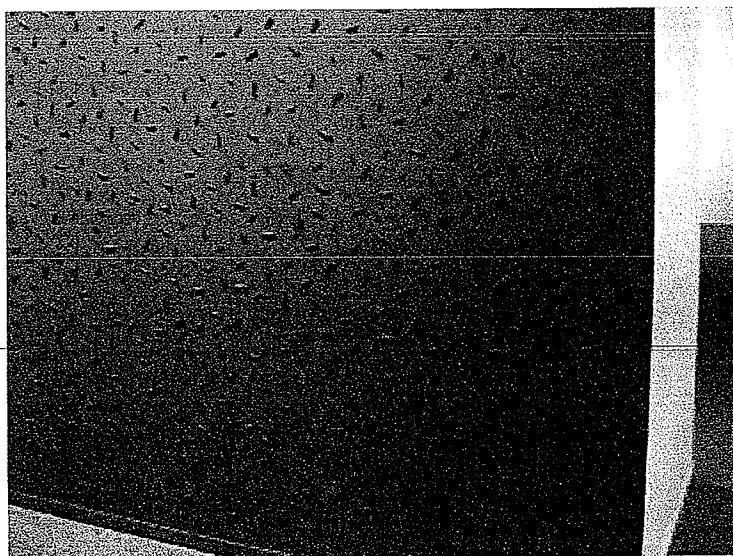


Figure 18: *Kutoyis* (bottom right half of wall), 10' H x 16'2" W, SAAG, April 2005

The name *Kutoyis* is Blackfoot and it means blood clot. *Kutoyis* is also the name of a mythical character in Blackfoot stories and creation legends. HeavyShield states that it is through *Kutoyis* that the Blackfoot learned the traits needed on how to be a good people (HeavyShield MAWA). *Kutoyis* completed his tasks by turning the tables on his enemies, subjecting them to the same subjugation that they intended for the Blackfoot. (Chumak 160). The Sun, sent *Kutoyis* to earth to “help the people, preserve the people, to strengthen the people and to bring courage to their hearts” (160). The story of *Kutoyis* and many others, were told to her by HeavyShield’s father’s mother, Spotted Eagle (HeavyShield MAWA & U of M). As explained

by Kainai Elders in Chumak's book The Wisdom of the Blackfoot, the Bloods and the Peigans of Canada, Kutoyis the avenger of the Niitsitapi (real people) came to the people in this way:

Maksinam (Wicked Heated One) would make old man (his father in law) go hunting with him and do all the work of skinning and cutting, taking it all for himself and sending the old man home empty handed. One day at sunrise while hunting, the old man's son-in-law shot a buffalo but did not kill him. The old man went to put it to rest when he came upon a blood clot. Knowing that Maksinam was watching his back he quickly put the clot in his quiver pretending to drop all his arrows. That night the old man told his wife to boil water so that he could make blood clot soup. While waiting for it to cook they heard a child's cry form within the pot, they opened the pot they found not a clot but a baby. They wrapped him in a robe and sang the welcome to life song. The son-in-law also heard a baby's cry and said that if it was a boy that he would kill him that night and if it was a girl then he would someday marry her as well. He then sent each wife one by one to see if it was a boy or girl, each came back saying that it was a girl. The youngest and good daughter, went to the tent and found out the truth about the baby boy, she however reported back to her husband that it was a girl- he then sent bones over for his mother in law to feed on to give strength to the baby. The old people knew that something great was going to come from their son, Kutoyis. The baby surprised his parents by talking, old man held him up to each lodge pole starting with the east where the sun comes up. As he moved to each pole he got a little bigger and older until he was a grown man. He spoke to the old couple and said 'the Sun has sent me here to you I am Smoking Star. The cruelty in this will

now end. It is night, sleep in peace, the days of your pain has finished'. (140-146)<sup>19</sup>

Like HeavyShield's *Untitled*, the constructed cloth bundles reinforce a sense of ceremony and repetition. Each small bundle was placed on the painted wall in relation to the others around it, making sure not to overcrowd. On closer inspection, this wall resembles blood cells moving through a person's veins. In interpreting this image as blood cells and placing the similar imagery of the foothills into a situation, each cloth bundle represents a blood clot and its movement across the wall are the stories and teachings of Kutoyis, which move similarly throughout the foothills and mountains of Siksikaitstapi territory.

#### A Question of Place

A Question of Place was exhibited between April 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 at the Walter Phillips Art Gallery in Banff Alberta. It was a group exhibition curated by Métis/Tlingit curator Candice Hopkins<sup>20</sup>. There was no catalogue for this exhibit only a curatorial statement that accompanies the show. A Question of Place took up the entire space of the WPAG and included sound and video recordings, sculpture, installation, and web-based work. HeavyShield was one of six artists who participated in this exhibit<sup>21</sup>. The premise of this exhibit was to provide new insights into the meanings of place and community, each artist telling stories that included themes of impermanence, resistance and cultural change (Hopkins Curator Statement 2004).

---

<sup>19</sup> A chapter is dedicated to the stories of Kutoyis in Chumak's book The Wisdom of the Blackfoot, the Bloods and the Peigans of Canada: a Five-Year (1983-1988) Field Production, providing in great detail Kutoyis's various battles with the evil forces of the world Siksikaitstapi world.

<sup>20</sup> Hopkins is the curator in residence at the Walter Phillips Art Gallery. She has a MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York.

<sup>21</sup> As stated previously in the chapter the other artists included in this exhibition were Jimmie Durham, Brian Jungen, Zacharias Kunuk, Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Truman Lowe.

Figure 21 shows the WPAG floor plan. Highlighted in red is the area that HeavyShield's *body of land*<sup>22</sup> occupied.

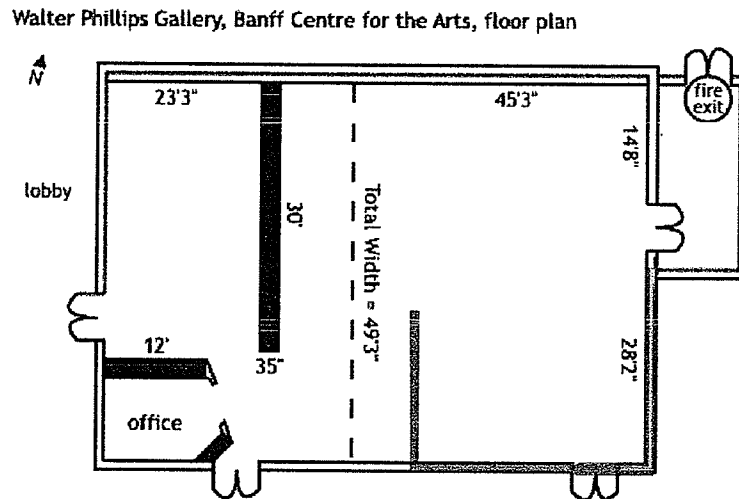


Figure 19: Floor plan for the Walter Phillips Art Gallery. The highlighted red is where the piece *body of land* was placed, April 2005.

*Body of land*, an installation (Figure 20), was originally constructed in 2002. It comprises 450 digitally reproduced photographs of human skin (HeavyShield's own) that were shaped individually into the form of a cone and taped over three white walls of the gallery. The colour varies throughout the photographs, some are light and dark, some are more brown in colour and others are more red (Figure 21).

<sup>22</sup> HeavyShield's *body of land* also appeared in 2002 at the Kelowna Art Gallery in Kelowna British Columbia. The work appeared as part of Candice Hopkins required MA degree fulfilments which also included the work of artist Elaine Reichek.

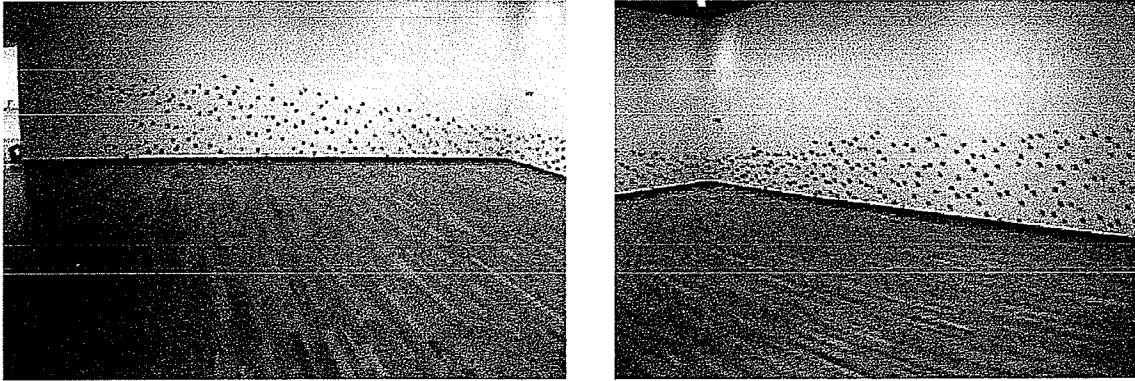


Figure 20: *body of land*, Dimensions Variable, Walter Phillips Art Gallery, April 2004.

Like HeavyShield's *Kutoyis*, *body of land* does not cover the entire wall in this installation. All of the cones travel a third of the way up the wall, leaving the top two-thirds of the wall bare. The horizon line is not straight but sporadic and distorted, much like the horizon line in *Kutoyis*. Once more, like in *Kutoyis*, *body of land*'s flowing horizon can be interpreted as the fluid movement of the landscape of Southern Alberta. There are visible groupings of cones and some that are more scattered across the landscape of the wall.

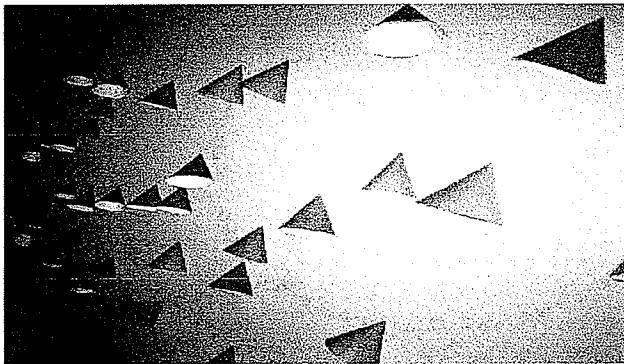


Figure 21: *body of land*, Dimensions Variable, Walter Phillips Art Gallery, April 2005

This installation piece is reminiscent of what HeavyShield's ancestors would have seen as they looked along the horizon of the prairies. Installed in fluid groupings that cover three walls (highlighted red in Figure 19), *body of land* moves and swells, creating a vast landscape that seems to envelop the viewer. Curator Candice Hopkins also states that HeavyShield:

Reverts back to the smooth form of the teepee; replacing animal skin with human, in her decision to make body of land from photographs it becomes indexes (*sic.*) of the body. This decision, along with her statement of identifying every cone as a 'portrait', suggests that each element in her work is not simply a multiple or one of many- but rather, unique and individual (Unpublished Thesis 26).

Figure 22 shows an archive photograph from the Glenbow Archives in Calgary and illustrate what HeavyShield's relatives may have seen, looking out to the horizon. Before settlers came into the Western Prairies, the Blackfoot people moved continuously in order to harvest the various plants and animals they needed to live; these movements were not random (i.e. they followed a residential mobility pattern (Binford 5-10)), as each were directed by where the resources could be found (Old Person 41).

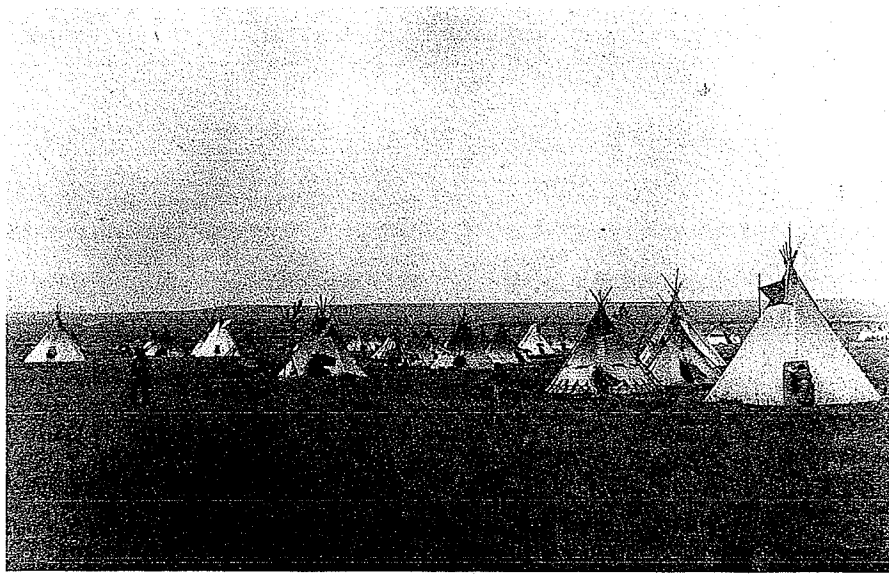


Figure 22: Kainai Camp Southern Alberta 1893. Courtesy of the Glenbow Archives NA 668-2

In order to understand the complexities and the formal properties of *body of land*, I positioned myself in the middle of the floor, so that the three walls were at equal distance from me. I sat down and closed my eyes. Each time I opened my eyes, the wall came to life, kin groups were grouped closer together and other extended family dwellings were slightly further away. I

closed and opened my eyes again and I felt the movement in the land as if the movements of the foothills that I witnessed the previous day had come alive. HeavyShield stated in our interview that this piece was placed in a u-shaped manner so that it envelops the viewer (HeavyShield).

Faye HeavyShield created this piece with images of her own skin, but it is not restricted to her experience as I learned from my observations of this work and in later discussions with her. She uses abstraction to enable her work to contain no restrictions on who can or cannot be a part of the installation and to express what the exact subject matter is about. She stated in our interview that this is a reason that she creates her pieces in this way, so that all can experience her work (HeavyShield).

The process of remembering in Faye HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land* have layers that include individual, cultural and historical memories. Each examined work is inspired by recollections of the lives of her parents, her brother, her grandmother and the history of her community. HeavyShield did not create these selected pieces as memorials or "dead memory" (HeavyShield U of M), but rather they demonstrate that her process of remembering and her memories represent continuous development and growth.

*Untitled, North End, Kutoyis, and body of land* all share the concept of home that Lee Maracle discusses in the quote at the start of this chapter. It is expressed through the way that HeavyShield incorporates people and places into her artwork. As Maracle states:

I remember now, that home, the blankness of the walls, the wind bleeding through the odd missing board, the wiring hanging loose, no insulation, no inner wall, just the old shiplap that made up the original walls, the pot-bellied stove trying in vain to heat the place, I remember how it shaped me. I remember that a windowless room terrified me every day for eleven years. I remember a scared and wilful



mother, desperately trying to hang on to her children, [trying to] develop some semblance of identity, lawfulness, love and joy, in a context too overwhelming for her to ever be successful. I remember ... *Home*. It shapes. (Maracle Arrest this Memory 109)

In the above quote by Sto:loh writer Lee Maracle, the definition of home is shown in two ways. The first is seen in respect to the physical form of a house and the second is shown through the memories of her mother and the created social environment within the confines of the house. It is the latter sense of home that holds meaning and can be felt in the artwork of Faye HeavyShield. They appear in abstract forms, but the storytelling that occurs in each artwork tells of a woman who knows who she is and knows where her feet are planted on the earth. HeavyShield also knows that her family and the land where she calls home are very much a part of her internal fabric, that they are incorporated into her creativity whether it is an obvious expression or a part of the process. Her works are a statement of a lived contemporary life as well as a story of a time that began before hers.

Abstraction in art is a powerful tool that allows one to bypass literal perception and reaches into the otherwise impenetrable world of unconscious emotion. This is possible because, the more abstract a work of art, the fewer preconceptions it evokes in the mind of the beholder. Abstraction in art keeps the conscious portion of the human psyche functioning at a minimum, allowing for the unconscious to be used to invoke feelings and emotions that would otherwise be categorized in the conscious mind.

Through my study of the selected artworks *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis* (SAAG) and *body of land* (Walter Phillips), I was able to establish that memory<sup>23</sup> and the process of remem-

---

<sup>23</sup> Memory is a multi-layered, which includes family, culture and history and does not necessarily, reflect one singular point in history or experience in a person's life.

bering is evident in HeavyShield's work. In addition, her work creates a visually oral way of storytelling that continues her Kainai cultural traditions. Aboriginal artist Robert Houle stated in 1992 that Faye HeavyShield uses memory as one of the most "important elements in her creative production" (154). He adds that she "uses cultural signposts (such as language, ceremony, and animals) as mnemonic devices to bring into visual being objects that are to her fragments of reality as they actually appear without the traditional and familiar conventions of perception" (154). Memory is still as important aspect of Faye HeavyShield's work. The cultural signposts that Houle observes in 1992 are still present in the 2004 productions of *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land*. All four works are connected to ceremony, history, tradition and family. Memory theorist Thomas Butler acknowledges that memory "is not only what people personally experience, refine and retain, but what people also inherit from past generations and pass on to the next" (13). This is evident in HeavyShield's incorporation of Kainai mythical character Kutoyis, her interpretation of the Kainai burial ceremony found in *North End* and in the landscaped appearance of historical teepee formations in *body of land*.

## Chapter Six

### Concluding Thoughts

I have shown through this research that memory and remembering is present in Faye HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis, and body of land*. Through a conceptual framework created in readings of Aboriginal art theory and Aboriginal creative literature, the process of remembering is a strategy that has been and continues to be used as a way of dealing with colonial mistreatment. Despite a pervasive culture of assimilation, Aboriginal artists (and through them, their communities) use memory and the socio-political act of remembering their past, in order to continue their culture and traditions. By possessing the memories of her ancestors, her parents and of her own experiences, HeavyShield goes against the assimilation process that was put in place to colonize Aboriginal people. Through this act of not forgetting, the colonial process of assimilation becomes less effective. Through a transformational process, HeavyShield's work includes Western art forms and mediums that are incorporated into her own cultural and personal memories, creating a visual story. Concepts of family, home, and the land are brought to life through HeavyShield's *Untitled, North End, Kutoyis* and *body of land* demonstrate that in this case, colonization and assimilation did not triumph and that she is still very much connected to her family, her culture, her sense of home and to the land around her.

For Aboriginal peoples the process of remembering means to de-colonialize. Forgetting memories includes the individual, the family and the community as a whole. For generations Aboriginal people have internalized the assimilation process and families are born into forgetting. By remembering and not forgetting, both positive and/or traumatic memories go against the colonial process of assimilation. Colonial assimilation attempted to permanently destroy and break up the family unit, both close and extended and take away what Aboriginal people consid-

ered being their home and their land. Contemporary Aboriginal artists, including the work of Faye HeavyShield, and writers show in a number of various ways that assimilation did not succeed. That acknowledging history, gaining strength from the memories, and remembering family, their definition of home and connections to the land are still alive and strong.

Faye HeavyShield does use memory and the process of remembering in her artwork and creates a visually oral way of storytelling. Her work is an example of how these such as family, home and the land are still very much alive and being transferred to future generations of Aboriginal people. The four artworks of HeavyShield's that have been selected for this study, *Untitled*, *North End*, *Kutoyis*, and *body of land*, all show that memories of Kainai traditions have created a renewal of her cultural identity and solidify where she came from and where she is going. She provides evidence through her work that her language is still strong and her cultural identity is still intact. Strength comes from remembering her family, the sense of home that her family created and the land that they still live upon and this shows that the colonial assimilation process did not succeed in destroying Aboriginal lives but rather through remembering, HeavyShield's Kainai history and her own memories and experiences still exist.

This research project was a journey for me, not only academically but also personally. It has become part of my emotional and my physical fibre, sending me on a rollercoaster of inspirational thought. What started off as a huge undertaking in the beginning eventually dwindled down, in its respective manner, to something much more manageable, and to my shock included much more of my own personal reflections in it. I learned a lot of Kainai history and culture doing my research. It inspired me to begin to learn Blackfoot as a language and to continue conducting research within this region of Canada and within the Blackfoot Nation.

When I did my fieldwork and saw HeavyShield's exhibit blood in Lethbridge and *body of land* in Banff, I was able to create my own memories, which included my family and what home meant to me. My family experienced the fieldwork portion; my partner Ted and our son Dakota (fig. 23) joined me in my journey and I believe that it made the experience of HeavyShield's work even more special. The decision to incorporate photographs of my family and the account of my parent's experiences as newcomers in this country in the text of this thesis was influenced by HeavyShield's exhibit blood, where she shows her strong connection to her own family. Her honouring of her parents really meant a lot to me because I am very close to my own parents and admire them greatly. It was exciting to write this thesis, as I was able to incorporate my own family within its pages.

When I discussed this with Faye, she was happy and excited to see that I had included my family, especially the old photographs. In our discussions, HeavyShield said to me that it was important that I have this for my son for when he gets older, so he can look at it and it would be a part of his family. Since the exhibit at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery and the installation piece at the Walter Phillips Art Gallery were so centred on family ties, love, home and land – she felt that it would be suitable to include as much of my own journeys and my own connections to family and home in my work.

Having travelled to Southern Alberta, I can now see where HeavyShield gains inspiration of her work. The landscape takes your breath away as it transforms and morphs one moment to the next as foothills collapse into one another. Prior to my fieldwork I had only seen the foothills from a plane. I was taken away with how the foothills rolled around you. There is great strength that comes from that area of Canada and I feel lucky that I had the opportunity to research there. HeavyShield's work left me in awe and many emotions were generated while experiencing *Unti-*

*tled, North End, Kutoyis and body of land.* The formation of this research project allowed me to reflect on my own memories of my family and of my concepts of home as well as remembering important people and places in my own life. It took me to theoretical arenas that I could never have imagined venturing into and asked hard questions of my research interests as well as my position in the field of Aboriginal or Native Studies.

In whatever challenges I take on in the future, my experience with Faye HeavyShield will remain influential, for teaching me the intimacies of writing, looking at art, listening to what creativity has to offer and to know and love my family. Her work inspires me.



Figure 23: My son Dakota when he was a just over a months old. August 2002

## Works Cited

- Acland, Joan Reid. "The Native Artistic Subject and National Identity: A Cultural Analysis of the Architecture of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Designed by Douglas Cardinal." Diss. Concordia University, 1994.
- Ames, Michael. Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992.
- Anderson, Joseph. "Re: HeavyShield." E-mail to the author. 23 Jan. 2006.
- Archuleta, Margaret. "The Fourth Annual Biennial Native American Fine Arts Invitational at the Heard Museum." American Indian Art Magazine Winter 1994: 54+.
- Ashcroft, Bill. Post-colonial Transformations. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Baele, Nancy. "Calgary Artists Sculptures all Spring from Memories." Calgary Herald 19 April 1994: A11.
- Ballenger, Bruce. "Methods of Memory: On Native American Storytelling." College English. 59.4 (1997): 789-800.
- Barnet, Sylvan. A Short Guide to Writing About Art. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman Press, 2003.
- Bastien, Betty. Blackfoot Ways of Knowing. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004.
- Berkhofer, Robert. The White Man's Indian. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Berlo, Janet, and Ruth Phillips. Native North American Art. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Binford, Lewis R. "Willows Smoke and Dogs Tails: Hunter-Gatherer Settlement and Archaeological Site Formation." American Antiquity 45.1 (1980) : 4-20.



Butler, Thomas. "Memory: A Mixed Blessing." Memory: History, Culture and the Mind. Ed. Thomas Butler. Oxford: Blackwell Ltd., 1989.

Campbell, Maria. Halfbreed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd, 1973.

Cardinal-Schubert, Joane. "In the Red." Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation. Ed. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981. 122-133.

---. "'Flying With Louis'". Making a Noise: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art history, Critical Writing and Community. Ed. Lee-Ann Martin. Banff: Banff International Curatorial Institute, 2005. 27.

Chumak, Sebastian. The Wisdom of the Blackfoot, the Bloods and the Peigans of Canada: a Five-Year (1983-1988) Field Production: A Spiritual Odyssey of the Original Heritage of the Genesis, Myths, Legends, Folklore and Wisdom of the 'Siksika', Blackfoot, (the ones who walk in blackened moccasins), 'Kainai', Blood (the people of many chiefs), 'Api-kuni', Peigans, (the ones who wear scabby hides). Toronto: Canada Heritage Foundation. 1988.

Clark, Janet. "She: A Room Full of Women, Faye HeavyShield." Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1994.

Clifford, James. "Of Other Peoples: Beyond the Salvage Paradigm." Discussions in Contemporary Culture. Ed. Hal Foster. Vol.1. Seattle: Bay Press, 1987.

---. The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Crosby, Marcia. Nations in Urban Landscapes. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery, 1997.

Crowe, Thedius Berthelson. Introduction. Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People.  
By George Bird Grinnell. Lincoln: university of Nebraska Press, 2003. v-xvii.

Cruikshank, Julie. Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Elders. Vancouver:  
University of British Columbia Press, 1990.

Dempsey, Hugh. Indian Tribes of Canada. Calgary: Glenbow Museum Publications, 1979.

---. Introduction. Niitsitapi - The Real People: A Look the Bloods. Eds. Standoff Tribal Council.  
Standoff: Blood Tribe, 1983.

Durand, Guy Sioui. "Ak8a-Enton8hi: Of Saliva and Quill." Making a Noise: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art history, Critical Writing and Community. Ed. Lee-Ann Martin. Banff:  
Banff International Curatorial Institute, 2005. 128.

Eigenbrod, Renate. Travelling Knowledge's: Positioning the Im/Migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005.

Feldman, Edmund B. Varieties of Visual Experience. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.,  
Publishers, 1987.

Floor Plan. Southern Alberta Art Gallery. Lethbridge, Alberta. April 2004.

Floor Plan. Walter Phillips Art Gallery. Banff, Alberta. April 2004.

Francis, Daniel. The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture. Vancouver:  
Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.

Goldfrank, Esther S. Changing Configurations of the Social Organization of the Blackfoot Tribe During the Reservation Period: The Blood of Alberta, Canada. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1945.

Grinnell, George Bird. "Early Blackfoot History." American Anthropologist 5.4 (1892): 153-164.

---. Blackfoot Lodge Tales: the Story of a Prairie People. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2003.

Gunn, Paul Allen. "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Indian Perspective of American Indian Literature." The Remembered Earth. Ed. Geary Hobson, 1979. 222-239.

~~Halfe, Louise-Beatrice. Blue Marrow. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1998.~~

Hands of History. Dir. Loretta Todd. Narr. Doreen Jensen, Rena Point Bolton, Jane Ash Poitras and Joane Cardinal-Schubert. National Film Board of Canada, 1994.

HeavyShield, Faye. "Artist Talk." Manitoba Association of Women Artists, Winnipeg. 15 Oct. 2005.

---. "River and Other Words." University of Manitoba School of Art, Winnipeg. 19 Oct. 2005.

---. Personal interview. 12 Nov. 2005.

---. blood. Lethbridge: Southern Alberta Art Gallery, 2005.

---. "Bone Things: The Art of Faye HeavyShield." Border Crossings 4 (1992): 49-52.

Hobson, Geary. Introduction: Remembering the Earth. Ed. Geary Hobson. Albuquerque: university of New Mexico Press, 1979. 1-11.

Hopkins, Candice. "Migrating Motifs." Diss. Center for Curatorial Studies, 2003.

---. "A Question of Place." Curator Statement. Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 2004.

---. "How to get Indians in the Art Gallery." Make a Noise: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community. Ed. Lee-Ann Martin. Banff: Banff International Curatorial Institute, 2005. 192.

Houle, Robert. "The Emergence of a New Aesthetic Tradition." New Work for a New Generation. Regina: Norman McKenzie Art Gallery, 1982.

---. "Faye HeavyShield". Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada. Eds. Nemiroff, D., Houle, R. and Townsend-Gault, C. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992. 154.

---. "The Spiritual Legacy of the Ancient Ones." Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada. Eds. Nemiroff, D., Houle, R. and Townsend-Gault, C. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992. 43.

Jensen, Doreen. "Art History". Give Back: First Nation's Perspectives n Cultural Practice. Vancouver: Gallerie Publications, 1992. 15.

---."The Role of a Traditional Gitksan Artist." My Home as I Remember. Ed. Lee Maracle and Sandra Laronde. Toronto: National cultural heritage Foundation, 2000. 140-144.

Kainayssini Imanistaisiwa: The People Go On. Dir. Loretta Todd. National Film Board of Canada, 2003.

Kane, Margo. "Moonlodge." An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English. Ed. Daniel Moses and Terry Goldie. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992. 327-340.

---. Full Circle: First Nations Performance. 24 Feb. 2006. < <http://www.fullcircle.ca/index.html>>.

Keeshig-Tobias, Lenore. "Stop Stealing Native Stories." Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation. Ed. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981. 71-73.

Kulchyski, Peter. "What is Native Studies?" Expressions in Canadian Native Studies. Ed. Ron F. Laliberte, Priscilla Settee, James B. Waldrum, Rob Innes, Brenda Macdougall, Lesley McBain and F. Laurie Barron. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Extension Press, 2000.

---

LaRocque, Emma. Preface. Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada. Ed. Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance. Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Limited, 1990. Xv-xxx.

---. "Nostalgia". Native Writers and Canadian Writing. Ed. W. H. New. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990.

Laronde, Sandra. Introduction. My Home as I Remember. Ed. Lee Maracle and Sandra Laronde. Toronto: National cultural heritage Foundation, 2000. iii.

Lemecha, Vera. Faye HeavyShield: venus as torpedo. Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1995.

Maracle, Lee. "Oratory: Coming to Theory." Give Back: First Nations Perspectives on Cultural Practice. Vancouver: Gallerie Publications, 1992. 85.

---. Preface. My Home as I Remember. Ed. Lee Maracle and Sandra Laronde. Toronto: National cultural heritage Foundation, 2000. i.

---. "Arrest This Miracle." My Home as I Remember. Ed. Lee Maracle and Sandra Laronde. Toronto: National cultural heritage Foundation, 2000. 106-111.

Martin, Lee-Ann. Mapping our Territories. Banff: The Banff Centre, 2002.

McLoughlin, Moira. Museums and the Representation of Native Canadians: Negotiating the Borders of Culture. New York: Garland Publishing, 1999.

McMaster, Gerald, and Lee-Ann Martin, eds. Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992.

Mountain Horse, Mike. My People the Bloods. Calgary: Glenbow – Alberta Institute and Blood Tribal Council, 1979.

Nemiroff, Diana. "Modernism, Nationalism, and Beyond: A Critical History of Exhibitions of First Nations Art." Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada. Eds. Nemiroff, D., Houle, R. and Townsend-Gault, C. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992. 154.

Old Person, Earl. Nitsitapiisinni: The Story of the Blackfoot People. Calgary: The Glenbow Museum, 2001.

Oster, Ted. Personal interview. 20 March 1993.

Phillips, Ruth. "The Public Relations Wrap: What we can Learn from The Spirit Sings." Inuit Art Quarterly 5.2 (1990) : 13-21.

Public Relations Department. The Home of the Kainai Nation. 15 Dec. 2005. 20 July 2005. <http://www.bloodtribe.org/main.html>.

Rose, Wendy. "Just What's All This Fuss About Whiteshamanism Anyways?" Coyote was Here: Essays on Contemporary Native American Literary and Political Mobilization. Ed. Bo Schoeler, *The Dolphin* 9 (April 1984): 14.

Reinharz, Shulamit. Feminist Methods in Social Research. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Richard, Jolene. "After Essay: Indigenous Is the Local" On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery. Eds. Lynda Jessup and Shannon Bagg. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002. 115.

Ridington, Robin. Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988.

---

Royal Ontario Museum. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Contemporary Native Art of Canada-Silk Screens From the Triple K Co-Operative, Red Lake, Ontario. Toronto: ROM, 1977.

Rushing III, W. Jackson, ed. Native American Art in the Twentieth Century. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Schensul, Stephen L., Jean J. Schensul, and Margaret D LeCompte. Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1999.

Schöler, Bo. "Trickster and Storyteller: The Sacred Memories and True tales of Gerald Vizenor." Coyote was Here: Essays on Contemporary Native American Literary and Political Mobilization. Ed. Bo Schoeler, *The Dolphin* 9 (April 1984): 14.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999.

"The Blackfoot Tribe." Science November 6.146 (1885): 456-458.

Townsend-Gault, Charlotte. "Kinds of Knowing". Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada. Eds. Nemiroff, D., Houle, R. and Townsend-Gault, C. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992. 75.

---. "Rebecca Belmore." Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada. Eds. Nemiroff, D., Houle, R. and Townsend-Gault, C. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992. 114.

~~Treaty 7 Elders. The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003.~~

Vogel, Vanessa, M.L. "The Glenbow Controversy and Exhibitions of Native North American Art" European Review of Native American Studies 4.1 (1990) : 43-46.

Walkingstick, Kay. "Native American Art in the Post-modern Era". Art Journal, 51.3 (1992): 15-18.

Walters, Anna Lee. "Come my Sons." The Man to Send Rain Clouds. Ed. Kenneth Rosen. New York: Viking Press, 1974. 15-24.

Wissler, Clark and D.C. Duvall. Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.



Youngman, Alfred. "The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples." Book Review. American Indian Quarterly 14.1 (1989) : 71-73.

Appendix One  
Artist Exhibit Profile

---

## Faye HeavyShield Exhibit Listing

Born 1953 in Stand Off, Alberta  
Currently lives in Lethbridge AB

**1980-1985** Alberta College of Art, Calgary AB

**1985-1986** University of Calgary, Calgary AB

**1989**

4<sup>th</sup> Biennial, Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ (shared)

**1992**

Land Spirit Power, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON (shared)

New Territories: 350/500 years After: An Exhibition of Contemporary Aboriginal Art of Canada, Vision Planetaire Montreal, QC (shared)

Gallery Artists, Ufundi Gallery, Ottawa ON (shared)

Time to Dialogue, Triangle Gallery, Calgary AB (shared)

**1993**

Local Stories, Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton AB (shared)

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Triangle Gallery, Calgary AB (shared)

Heart Hoof Horn, Glenbow Museum, Calgary AB (solo)

**1994**

Artists who are Indian, Denver Art Museum, Denver CO (shared)

Together – Alone, Newzones Gallery, Calgary AB (shared)

Share the Heartsong, Triangle Gallery, Calgary AB (group)

She: A Roomful of Women, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Calgary AB (solo)

Faye HeavyShield: Into the Garden of Angels, The Power Plant, Toronto, ON (solo)

Heart Hoof Horn, SAW Gallery, Ottawa, ON (solo)

The Heart As, Pit Gallery, Vancouver BC (solo)

Feminist Works from the Permanent Collection, Glenbow Museum, Calgary AB (shared)

Sisters, Feminist Spin Forum, Calgary AB (solo)

## **1995**

Faye HeavyShield: Venus as Torpedo, Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina SASK (solo)

Nations in Urban Landscapes, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver BC (shared)

Ordinary Image: Aspects of Ritual in Contemporary Art, Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University Montreal, QC (shared)

From Within the Wall, Stride Gallery, Calgary AB (solo)

## **1996**

Ghostwriter #2, Mercer Union, Toronto ON (solo)

## **1997**

Public Investigators: Undercover in Public Space, Banff Centre of Arts, Banff, AB (shared)

Spiral and Other Parts of the Body, La Centrale/Powerhouse, Montreal QC (solo: anthology)

Tradition of Change, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg ON (ongoing)

## **1998**

Margins of Memory, Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS (G)

## **2002**

body of land, Kelowna Contemporary Art Gallery (S)

Mapping our Territories, Walter Phillips Art Gallery, Banff Alberta (G)

Mind over Matter, Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM (G)

Migrating Motifs, Center for Curatorial Studies Museum, Brad College, Annadale-on-Hudson, New York. (Shared)

## **2004**

blood, Southern Alberta Art Gallery Lethbridge AB (solo: catalogue)

A Question of Place, Walter Phillips Art Gallery Banff AB (shared)

A History Lesson, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from the Collection of the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Toronto ON (shared)

speak of eddy, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon SASK (solo)

Connexion at Ste. Croix, Gallery Connexion, Fredericton, NB (off-site installation)

## **2005**

Alberta Scene, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa ON (travelling shared)

Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art, Walter Phillips Art Gallery, Banff AB

In My Lifetime, Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Montreal QC (catalogue)

The McIntyre Ranch Project, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge AB (shared)

From-Space-Concept-Metaphor: Contemporary Alberta Sculpture, Triangle Gallery, Calgary AB (shared)

Rock paper river, Gallery Connexion, Fredericton, NB (solo)

CAMPsites, Museum London, London ON (catalogue)

## **2006**

Aapaskaiyaawa (They Are Dancing), Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina SASK (recent acquisition)

## Appendix Two

### Ethics Form

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction, the information regarding participation in this research project, and that you agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification throughout your participation.

Researcher: Sharon E. Humphrey  
Department of Native Studies  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
University Of Manitoba

Supervisor: Dr. Jill Oakes  
Department of Environment  
University of Manitoba  
(204) 474-7352

( ) -

.ca

ca

The University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board has approved this research. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, please contact either of the above named persons, or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature //

November 12 - 2005

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

05-11-12

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon E. Humphrey  
Researcher's signature

I agree to let the researcher use my name in the text of her thesis

Y  N

I would like to have a copy of this final project to be placed in a community setting (i.e. school, library or gallery), so that others can read it.

Y  N

I agree to let the researcher transcribe and copy verbatim the text of this interview within the body of the thesis.

~~Y  N~~ NA

I give permission to the researcher to use the material collected for this study in future articles, teachings and/or research.

Y  N

- Written material (thesis, transcribing, etc.)
- Visual material (photos (exhibits and of myself), tape recording etc.)

Y  N

Y  N

If given the opportunity to publish this material, does the researcher have permission to use materials gathered?

*for thesis, yes*  Y  N

I would like a copy of my transcribed interview

Y  N

I would like to review all transcribed material from the interview prior to the completion of this project. I would also like to have a say in what is or is not placed within the text.

Y  N

I have read and understood the following consent form

Y  N

*not  
taped*

Eate of tapes used in recording interviews: would you prefer them to be:

Destroyed       Returned to you       Become property of the University of Manitoba  
 Other, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Nov 12 - 2005



Appendix Three  
Interview Questions

---

## Questions for Faye HeavyShield

**Through the act or process of remembering, Faye HeavyShield places her memories (individual, cultural and historical) into her artistic productions.**

### GENERAL

How is your memories triggered?

Do you feel that your memories play a large part in how you come up with your ideas?

Do you think of your work before hand or is a lot of the process intuitive (known directly and instinctively, without being discovered or consciously perceived)?

Do you find that the distinction of the colour brings more focus onto the details and ideas, especially in contrast with the usual white walls of the gallery?

In the past 15 years there has been a considerable amount of writing in regards to Aboriginal art theory, how do you feel that this has changed or not changed how people look at Contemporary Aboriginal art?

How do you decide how pieces are arranged in a show (solo exhibit)?

You have often been associated with the minimalist movement within sculpture and art in general, what are your feelings with being placed within this category of art?

Is your work site specific? Does what you do depend on where it is or its temporality at a particular space?

Editing process, is there a lot of this within your art process?

I have read that you attended residential school when you were 6 for a couple of years, did you attend at all after that?

Where you interested in art as a young woman in your teens or 20's?

I notice that you didn't attend post secondary school till you were in your 30's (I also started later and am still attending school), is there reason you decided to attend school at all for art? Or did not go earlier?

I have read in other interviews that you found art to be the only thing you were ever good at, what was it that made you try it or stick with it (besides being good at it)?

My positionality as a non –Aboriginal academic interested in Aboriginal art – advice or how do you feel about that position.

So do you see your self as a storyteller of sorts?

I found in looking at a lot of contemporary Aboriginal art I have learnt a lot of varied histories and just as varied contemporary realities, do you feel that your art is teaching or informing the viewing audience a varied history and contemporary stories?

I have chosen to use contemporary Aboriginal literature as my theoretical base for my thesis; do you feel that this mode is appropriate for doing research in an Aboriginal context?

Are you surprised at how 'famous' you have become in the art world? Was it something that you ever thought of in the beginning or your artist career?

### WRITING

Do you feel your writing compliments the artwork you present in galleries or is it the other way around the art compliments the writing?

Since you write as well, how does this influence your artwork?

Do you find that writing helps in the reductive process, in creating the visual pieces?

Would you consider writing from a theoretical standpoint- or do you feel that your creative writing fits the unconventional means of theory that I support in my thesis?

Do you also write in Blackfoot? (If so) do you find it easier to write in Blackfoot or in English when you are trying to construct your ideas?

### STUDIED EXHIBITS

#### BLOOD

I know from your public lectures that this exhibit was very personal for you, does it feel strange to exhibit this personal side- especially in the written portions that accompany the pieces?

Is there a dialogue between the pieces that you create in the works? Such as in the Blood show, does one exist in its placement with each other?

In previous interviews I have read that you do not believe that you carry on particular Blackfoot or Blood traditions in your work (this being in 1993), Do you still feel the same way? This being said, the Blood show, exhibited both an oral character of Kutoyis and a traditional burial rite was used in that show. Is it possibly part of your subconscious that brings that stuff about?

Is there significance in the title of 'North End'? I know that it is representative of your parents (through my own year calculations)- how did you decide to come up with using that idea of Blackfoot funeral rites?

Is there any significance of showing at the SAAG?

Was there a double meaning or play on words for the title of the exhibit?

Was the time of year significant for any meaning within the works in the exhibit?

The use of tree as a symbol?

Blood signature piece more about that

Measurements of the selected pieces?

### BODY OF LAND

For the Body of Land installation you use digitized your own skin and included it in the work, do you think the way that you referenced the body in your work allows for more possibilities? (For interpretations etc.)

Is there significance with the number of cones?

Why was that piece chosen for that particular exhibit? Was it because Hopkins had previous experience with that piece?

### SUBSECTIONS

Family

Education

Economic

Artists influence

Political and social