

# **Giving Life to the Truth<sup>1</sup>: Indigenous Art as a Pathway to Archival Decolonization**

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER of ARTS  
Department of History  
Joint Master's Program  
University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the MMIWG's Inquiry mission statement as released on Facebook, "Give Life to the Truth by creating a living legacy through commemoration and artistic expressions," accessed on March 20, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/MMIWG/photos/a.367701940261946.1073741828.361462917552515/524740757891396/?type=3&theater>

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## Abstract

The impact of colonialism has left its legacy on Indigenous people in many detrimental ways: less access to education and health facilities for Indigenous communities; disproportionate levels of poverty, mental health issues and addiction; overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system; institutionalized racism; and disproportionately high levels of violence against Indigenous women and girls, among many other effects. Archives are a site of power, and the archivists who appraise, describe and create access to the records hold great responsibility as they enact that power. Archival institutions are a key site where colonialism has been enacted with real and multiple effects on Indigenous communities. Looking to advance the decolonization of the archive and support Indigenous people in Canada working to reclaim their truth on a national scale, this thesis advocates the collection of Indigenous art as a social memory medium that holds the same weight as any other archival record in terms of authenticity and evidence of historical truth. Indigenous art can enable and demonstrate healing from trauma, share and preserve Indigenous culture and knowledge, reveal truths from personal experience, fight racism, resist colonial beliefs, promote awareness of problems Indigenous people may face, and encourage activism.

Archival postmodernism and decolonization look to include marginalized communities in the archival record, from which they have historically been left out (oftentimes purposefully). With a decolonizing approach in mind, many archivists have been looking for ways to collaborate with Indigenous communities and to work together to help decolonize Indigenous records in the archive.

A case study of the Legacy Archive at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls demonstrates how applying archival theory and best practices,

implementing international Indigenous protocols, and collecting Indigenous art are helping to make strong headway into decolonizing archives, and Canadian history, by bringing the truth about the high levels of violence against Indigenous women and girls and members of the 2SLGBTQIA communities to the forefront.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on Treaty 1 territory and that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

I would like to thank my advisor Greg Bak, who always had confidence in my ability, who always supported my journey towards my Master's degree, his guidance throughout the process and who always had great knowledge which he shared with me to enable me to fully develop the ideas presented in this thesis. I would also like to thank Tom Nesmith, first for introducing me to archives, then convincing me to go into the Master of History (Archival Studies) program. He was right when he said it would be a good fit for me. Further, thanks to Tom for helping me to develop my thesis topic in the early stages and always sending me helpful resources when it came across his table. I would also like to thank Julie Nagam who provided excellent comments and feedback on my proposal that really guided me through my writings, especially in my chapter one.

I am also privileged to have a great group of archivist friends who were students together (I am the last one to graduate out of this bunch!!), and that stemmed from working together at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. We stay in contact today, and they were very helpful in providing feedback and advise on some of the challenges I faced in my thesis, as well as helping me grow as an archivist, so I big thank you goes out to Marta Dabros, Jesse Boiteau, Jarad Buckwold, Nicole Courier and Jessica Nichols.

I would like to finish by acknowledging those that read different versions or sections of my thesis and provided grammatical, or commentary on my thesis. Your expertise and time is so greatly appreciated. A big thank you then to Peter Lundy, Courtney Lundy, Shelby Thomas, Jarad Buckwold, Marta Dabros, and Jesse Boiteau.

## **Dedication**

First and foremost, to my mum and dad (Marie and Peter), who are my foundation, and my strength throughout this process, and deserve much credit for supporting me so I could achieve this success. It is ours to share. I love you so very much.

To Stephen and Courtney, and my many friends who have stood with me on this journey, I am so grateful. I needed you.

To my friends and colleagues at National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, many of you are an inspiration to me in terms of your strength, resilience, and power. Your determination, the care and love you put into your work, and the passion and dedication that you put into this Inquiry has inspired me for a lifetime. I will learn from this and grow from this. Thank you.

To the families and survivors of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as well as members from the 2SLGBTQQIA community. I hear your stories. I believe your stories. I will move forward in good way and do all that I can to make sure that all your voices are heard.

*To all of you, I dedicate my thesis, because without you, I would not have written it.*

**With Love and Respect,**

**Petra**

## **Preface: Transparency and Accountability**

Not only do I have an ethical responsibility to be upfront about my positionality in this research, but I also believe wholeheartedly it is best practice to allow people to see your truth, as it helps them understand the journey you are on. Here, I acknowledge that I identify as a non-Indigenous ally, a term that has been used to describe me (and other non-Indigenous co-workers) by colleagues at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.<sup>1</sup> The term ally is a serious one, and I believe it takes time to become an ally. Furthermore, you always have to listen and learn to continue to be one. Although the term settler has been and is used quite frequently in academic circles to describe non-Indigenous people in Canada, I have not felt connected to that term nor identified with it. I consulted with many of my Indigenous colleagues who respected my choice and positionality of ally, rather than settler.

Following Indigenous protocols, I met with an Elder that I have had a working relationship with for over three years; we had a heartfelt conversation. I shared my concerns about how to correctly position myself, and she put my mind at ease. She advised me to follow my true heart and what it tells me. When I said the word ally, knowing that it is a strong and powerful word, I was asked in what way I was an ally. This questions provided me an opportunity for self-reflection as I shared my story with her.

I have always wanted to help children and women, especially the most vulnerable. I was working towards a career in either social work or education, but I was convinced that good work

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<sup>1</sup> They just use the term ally, but I wanted to be clear that I was not an Indigenous person, but a first generation born Irish-Canadian. Additionally, I am the senior archivist at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. My biggest responsibility is collecting artistic expressions as a means of collecting truths, to be put into a Legacy Archive that will be used for Education, Research and Outreach purposes.

for all people could be done in Archives, especially those located in marginalized communities. I would later learn how very true that was. I discovered the archives is a place where social memory is kept; yet for many marginalized/colonized people, their truths were not there. I saw an opportunity to help make that right, to make sure that their story would be preserved and heard. This is where I could be an ally. I could help fight for Indigenous inclusiveness in the archive, as a person who understands that there is a colonized past in Canada, and as a person who understands that social memory practices are different among different nations.

This journey has led me to some amazing opportunities. I was fortunate enough to work as an archival assistant during the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission event, and to work nearly two years at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, also doing archival work. I am now working with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Not only has this been a unique life experience, I am more honoured, humbled, and inspired than I have ever been. For me, an archivist has the great honour of agreeing to listen to, and to care for someone's truth or knowledge, so that it may be passed on to someone else. It is a role that I will always value and take pride in.



## Introduction

Even though progress has been made in terms of knowing historical truths about Indigenous history in Canada, there are still many truths<sup>2</sup> that are left unheard. The impacts of colonization on Indigenous people in Canada are far from gone, in fact the legacies of it are very real for so many. The much higher rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls, as well as members of the 2SLGBTQQIA<sup>3</sup> communities, less access to education and health facilities for Indigenous communities; disproportionate levels of poverty, mental health issues, and addiction; overrepresentation of Indigenous people within the criminal justice system; institutionalized racism, land claim battles, and fighting for treaty rights are just few of legacies that remain from colonial policies that were forced on the Indigenous people.

Another place where colonialism has had a great impact is in the archive, which wields great power. An archive is a place where records of history and social memory are kept. It is where educators and researchers find information to do their work, and publish their findings. It is the place where archivists decide which records to include in the institution, how the record is described and how it will be accessed. This has a major impact on Indigenous people and communities as records that are held in the archive that are about them, are very rarely written by them or even managed by them. Overall, Indigenous history in Canada has been told in these records held in the archive, therefore from a skewed though purposeful perspective.

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<sup>2</sup> I am using the notion of truth as it is maintained in the the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles, especially when focusing on the archival responsibilities for preserving and providing access to records of human rights violations. These are based on principle 2: the Right to know, which is how I discuss Indigenous art as a tool to combat impunity.

<sup>3</sup> This is the term the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls uses officially so It is the term I will use throughout this thesis. It stands for: Two Spirited Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Queer Questioning Intersexual and Asexual.

This thesis argues that Indigenous art will advance decolonization in the archive as Indigenous art is a social memory medium and should be given the same weight as other historical archival records. Further, this thesis examines how archives can make a difference in having Indigenous voices heard, preserved and empowered. In particular, I explore how art can function as an archival record, and one that is particularly well suited to Indigenous expressions of identity and perspectives on history.

Chapter one demonstrates how Indigenous art offers an opportunity to break down the barriers of colonialism by preserving Indigenous culture, knowledge, and by “Giving Life to the Truth.”<sup>4</sup> Indigenous artists face many barriers, past and present, to stage their art, and for it to reach audiences on a both national and global level. Their strength and determination reflect the resilience of Indigenous people to keep or re-connect to their culture, and for the world to know the truth about the history of Canada. Art shares knowledge and truth. It can be a form of resilience and activism, and is also used as a tool to heal from colonial trauma. In all of these ways, art helps decolonize the archive thus Canada’s history.

Chapter two highlights the many historians, scholars and archivists, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who have discussed the colonial nature of the archive, including Adele Perry, William T. Hagan, John Borrows, and Raymond Frogner. The policies and protocols of archives play a critical role in determining what archival records are collected, how they are interpreted and described, and how they are made accessible; in this way, archives and archivists can be powerful allies to Indigenous communities. Creating a meaningful relationship of trust between

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<sup>4</sup> Inspired by the MMIWG’s Inquiry mission statement as released on Facebook, “Give Life to the Truth by creating a living legacy through commemoration and artistic expressions,” accessed on March 20, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/MMIWG/photos/a.367701940261946.1073741828.361462917552515/524740757891396/?type=3&theater>.

Indigenous communities and archives is integral for an archive to decolonize its holdings; Indigenous communities can offer much in terms of knowledge.

Archival theories that aim to be more inclusive of Indigenous archival records and enhance traditional archives include an activist approach to archiving, grassroots archiving, participatory archiving, and adding donor's voices to provide the description. All of these theories and methods require direct involvement of the marginalized community itself. Finally, an archive can also look to the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles, UNDRIP, the Society of American Archivists protocols for Native American archival materials, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, for guidance in designing and implementing their own policies.

I will look to Canada's best practices and archival standards in exploring the best options for digital preservation systems and digital content management/archival description application that are geared towards Indigenous archives. There are many archival standards to adhere to, including the Open Archival Information System (OAIS), metadata standards (such as PREMIS), Accession Standards, and Description Standards (such as Canada's *Rules for Archival Description* or RAD). I will compare free, open source digital preservation systems (such as Archivematica) with proprietary systems (such as Preservica). I will review access points for these systems, narrowing in on Access to Memory (AtoM) another free open source application and Mukurtu, a free open source digital content management system designed with Indigenous materials in mind. I will conclude chapter 3 by offering advice on the system best suited for an archive such as the Legacy Archive of the National Inquiry of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Chapter 4 is a case study on the National Inquiry's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Legacy Archive. I will conclude the thesis by demonstrating how archival

theory, global human rights matters , Indigenous rights concerns, Indigenous knowledge and culture, and archival standards and best practices have all had an impact on the framing and development of the Legacy Archive of the National Inquiry of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

## Chapter 1

### Indigenous Art as a Social Memory Medium

Colonialism has had a deleterious impact on Indigenous people, both in terms of mental and physical health, but also in terms of eradication policies with respect to their culture, languages, and beliefs. Moreover, archival records about Indigenous people were most often created by non-Indigenous people in government agencies, academic institutions, corporations and churches. These records fail to express Indigenous ideals of cultural, political, and economic self-determination.

Indigenous art offers an opportunity to decolonize Canada's history by adding contextual historical truth in archival institutions as official archival records. Indigenous artists have faced many challenges beginning with having their art not being accepted into art galleries because of discriminatory policies, western notions of fine art, racism, negative stereotypes, and avoidance of political/activist art.<sup>1</sup> Through perseverance, Indigenous art broke through these barriers, and these artists and their art have reached a national platform. Indigenous art has been likened to storytelling. Art has the ability to share and preserve Indigenous culture and knowledge: it can be a place where one's truth and experience is revealed; it can be a tool to fight racism and resist colonial beliefs; it can be a platform to raise awareness about problems Indigenous people face and encourage activism; it offers an opportunity for healing and commemoration for Indigenous people who have suffered from the traumas of colonialism.

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<sup>1</sup> I want to acknowledge that I understand that many Indigenous artists preferred to be known just as an artist without being attaching to a race or culture, to that title. That being said, for my thesis I am focused on Indigenous artists specifically, hence why I identify the artists as such. Furthermore, here I am not trying to define the art itself, or critique it or the artist, but rather I am taking art that has already been defined by the artists themselves (for the most part), or by art critics, that have created art with intentional Indigenous messages, knowledge etc... then I am using that information through an archival lens to assess and apply in my thesis.

## 1.1 The Impact of Colonialism on Indigenous People in Canadian History

Colonialism has had, and continues to have, an extremely negative impact on Indigenous people in Canada. The Canadian government forced assimilation policies onto Indigenous people through the *Indian Act* and Indian Residential Schools, which attempted to eradicate Indigenous culture, language, and beliefs. The legacies of Indian Residential Schools are some of the worst of what colonialism has done to Indigenous people. Alcoholism, drug addictions, broken homes, serious mental and physical health problems, and critically high levels of violence (especially towards Indigenous women and girls) are just some of the legacies of Indian Residential Schools. Norval Morrisseau said, “150 years of the assimilationist policies of Canada’s Indian Act...had visibly erased Indigenous issues and understandings from Canadian public life.”<sup>2</sup>

The Canadian government further promoted racial ideas to the Canadian nation that Indigenous people were childlike, savage, and in need of supervision and leadership. This ongoing systemic racism, paternalism and domination has had a dramatic influence on the written history of Indigenous people in Canada. Sources that informed this history, up until very recently, have come from the Canadian government, academic historians, and anthropologists, most of whom were primarily non-Indigenous people. Susan D. Dion and Angela Salamanca argue that “Well into the middle of the last century, representations of Indigenous people were bound up in colonial domination, a practice in which dominant cultures seek to control the telling of Indigenous stories.”<sup>3</sup> This is all too true in Canada, and it is past due to change the sources of our Canadian history.

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<sup>2</sup> Carmen Robertson, “Significance and Critical Issues,” *Norval Morrisseau: Life and Works*, accessed on July 27, 2017, <https://www.aci-iac.ca/norval-morrisseau/significance-and-critical-issues>.

<sup>3</sup> Susan D. Dion, and Angela Salamanca, “inVISIBILITY: Indigenous in the city: Indigenous artists, Indigenous youth and the project of survivance,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 3:1 (2014):165.

## 1.2 The Impact of Colonialism on Indigenous Art: A brief history beginning in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> C.

Colonialism remains an issue today as Indigenous art forms continue to be judged by Western, ‘modern’ ideals of art, rather than by Indigenous ideals, which, in turn, marginalizes the art’s narrative.<sup>4</sup> Anne Whitehall argues that “the underlying presupposition of such a mode of incorporation is that objects produced by all Aboriginal societies have their own complex aesthetic systems, which deserve to be recognized and celebrated with the same intellectual seriousness as western fine art objects.”<sup>5</sup> Carmen Robertson suggests that museums and art galleries still use “confining classifications assigned to traditional Indigenous arts since the 19<sup>th</sup> century by anthropologists who considered them primitive.”<sup>6</sup> Robertson further states that this is just one of the many challenges Indigenous artists face as Western notions of art, classification systems, racism, and the lack of exhibition space and opportunities, all impact the ways in which traditional Indigenous art is seen and valued.<sup>7</sup>

Artist Minnie Ryder emphasizes that one of the obstacles she faces is that her traditional artwork is not accepted as legitimate, which itself diminishes the importance of Indigenous art in art history.<sup>8</sup> The National Gallery of Canada (NGC) was for many years exclusionary and discriminatory in its omission of Indigenous art from its collection. The NGC collection policy for Canadian pictures focused on artworks from Britain, France, and Italy, cultures that were then considered to be the hereditary roots of Canadian art.<sup>9</sup> Whitelaw argues that even when the

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<sup>4</sup> Carmen Robertson, “Clearing Paths,” in *Clearing a path: new ways of seeing traditional indigenous art*, eds. Carmen Robertson and Sherry Farrell Racette, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2009), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Anne Whitehall, “Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31:1 (2006), accessed on July 29, 2017, <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1775/1897>.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson, “Clearing Paths,” 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>9</sup> Diana Nemiroff, “Modernism, Nationalism, and Beyond: A Critical History of Exhibitions of First Nations Art,” in *Land, Spirit, Power: first nations at the National Gallery of Canada*, eds. Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle, and Charlotte Townsend-Gault. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992), 18.

NGC introduced Indigenous art into its Canadian narrative of art history, it still “was presented in such a way as to conform to Western conceptions of aesthetic interest, with the result that the ceremonial character of many of these works is erased...[and] the works themselves on display in the gallery remain over-determined by the discourse of the art museum, which privileges modes of seeing over methods of apperception that include the other senses.”<sup>10</sup>

Lynda Jessup argues that art galleries and museums are still dominated by “the settler version of Aboriginal history... [and] in this narrative, Aboriginal peoples themselves have no place – let alone a place within which they can tell their own histories.”<sup>11</sup> Whitelaw agrees that art galleries and museums present Indigenous art based in “antiquated conceptions of the authenticity of pre-contact indigenous cultures, and the impossibility or undesirability of any link between this idealized, ‘authentic’ past and the present.”<sup>12</sup> Further she states:

the display of Canadian and Aboriginal art in these galleries is not a complete success. Much of the Aboriginal work included in the exhibition is ceremonial in nature and can only be truly understood in the context of its use. The privileging of the visual that characterizes the art museum effectively erases the multisensory experience these objects demand, requiring them to conform to Western ways of seeing.<sup>13</sup>

The Canadian government had some influence on what Indigenous artists created. The concept of contemporary Indigenous art, from a North American perspective, came into play in the 1950s and 1960s when the Canadian government invested in the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, where Inuit soapstone carvings, drawings, and prints were marketed to the south as contemporary Indigenous art.<sup>14</sup> The artists were influenced by the Canadian government to

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<sup>10</sup> Whitehall, “Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada.”

<sup>11</sup> Lynda Jessup, “Hard Inclusion,” in *On Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery*, eds. Lynda Jessup and Shannon Bagg, (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002), xvii.

<sup>12</sup> Whitehall, “Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Robertson, “Significance and Critical Issues.”



create art with traditional themes that were considered desirable in the south, where settlers were fascinated by the Inuit people and envisioned them as an untouched society.<sup>15</sup> Inuit artists, for example, were asked to depict traditional cultural practices, much of which was forbidden to be shared with the public, even as their culture was “being debased, devalued, and actively oppressed by the dual forces of colonialism and Christianity.”<sup>16</sup> Producing art was one of the very few economic options for Inuit people, as job opportunities were extremely limited in the North. However, Inuit artists were able to design art that both appealed to Western audiences and depicted accurate Inuit knowledge of history, stories, and practices, and, therefore, demonstrated active cultural resilience.<sup>17</sup> Alena Rosen suggests that:

Qallunaat [non-Inuit people] have certain images in their minds of what an ‘Eskimo’ is, and want to purchase art that reinforces this idea. The Qallunaat arts advisor has been an essential figure in the development of contemporary Inuit art, and arguable many artists would not have achieved the level of success and profile in the art market without the assistance and advice of arts advisors. Even so, it is not always an easy or completely beneficial relationship... The issue here is that this process took most of the decision making power away from Inuit artists.<sup>18</sup>

Indigenous art can play a significant role in decolonizing Canadian history by showcasing Indigenous knowledge, as understood from an Indigenous perspective, and expressed by Indigenous people.<sup>19</sup> Most historical representations of Indigenous people in Canada are found in

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<sup>15</sup> Heather Igloliorte, “Inuit Artistic Expression as Cultural Resilience,” In *Response, Responsibility, and Renewal: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey*, eds. Gregory Younging, Jonathan Dewar and Mike DeGagne. (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009), 130.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Alena Rosen, “Inuit Art, Knowledge and ‘Staying Power’: Perspectives from Pangnirtung, (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba), 2013), 76-77, accessed August 13, 2018, [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/bitstream/handle/1993/22097/rosen\\_alena.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/bitstream/handle/1993/22097/rosen_alena.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

<sup>19</sup> I want to acknowledge here that I know that not all art made by Indigenous people is activist in nature, or is about Indigenous history, or about sharing one’s truth, or culture, but can be about fine art itself. Cathy Mattes says that there has been a consequence to those who make these connections between Indigenous art, and its cultural significance and that is that it now seems to be expected of contemporary Indigenous artists to have authority on

films, museums, and archives, and were selected and collected by non-Indigenous people. Indigenous art can counteract this stereotypical, outsider version of what it means to be Indigenous.<sup>20</sup>

There are some specific racialized beliefs and ideas that many Indigenous people feel they must debunk as part of the process of decolonizing history in Canada. There are many obstacles Indigenous artists have to face, both in the past and present, to have their art respected, made available to the public, and for it to be understood as the artist has intended. Much of the earlier collections of Indigenous art were assembled by anthropologists who deemed the artwork to be artifacts and were used to advance racial beliefs. Art historians and theorists would not recognize Indigenous art as ‘fine art’, with the exception of that which they designated ‘primitive art’.<sup>21</sup> Lee-Ann Martin argued that “Both the discipline of anthropology and ethnological museums embraced the study, classification, and presentation of Aboriginal material culture as artifacts.”<sup>22</sup> Martin demonstrated how Indigenous art was collected and categorized by anthropologists and ethnologists, and used for “scientific and comparative study of culture, as visible ‘evidence’ of racial inferiority (and therefore as justification of colonial intervention), but also in their capacity as objects of aesthetic pleasure, exotic delectation, and spectacle.”<sup>23</sup> Cathy Mattes argued that many Indigenous artists’ works were viewed as ethnographic objects and at

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“Aboriginal issues, spiritually enlightened, keepers of the past, or paint in the style of Woodland artists. Over forty years after the seven Woodland School artists made their mark, artists are at times still located as ‘Indian artist’.” Cathy Mattes, “Aboriginal artists defying expectations,” *Canadian Dimension* 41:1 (Jan-Feb 2007), accessed on August 30, 2017, <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/aboriginal-artists-defying-expectations-cathy-mattes>.

<sup>20</sup>Dion, and Salamanca, “inVISIBILITY,”165.

<sup>21</sup> Lee-Ann Martin, “Negotiating Space for Aboriginal Art,” in *On Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery*, eds. Lynda Jessup and Shannon Bagg, (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002), 239.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

times “received more recognition from history museums than from contemporary art galleries.”<sup>24</sup> Few works of art by Indigenous people were showcased in art galleries, as their work was not considered contemporary art, but rather artifacts, and therefore housed in museums. There was a “salvage anthropology” movement amongst anthropologists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to collect such artifacts and preserve them in museums before Indigenous communities died out or were assimilated into the Canadian nation.<sup>25</sup>

One of the constant challenges Indigenous art faces is the idea that the art is an artifact. Robertson states that anthropologists, art historians, and the general public all imposed designations without knowing Indigenous culture or aesthetics therefore diminished the artistic achievements of these very artists.<sup>26</sup> Jason Vastokas explains what western notions of art is lacking and what is needed to be done to include other cultures notions of art:

Given the conceptual paradigm of ‘performance’ as the tie that binds art, society, and environment together, and given the recognition that ‘lived experience’ is the crucial foundation for human communication and mutual understanding, even across cultures, what is needed is a total re-definition of what constitutes the dimensionality of the art object. We need to think not only of the ‘expanded field’ of sculpture in relation to place and space. In order to fully comprehend the arts of all cultures, not just the postmodern West, we need to develop a theory of interpretation grounded, as both Dewey and Turner suggest, in the neurobiological ‘sensibles’ of experience, rather than in strictly mental concepts. Thus, we have to consider not only sculpture in the expanded field, but also paintings and all other two- and three-dimensional objects produced by either hand or machine. By this means, we may find a place for the so-called ‘applied arts’ of ceramics, textiles and furniture in the universe of expressive things, alongside the standard ‘high art’ forms of Western tradition.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mattes, “Aboriginal artists defying expectations,” 24.

<sup>25</sup> Whitehall, “Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada.”

<sup>26</sup> Robertson, “Clearing Paths”, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Joan M Vastokas, “Beyond the Artifact: Native Art as Performance,” (*Presentation: The Fifth Roberts Lecture*, Wednesday, March 7, 1990), 28. (North York: Ontario, York University, Roberts Centre for Canadian Studies). Accessed on August 7, 2017. <http://robarts.info.yorku.ca/files/2013/11/rl-Vastokos1.pdf>.

Carol Payne and Jeffrey Thomas discuss the impact of colonialism on representations of Indigenous peoples in Canada's archival records, specifically on the anthropologic photographic records of Indigenous people. Payne and Thomas look at how these records were used to freeze in time stereotypical racialized ideas about different types of Indigenous people. Payne and Thomas argue that these records "present Aboriginal peoples as the official 'Other'; these individuals are usually rendered nameless, reduced to flagrant cultural stereotypes, presented as a homogeneous group and portrayed as peoples frozen in a time long past."<sup>28</sup> Thomas has surveyed many photographic collections, held by museums and archives, looking for photographs created by Indigenous people. What he found were photographs created by white photographers, all of which portrayed Indigenous people in specific racialized ways. This, Thomas argues, comes from 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century racial theories proposed by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and Lewis Henry Morgan, which influenced ethnographic photographers. These photographers created images that promoted the "inferiority of Aboriginal peoples and the justification for colonial dominance."<sup>29</sup> Thomas argues "that the photographic archive – whether under the aegis of a colonial or settler colony government or under that of anthropology – marked a site of Aboriginal subjugation."<sup>30</sup> Thomas feels that the government used this to "justify the final push of Indians to the periphery of the civilized world, as reflected by their captivity on reserves."<sup>31</sup> Thomas asserts that "so much of our history is voiceless in the sense that we find it by looking at photographs of monuments or at history books. We wonder where

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<sup>28</sup> Carol Payne, and Jeffrey Thomas, "Aboriginal Interventions into the Photographic Archives: A Dialogue between Carol Payne and Jeffrey Thomas," *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation* 18:2 (2002):109-110.

<sup>29</sup> Payne and Thomas, "Aboriginal Interventions into the Photographic Archives," 114.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-110.

<sup>31</sup> Payne and Thomas, "Aboriginal Interventions into the Photographic Archives" 115.

our history is – why isn't it here? Why are we portrayed in an unrecognizable way?"<sup>32</sup> Julie Nagam echoes this same sentiment, stating that "Historical images of Aboriginal people have kept us in a frame that renders us still and voiceless."<sup>33</sup>

Mattes discusses the negative role stereotyping has played in affecting how settlers treated and viewed Indigenous people in real life. Mattes remarks that the staged photography of Edward Curtis, who created postcards which romanticized and glamourized the West, along with "Hollywood Cowboy and Indian" movies that encouraged racial stereotypes, advanced the idea that Indigenous people were "submissive, savage, [and] mythical," and played a key role in the settlement of the west.<sup>34</sup> Such colonial records remained intact and available because it was these records that museums, archives, and galleries would collect.

Colonialism has had a very real impact on Indigenous artists and their ability to have their work shown in galleries, as well as the way in which their art was perceived by the world. Although many Indigenous communities were part of the "socially conscious sixties," artist Robert Houle notes that much art of the early sixties "did not reflect social or political conditions, but rather perpetuated the romantic stereotypes that had come to be associated with Native culture."<sup>35</sup>

In the 1960s, there emerged a group of Indigenous artists who not only overcame obstacles created by colonialism but also created the Woodland School of art, which became

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<sup>32</sup> Jeffrey Thomas, "Emergence from the Shadow: First People's Photographic Perspectives," in *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada*, eds. Carol Payne and Andrea Kunard, (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2011), 215.

<sup>33</sup> Julie Nagam, "Charting Indigenous Stories of Place: an Alternate Cartography through Visual Narrative of Jeff Thomas," in *Diverse Spaces: Identity, Heritage and Community in Canadian Public Culture*, ed. Susan Ashley, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 190-191.

<sup>34</sup> Mattes, "Aboriginal artists defying expectations," 24.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Houle, *The Art of Alex Janvier: His First Thirty Years, 1960-1990*. (Thunderbay Art Gallery, 1993), 9.

widely accepted in the art world. Artists responsible for this movement included Daphne Odjig, Jackson Beardy, Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, Joseph Sanchez, Eddy Cobiness, and Alex Janvier. While they made their voices heard, many concerns remained, including copyright issues, art markets, and the lack of resources for other Indigenous artists. Their use of “stylized animals, spirits, and landscapes...became recognized in Aboriginal communities as a vital expression of Aboriginality. As well, this movement caused excitement on the Canadian art scene, and a market developed, blazing trails for those who came after.”<sup>36</sup>

In the 1970s, Southwest and Woodland styles, as well as Inuit carvings, became increasingly popular with the public. These types of art were created because of the “pressures of the marketplace for romantic or naïve traditionally oriented art.”<sup>37</sup> In the 1980s, there were more Indigenous artists who attended art schools, and who also had “overt political stances,” which was reflected in their art.<sup>38</sup> It was because of this that their art would be rarely shown in art galleries, as “they did not fit into many people’s notions of ‘Indian Art.’”<sup>39</sup>

An example of how colonialism was still dominating the narrative of Indigenous art in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century can be seen in *The Spirit Sings* exhibit, organized by the Glenbow Museum and supported by Shell Oil Corporation. The controversy began due to the fact that the exhibit was sponsored by a company that was actively fighting a land claim made by the Lubicon Nation and extracting resources from that territory. Secondly, it was curated by non-Indigenous people, without Indigenous community consultation. Thirdly, it displayed huge amounts of cultural

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<sup>36</sup> Mattes, “Aboriginal artists defying expectations.”

<sup>37</sup> Nemiroff, “Modernism, Nationalism, and Beyond,” 35-36.

<sup>38</sup> Catherine Mattes, *Gatherings: aboriginal art from the collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2002, 6.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 7.

property that had been looted from Indigenous communities by colonial institutions.<sup>40</sup> Finally, it showcased items that were considered sacred to the Mohawk people, many of which they themselves were not allowed to access.<sup>41</sup> Whitelaw suggests that the exhibit perpetuated the image of Indigenous peoples as “primitive” and that they were a “vanishing race”.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.3 How Indigenous Art can Decolonize History in Canada

Indigenous art has been likened to storytelling; it is more than just entertainment or aesthetic art. It is a place of power, and Lenore Keeshig Tobias declares that the stories told through Indigenous art “reflect the deepest, the most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of people. Stories show how a people, a culture think.”<sup>43</sup> Heather Igloliorte also believes art connects to one’s culture: “[A]rt is not separate from the community – it is of the community and includes participation and interactivity – we come to know through observing and then joining-in, listening and looking, and take up our responsibility to participate according to our own capacities and gifts always with respect and in service of knowing self in relationship with community and nation.”<sup>44</sup>

Maxine Noel explains the intricate nature of Indigenous art:

The intricate and diverse purposes behind Native artwork go beyond mere aesthetic value, driven by social, cultural and political issues in the Aboriginal community. Perhaps the most important function of Native art is its ability to transcend language barriers, to communicate with others regardless of dialect, and to strengthen tribal relationships. This ability fostered social and political alliances with other tribes and helped Aboriginals to unite with one another

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<sup>40</sup> Steven Loft, “Reflections on 20 Years of Aboriginal Art.” (Presentation at the 2010 Visiting Trudeau Fellow, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. February 8, 2012), 18, accessed on May 23, 2018, [http://www.fondationtrudeau.ca/sites/default/files/u5/reflections\\_on\\_20\\_years\\_of\\_aboriginal\\_art\\_-\\_steven\\_loft.pdf](http://www.fondationtrudeau.ca/sites/default/files/u5/reflections_on_20_years_of_aboriginal_art_-_steven_loft.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> Dan Dibbelt, “Nations gather to protest Glenbow's Spirit Sings display,” *Windspeaker* 5:23 (1988), accessed on August 16, 2017, <http://www.ammsa.com/node/16694>.

<sup>42</sup> Whitehall, “Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada.”

<sup>43</sup> Dion and Salamanca, “inVISIBILITY,” 163.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

through their artwork. Native culture is also rich with ancient legends and stories that are considered extremely valuable, and art was a way for each tribe to illustrate its own unique tales. Every piece of artwork has a hidden or innate meaning that was passed down through generations and filtered through creative venues in order to protect it and make it more easily understandable. Spirituality is a dominant theme in Native artwork as well, with many artists inspired by the spiritual beliefs of their ancestors. These inherent values are expressed through art, providing unique variations on traditional, written religious doctrine. After the introduction of European culture into Native society, art became a way to understand changes in the people and their traditional way of life. Art became therapeutic, helping Aboriginals cope with newly created societal problems, including loss of their unique culture and language. As Canada gradually was transformed into an organized and democratic country, the Native community was forced to change as well, oftentimes struggling to exist in a society that they did not understand. Modern Aboriginal artists convey these tragic hardships, attempting to deal with their own problems, as well as the adversity experienced by their ancestors.<sup>45</sup>

In the next section of this chapter I will explore how art decolonizes Canadian history by:

- (i) sharing and preserving Indigenous cultural and historical knowledge; (ii) revealing truth and experience from an Indigenous perspective; (iii) fighting racism and resisting colonial beliefs;
- (iv) promoting awareness of problems Indigenous people face and encourage activism; and (v) offering a space for Indigenous peoples to heal themselves from the traumas of colonialism.

**i. How Art is a Cultural way of sharing and preserving Indigenous knowledge**

After residential schools, further government acts were created as a means to assimilate Indigenous people and so to affect an attempted cultural genocide. It is integral to Indigenous people's survival to be able to remember and teach their customs, traditions, languages, and ceremonies.

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<sup>45</sup> Maxine Noel, and Caitlin Noel-Drewer, "Aboriginal Art," *Aboriginal Perspective*, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www3.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?mode=theme&language=english&theme=30660&filem=&excerpt=&submode=about&expmode=1>.



Dion and Salamanca express that the artwork of ancestral teachings not only demonstrates ways of knowing and being, but that it also has the ability to look back at history “re-creating and living our interpretations of the teachings in support of a new emergence.”<sup>46</sup> Dion and Salamanca state that “Ancestral Knowledge is accessed through relationships with family, community elders and from oral and written documentation. It is also recuperated through participations in ceremony and traditional practices.”<sup>47</sup> Alena Rosen affirms that Inuit art has a large role to play as a conduit for knowledge production through storytelling. Rosen spoke to artist and leader Mattiusi Iyaituk, who stated that the Inuit people do not have a written history; it was through their carvings that their history would be recorded.<sup>48</sup> Rosen says that the relationship between Inuit art-making and Inuit knowledge has three aspects:

The first aspect of the relationship is the production of Inuit knowledge, the subject matter and narrative content of works of Inuit art...A second aspect, emphasized by Jaco Ishulutaq, is that of art as objects, the process of displaying or exhibiting works of Inuit art, and how the stories are told about the objects. Often, the stories that get told involve an examination of Inuit life before settlements, a trend which is seeing shifts in recent years. The third aspect, as indicated by Rhonda Veevee, is the transmission of Inuit knowledge, a role which places art making and exhibiting art in position to promote cultural resilience.<sup>49</sup>

Rosen offers insights from Zebedee Nungak, who outlined four areas of knowing that continue to be drawn on by Inuit artists including: their *unikkaaqtuat* (legends), their *unikkaat* (historical accounts), their *inuusirminitait* (life experiences), and their *isumaminitait* (inspired imaginations).<sup>50</sup> Rosen further examines two of these stories. First is the *Unikkaat*, which are stories that are considered educational, including stories about everyday life – hunting trips, for

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<sup>46</sup> Dion and Salamanca, “inVISIBILITY,” 168.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Rosen, “Inuit Art, Knowledge and ‘Staying Power’,” 69.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 62.

example – stories about funny things that have happened to tellers, or even stories the tellers find entertaining. Then there is the *Unikkaaqtuat 16*, which is longer, older stories that are considered “traditional”, and which are about the physical and spiritual worlds. Rosen states that “stories represent cultural memory and imaginative history of the community. They encode the values considered important for survival. Both the commonplace and the important events are understood in relation to these stories and the beliefs they express.”<sup>51</sup> Many of the stories told are about Inuit life before colonialism, including stories about hunting, ways of making a living, and camp scenes with demonstrative knowledge of technologies required for living off the land.<sup>52</sup>

Rosen concludes that:

through the telling of stories, Inuit establish themselves as authorities on their experiences, embracing both diversity and collectivity. It’s important that *unikkaat* and in particular *unikkaaqtuat* are told in the right way, and that the work of art is *suligasuatuk* or *sulitsiartuq*, expressing the truth well, endeavoring towards a truth. This is why interpretations of Inuit art that aim for cultural resilience must respect protocols of narrative memory, Inuit knowledge production, epistemology and ontology. Through art making, staying power is exercised as knowledge is voiced.<sup>53</sup>

Many Indigenous artists look back to the land and the relationships their nation had with it, for inspiration for their artwork. Indigenous artists look back on their history and share that past knowledge through art, creating a connection with their culture. Leah Fontaine, a Winnipeg artist, explores through her art a way to connect back to the land. Fontaine argues that residential schools and technology are the prime reasons why Indigenous people have lost their connection to their natural environment. Her mixed media art series *Elements* (2004) is where she “digitally merges photographs taken from a ‘ceremonial environment’ with imagery from nature to

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 111.

represent the four elements. She ironically utilizes computer technology, something that has removed us from nature, to reconnect with land and spirit.”<sup>54</sup>

A powwow is a ceremonial event created and hosted by First Nation Peoples. Kate Davis suggests that the powwow is a complex event of cultural ideas and values, as well as a place of learning and sharing knowledge. Furthermore, Davis says that the powwow is both rooted in history “yet present in the experience of urban living.”<sup>55</sup> Davis adds that this exhibition reveals “a history of art”, and though this history, “Aboriginal identity is expressed.”<sup>56</sup> Anne Hudson argues that the powwow has a generational connection that helps preserve its culture and that it is a transformative history that allows for other types of knowledge to be introduced.<sup>57</sup>

Jeffrey Thomas became interested in photographing powwows for two reasons. The first was because he wanted to demonstrate the current presence of Indigenous culture and to affirm its live and vibrant nature. The second reason is that he wanted them to be seen in “juxtaposition with his pictures of contemporary urban landscapes which he wanted to call into question the relevance of the historical pictures of Aboriginal subjects taken by white photographers.”<sup>58</sup> Thomas considers himself a photographic storyteller; his medium is the camera. His photographs engage the viewer, asking them to visually decipher the story. Storytelling is a particular skill that Hudson argues is a “tradition of talking about the world in a way that bridges the personal and collective. To engage the listener enough so he or she would retell it from his/her point of view is the goal. And so ideas are shared and develop and shape cultural perspective.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Mattes, “Aboriginal artists defying expectations.”

<sup>55</sup> Kate Davis, “Foreword to *The Powwow: an Art History*, Eds. Brenda Beckman-Long and Carolyn Cardinal, (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery, 2001), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Nagam, “Charting Indigenous Stories of Place,” 193.

<sup>58</sup> Payne and Thomas, “Aboriginal Interventions into the Photographic Archives,” 111-112.

<sup>59</sup> Nagam, “Charting Indigenous Stories of Place,” 193.

example of Thomas' storytelling skill through photography is *Buffalo Dancer at Bathurst Street Bridge*, which, according to Nagam:

provides the context for the absent Indigenous historical knowledge at the military site of Fort York. Thomas created a dialogue with this site by strategically placing the figurine to overlook and lead the viewer to the location of Fort York. The photograph stands in for his frustration that a great deal of Indigenous history has been ignored, including the important record of the Anishinaabeg warriors that fought off the Americans in the War of 1812. Fort York plays a part in the long and complex history of the creation of Canada. Thomas attempts to bring some of this history to the surface within the two above photographs because Fort York is where the peace chief stands, and it is the direction that the buffalo dancer motions towards. The buffalo dancer is bringing this space to life by referencing the past and at the same time exploring current Indigenous relationships to the space by the obvious modern attributes such as the cars, bridge, steel beams and etc.<sup>60</sup>

Nagam explains that Thomas's photographic images helps inform viewers of the complex colonial relationship between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people and circumstances, and that there are multiple perspectives and ways of understanding the different histories that belong to different geographic locations.<sup>61</sup> Nagam emphasizes that "Thomas's photographs are markers of a resistance to the dominant settler narrative. His photographs take the viewer throughout different locations in the urban space to convey the message of decolonization and to (re)claim the land as a Native space. Over time new stories are created in the same locations, allowing for growth and change within Indigenous stories of place."<sup>62</sup>

Preserving languages through art is another method of sharing knowledge. Two artists and activists, Hayden King and Susan Blight, created a project that helped promote the importance of saving Indigenous languages. This project was called *Ogimaa Mikana*, literally meaning "leader", and "road/path". They had a billboard on the corner of Queen Street West and

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 196-197.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 203-204.

Noble Street in Toronto; the billboard has black text on a white background and that says in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway), “If you want to learn something, first you must learn this.” King and Blight’s goal was to assert an Indigenous presence that is not otherwise reflected in Toronto’s culture, despite its large Indigenous population, whether it be in public art, buildings, or signs.<sup>63</sup>

These are just a few examples of how Indigenous artists are sharing their cultural knowledge, aiming to bring back to their nation’s culture that was almost eradicated by the Canadian Government’s cruel assimilationist policies.

## **ii. Art tells historical truths and fights colonial beliefs,**

There are not too many groups, communities, or individuals that can get their thoughts, their stories, or their voices heard on a national or international level. Art can be a place where a voice can be heard, a story can be told, and emotions can be shared and felt by others. With technology and the internet increasing the accessibility of information,<sup>64</sup> art can travel the world with very little cost. The truth of Indigenous history in Canada has rarely made it into official records and school books.<sup>65</sup> Falsehoods about treaties, residential schools, and Indigenous rights result in racist beliefs that have created enormous challenges for Indigenous people, who have to combat these beliefs on a constant basis. From an Inuit perspective, Rosen discusses the idea of

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<sup>63</sup> Rosanna Deerschid, “Artist Reclaims Toronto Streets Using Ojibway Language,” *CBC Radio*, May 15, 2016, accessed July 12, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/resisting-reclaiming-and-reconnecting-to-culture-1.3577136/artist-reclaims-toronto-streets-using-ojibway-language-1.3581118>.

<sup>64</sup> I acknowledge that in many northern regions, and in remote parts of Canada, many Indigenous reserves do not have access to the internet, even though it has been deemed by the Canadian government to be a necessity of life. Please see this link that maps out where there is Internet accessibility in Canada. This is obviously a separate challenge that is faced by Indigenous people when trying to share or access their knowledge. Government of Canada. “Broadband Internet Service Coverage in Canada in 2014.” Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, accessed on October 8, 2018. <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/internetcanada.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> This is beginning to change as the TRC, NCTR and MMIWG are creating official Education guides for educators to use in the curricula.

truth in Inuit culture and how it differs from western notions of Positivist truth. Western traditions of knowledge revolve around notions of truth and objectivity, while Inuit traditions of knowledge place less value on objective knowledge, with Inuit knowledge and ways of knowing coming from a frame of reference that is inherently social. Rosen maintains that “for the positivist epistemology that grounded Western thought in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, truth is based, ‘on its relation to reality. If the form of the statement and reality itself correspond to each other, the statement is true.’”<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Rosen identifies that it is the authority of the speaker that is the verification of the truth of the statement as truth comes from personal experience. Elders’ histories place more value on individual history over ideas of objectivity and generalization and this is how Inuit memory values differ legitimacy than western histories.<sup>67</sup>

Rosen affirms that “Inuit traditional knowledge is always related to the present, and the context in which it is produced... [and] that it is the balance of experience and innovation that is central to the production and transmission of knowledge.”<sup>68</sup> It is because of this that many Indigenous artists use their artwork as a platform to share their truth through their experiences and to confront colonial beliefs. Rosen maintains that Igloliorte’s concept of resilience is “in line with the Inuit worldview as communal and based on the well-being of the collective.”<sup>69</sup> Rosen argues that “the works of art engage in cultural resilience through re-enactment, bringing the old ways and the new ways of life together as a continuance, thus enacting a staying power. Inuit art serves as an historical record – of people’s life histories, of important community events – art which has arisen from experience.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Rosen, “Inuit Art, Knowledge and ‘Staying Power’,” 69.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 91-92.

<sup>70</sup> Rosen, “Inuit Art, Knowledge and ‘Staying Power’,” 94-95.

Through art, Sherry Farrell Racette brings a female Métis voice, not only to the art world, but also to Canadian history by sharing moments in Canadian history through a woman's perspective. One such example is her piece, inspired by historical sources, *Swept Away: The Story of a Fur Trade Bride*, which she described as:

an installation of three dolls posed in front of a fresco painting of a river. The dolls represent three moments in the life of a real woman—Nancy “Matooskie” McKenzie (1790–1851), the country wife of John George McTavish, a prominent nineteenth-century fur trader. Nancy became McTavish's wife at a very young age. The first doll represents a young girl dressed in her best at a trading post “ball,” presented as a potential wife. The second doll shows Nancy as the wife of the Chief Factor, the most important woman at a fur trade post, enjoying the privileges of her husband's rank and influence. Nancy was one of many women cast aside by their husbands. Her marriage was not legally recognized, and when McTavish married an English woman, Nancy was forced to marry a tradesman against her protestations. Her second marriage removed her from her former husband's social circles, but the family was further removed when her husband was transferred to Oregon territory. They traveled by York boat brigade on a transcontinental water system that included the Saskatchewan, Athabasca, and Columbia rivers. During the arduous journey, three of her children and her husband were swept overboard in two tragic accidents. The third doll prostrated with grief, covered with a shawl, represents her arrival at her destination. *Swept Away* references specific historic incidents, but also the rivers and events that swept her and thousands of women like her away from their families and home communities into relationships that crossed cultural boundaries and into a world that was continually shifting under their feet.<sup>71</sup>

Racette further shares important Indigenous female history through *Our Grandmothers Loved to Trade*. Racette described the celebratory trade blanket and what it represents:

The top of the blanket is a painted map of the Kitchizibi (Great River), the Mahamouzibi, River of Trade. Anishnabek traders traveled up and down that river, now known as the Ottawa River, for millennia and welcomed those who paddled up to trade with them (providing they brought gifts). Archaeological discoveries, such as fourteenth-century Venetian beads, bone and copper needles, and carved pendants, are evidence of the female in what is generally assumed to be a male endeavor. In the central portion of the blanket, I have surrounded a

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<sup>71</sup> Sherry Farrell Racette, “Making Stories (Artists Statement),” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 29:2/3 (January 2008): 42.

photograph of three young women wrapped in tartan shawls, with pieces of beadwork, fabric, and transcribed trade lists from the Hudson's Bay Company archives. I have beaded, embroidered, painted, and sewn on this piece. Through subject and process, I am emulating the actions of my female ancestors. This is the artistic component of my current research, which is an exploration of the role of women in the construction of new knowledge, literally stitching disparate elements into integrated wholes, creating and recreating their world. In my own way, with each stitch of the needle and every brush stroke, I insert myself into my own history—a history that has been eroded, suppressed, and forgotten—as an act of reclamation and celebration and as a means to connect myself to the generations of women who have gone before me.<sup>72</sup>

Dion and Salamanca argue that “Representing the experiences and perspectives of urban Indigenous communities through art allows for complex representations of people’s lived experiences that support learning in relationship.”<sup>73</sup> *inVisibility* was an exhibit that was installed at the John B. Aird Gallery in Toronto, where artists “clarify and complicate stories of schooling told by students, resulting in an exhibition that called on stakeholders in education and the public to think and respond.”<sup>74</sup> Indigenous artists and educators invited politicians, administrators, policy makers, and the general public to its Indigenized space, “where artists, scholars, film makers, teachers, students and parents could share their experiences and perspectives with each other, with stakeholders in education, and the broader community.”<sup>75</sup> This exhibit demonstrates what Indigenous students face in urban schools, which forces them to blend in and hide or to push back and “assert the markers and signifiers of their own Indigeneity.”<sup>76</sup> Dion and Salamanca state that this exhibit “While simultaneously creating a sensation for the audience that enlivens the students’ lived experiences ... invites the audience to go deeper and to engage,

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<sup>72</sup> Racette, “Making Stories,” 43.

<sup>73</sup> Dion and Salamanca, “inVISIBILITY,” 161-162.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*



asking viewers to complicate their understanding of what they have sensed.”<sup>77</sup> They claim that “Contemporary Indigenous art reflects our stories and our current story is one of recuperating from and speaking back to the violence of colonization, decolonizing ourselves, our communities, and institutional spaces including art institutions, museums and schools.”<sup>78</sup>

The residential school system in Canada was a gross violation of human and Indigenous rights, and an act of genocide. Many thousands of Indigenous children died and are missing from that era, and its legacy has created some of the worst conditions within Indigenous communities, including high rates of addiction, poverty, and abuse. There are many Indigenous artists who use art to make the public aware of the horrors that happened in those schools. It is difficult to face the darkness of the legacies and the traumas left with the survivors of residential schools and their descendants, and sometimes it is only through art that they can tell their truth. Marcia Chickeness links beaded designs to the traditional knowledge that relates to her family and community. In *Residential School Baby* there are additional layers of meaning embedded into a cradleboard and this is an attempt by the artist to “protect our youth from the traumatic effects of residential schooling, while recalling this painful past in Canadian history.”<sup>79</sup> Alex Janvier’s painting *Apple Factory, Sixteen going on Sixty*, and *Sweetheart Apple Deal* (1989) are just a few of 33 paintings based on the “agony, desperation and isolation of the children at residential schools.”<sup>80</sup> “The faceless portrait in the coffin in *Apple Factory* represents the children who died at school and arrived home in coffins with no explanation for their parents.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Carmen Robertson, “Clearing Paths,” in *Clearing a path: new ways of seeing traditional indigenous art*, eds. Carmen Robertson and Sherry Farrell Racette, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2009), 13.

<sup>80</sup> Houle, *The Art of Alex Janvier*,” 41.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Heather Igloliorte discusses how alcoholism, one of the legacies of residential schools, has impacted Inuit people and speaks to how artists have represented it in Inuit art. Artist Kananginak Pootoogook created a series of narrative drawings that “provide cogent examples of the ills of alcoholism in his community, despite only hinting at the origins of the problem.”<sup>82</sup> One of his drawings is about the Inuk man’s first alcoholic drink, “Even though it’s only wine he is very intoxicated. This is the beginning of alcoholism. In the image, a white man attired like a trapper looks on with detached amusement while a clearly intoxicated Inuk sloshes a glass of red wine around.”<sup>83</sup>

Annie Pootoogook<sup>84</sup> and Ovilu Tunnillie also address themes of alcoholism, spousal abuse, and negative self-image. Annie Pootoogook was known for her impressive self-reflexive, and autobiographical account of her personal challenges. In one work entitled *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles* (2001-02), “Pootoogook expresses her frustration with family alcoholism by depicting the time she gathered all the liquor bottles up and smashed them. Such bold statements are novel to Inuit art, but indicate a willingness of Inuit artists to begin the difficult process of self-examination and a desire to rebound from adversity to become fortified and more resourceful—the essence of resilience.”<sup>85</sup> J. Lynee Fraser says that Pootoogook’s work was:

Unflinching, she depicts modern Inuit life as she sees it, rather than producing the traditional scenes that people in southern Canada have come to expect. There is tradition in Pootoogook’s work, however. It is the Inuit concept of *sulijuk*, meaning when something ‘is true or real.’ Her focus is on scenes of prosaic domestic tranquility as well as domestic abuse – her own and that of other Inuit women – mental illness and alcohol abuse...Her artwork is a safe venue for her emotions, her interior spaces, to be expressed. Realized with coloured pencil on

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<sup>82</sup> Igloliorte, “Inuit Artistic Expression as Cultural Resilience,” 126.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> It is sad to note that Annie Pootoogook died a suspicious death, where her body was found in the Rideau River near Bordeleau Park on September 19, 2016. Another very sad legacy of Residential schools is the crisis of violence and death against Indigenous women and girls.

<sup>85</sup> Igloliorte, “Inuit Artistic Expression as Cultural Resilience,” 131-132.

paper, her stark images reveal Inuit life as it adapts to accommodate southern culture within a still relatively closed society.<sup>86</sup>

In these ways Indigenous artists use their artwork as a powerful tool to evoke their truths and memories of their experiences.

### iii. Art as a form of resistance to colonialism and racism

Indigenous artists have used their skills and art as a platform to fight against colonialism and have made it into a place of resistance. Dion and Salamanca discuss Indigenous art as evidence of cultural resistance. They write in their report:

Aboriginal heritage is based on spiritual heritage passed on by oral tradition. It's what defines us and has allowed us to survive as a culture. Observing, listening, remembering and transmitting are the foundations of Aboriginal education...The Aboriginal cultural identification movement has generated excitement and many nations have instituted organizations devoted to safeguarding and promoting language and culture, while artists and creators are increasingly present on every stage.<sup>87</sup>

Sonny Assu combats colonialism by altering some of settler Canadian artist Emily Carr's paintings. Assu argues that Carr's art documents the loss of culture, language, and land in Canada. Assu uses "abstract ovoid and U-shapes rooted in iconography of the Kwakwaka'wakw art style, digitally overlaid on Carr's landscapes as graffiti-esque tags," to say that "Indigenous people are still here, our struggles are still real, this land is still ours, and we're going to do what we need to do to make that known and fight for it."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> J. Lynsee Fraser, "Interior spaces, northern places: Nunavut artist Annie Pootoogook's artwork is observational and narrative," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 175:9 (October 24, 2006), accessed on July 31, 2017, <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/175/9/1100.full.pdf>.

<sup>87</sup> Dion and Salamanca, "inVISIBILITY," 164.

<sup>88</sup> Simon Cheung, "Meet the Indigenous Artist 'Tagging' Emily Carr Paintings: Sonny Assu on his exhibit *We Come to Witness*, on Now at Vancouver Art Gallery," *Megaphone Magazine*, January 3, 2017.

Dion and Salamanca discuss Heather Igloliorte's exhibit called *Decolonize me* (2012), where Igloliorte's purpose was to speak back to non-Indigenous people specifically. This art piece "participates in the examination of the long and complicated history of colonization in Canada, the emergent processes of decolonization, and the assertion of Indigenous sovereignty and cultural continuity within our borders and beyond."<sup>89</sup>

Nagam discusses artist Rebecca Belmore and how her art fights against colonization:

The artist's ability to use her body as a tool to shift the colonial gaze to a space that can communicate the link to the land and indigenous histories through stories of place. In the selected performances, Belmore's body creates a visual and embodied text that confronts the viewer with Canada's violent colonial history. Her actions and embodied practice narrate indigenous stories of place that confront the historical implications of space in Canada, which [is] colonized, racialized, and gendered.<sup>90</sup>

KC Adams, a Winnipeg Indigenous artist, fights racism with her *Perception* series.

Adams brings people together from Indigenous communities and photographs them, producing an image with two photos of one person, side by side. In one photo, the person looks angry and cold, with a racial stereotype captioned underneath. In the second photograph placed beside the first, the individual is smiling and captioned with information about who they really are. Adams hopes that this helps breakdown the racism that is rampant in Winnipeg and hopes that people start to look at Indigenous people as human beings.<sup>91</sup>

Alex Janvier was very political in his early work. Janvier used to sign his paintings with his treaty number, 287, as a political statement against the Department of Indigenous and

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<sup>89</sup> Dion and Salamanca, "inVISIBILITY," 169.

<sup>90</sup> Julie Nagam, "(Re)Mapping the Colonized Body: The Creative Interventions of Rebecca Belmore in the Cityscape," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35:4 (2011): 148.

<sup>91</sup>"Perception Photo Exhibit Tackles Aboriginal Stereotypes," *Manitoba CBC News*, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/perception-photo-exhibit-tackles-aboriginal-stereotypes-1.3002506>.

Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) (previously known as Department of Indian affairs).<sup>92</sup> Houle argued that Janvier's paintings were a depiction of the relationship between Indigenous people and the Government. Houle reflected on some of Janvier's paintings that demonstrated this relationship including: *Wounded Knee* (1973), which is about the military action taken against Indigenous reserves in South Dakota in the 1970's; *Sun Shines, Grass Grows, Rivers Flow* (1972), which reflects the Indigenous understanding of the ignored treaties that were signed by the government; *No One Understands Me* (1972), which is about "the isolation that many Indigenous people feel in the dominant Eurocentric society in North America"<sup>93</sup>; *Intertribal Indians Unlimited* (1990), which is described by Houle as representing:

the social and cultural annihilation of aboriginal peoples living on the Canadian prairies. This painting is appealing in its dynamic swirling colours and abstractions. With these, Janvier juxtaposes romanticized portraits of Native people, incorporating some of the conventional stereotype used in popular culture. However, on looking closer, the atrocities of colonial domination become obvious. The painting is a metaphor for the attitude of most Canadians toward aboriginal peoples, that is, they appreciate the exotic and beautiful aspects of Native arts and culture while denying the realities of the past and present.<sup>94</sup>

Jeffrey Thomas' form of resistance was to "challenge the silences in the archive" by changing the passive narrative that colonial photographs of Indigenous people presented to viewers, and, instead, provide an active voice.<sup>95</sup> Josephine Mills states that Thomas, through his photographic art, is "share[ing] the same history that has been left out of the official record by combining photographs of contemporary Aboriginal people with historical images and

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<sup>92</sup> Houle, *The Art of Alex Janvier*, 12.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>95</sup> Jeffrey Thomas, "At the Kitchen Table with Edward Curtis," in *Return to the land of the head hunters: Edward S. Curtis, the Kwakwaka'wakw, and the making of modern cinema*, eds. by Brad Evans and Aaron Glass (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014):128.

monuments by Europeans.”<sup>96</sup> Thomas feels that his work “illustrates how photographs by anthropologists can be re-interpreted and infused with new energy.”<sup>97</sup> Thomas collaborated with Carol Payne, a specialist in art history, to examine historic photographs of Indigenous people that were collected and saved in Canada’s national archive, (now called Library and Archives Canada or LAC).<sup>98</sup> Thomas argues that the photographs of Indigenous people in an archive should reflect the “reality of Aboriginal People, depicting all the members of our societies in every day settings,” not just the warriors and chiefs which have been the main subject from earlier photographers.<sup>99</sup> Julie Nagam notes that Thomas’s art work “unbinds Aboriginal people from the archaic notions of the past, frozen in time, by placing a figurine in the forefront of this image, and this figurine signifies an archaic, non-modern, silent, imagined idea of what Aboriginal people are. This act places both himself and Aboriginal people into the present because the figurine in the photograph acts as a self-representation.”<sup>100</sup> Nagam further evaluates Jeffrey Thomas’s photographic artwork in his *Indians on Tour* series, and argues that it contradicts what Nagam calls the static binary of Aboriginal visual representation:

Thomas whimsically plays with these dichotomies by placing plastic figurines of stereotypical Plains Indians in the foreground of each photograph, producing an image of Aboriginal people that initially seems to be consistent with archival photographs, which are bound to the Canadian master narrative. Thomas’ playful photographs re-appropriate these stereotypes by engaging the viewer head on with the absurdity of the constructed ideas, which becomes a whimsical self-representation. The placement of the plastic toys is an act of reclamation of constructed ideas that are grounded in romantic notions of the ‘Indian’ that have become incorrect representations of Aboriginal people. Unfortunately Indigenous people are stuck with these images as both fictional and real representations because the North American cultural imagination is grounded in the ideology of

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<sup>96</sup> Josephine Mills (curator), “A Necessary Fiction: My Conversation with Nicholas de Grandmaison,” Jeffrey Thomas (artist), University of Lethbridge Art Gallery (September 17-October 29, 2015), accessed on February 10, 2017, <http://www.uleth.ca/artgallery/?p=12084>.

<sup>97</sup> Thomas, “Emergence from the Shadow,” 228.

<sup>98</sup> Payne and Thomas, “Aboriginal Interventions into the Photographic Archives,” 110.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Nagam, “Charting Indigenous Stories of Place,” 195.

romanticism... Thomas's photographs challenge romantic notions of an Aboriginal person donning a plains headdress, riding a horse bare-back in the open terrain precisely because his images are re-appropriating these stereotypes within the contemporary urban environment. Thomas is trying to make sense of the romantic constructed images that have placed Aboriginal people in the archaic past; he complicates this relationship by using stereotypical caricatures of "the Indian" in the foreground. It is this placement of the figurine that puts Aboriginal people into the present and future image of the city, which directly contradicts the concepts surrounding the romantic notions of the 'Indian' that are locked in the past.<sup>101</sup>

Thomas agrees on the importance of "Indigenous stories of place in his photographs and these images provide new stories that produce new narratives to the dominant settler narrative by asserting in his own relationship to site."<sup>102</sup>

Women's roles in history have largely been minimized, and in some cases almost completely ignored. Sherry Farrell Racette fights against the notion that women don't have important roles in history. Racette has created artistic pieces that visualize interpretations of Louis Riel's diaries after being influenced by his references to women. As we live in a patriarchal world, the importance of these women in his life is often understated. *Riel's Vision of Death: 1885* (1992) "is a grouping of three paintings that depicts death as a seductive woman to take Riel from this world."<sup>103</sup> The second one, *Apparition: October 3, 1885* (1992), portrays a pregnant woman, who Racette states is "the Métis Madonna – a symbol of the birth of the Métis nation – [and who] came to comfort Riel when he was imprisoned."<sup>104</sup> Racette contends that "Riel had frequent premonitions of his death, and he envisioned Death as a beautiful woman, a

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 190-191.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>103</sup> John Boyle, Shelly Ferrell Racette and Catherine Mattes, *Rielisms*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2001, 21.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 21.

seductress. The role of Métis women in resistance and nationalism is totally overshadowed by the men on the front lines, yet Riel's own writings give evidence to their importance."<sup>105</sup>

Racette discusses artwork by Erica Lord, whose work is largely based on her awareness of Canada's conflicting histories. In the *Tanning Project* series (2005-2007), the self-portraits document text that gradually appeared on her skin: "Half Breed", draped like a necklace along the base of her collar bone, "Colonize Me" down a thigh. In "Dance Sauvage" (2005), she posed as Josephine Baker as a means of exploring a woman who exercised agency while negotiating the intersections of race, exoticism, repulsion, and desire. Erica's self-portraits often mimic the poses of erotic photography as a strategy to draw viewers closer. As Erica explains:

once they [viewers] get close, [they are] confronted with these labels and confessions that I feel have been placed on me...as a Native woman. I've been thinking about how the female body is a metaphor, you know, for colonization of the land and how just on the surface of the female body there are all these politics lying on the surface of it." The confessions and politics that Erica sees inscribed on the female body emerge from the complicated histories that have brought us to this place. But when did this begin? How was the female body viewed before it became entangled with the legacy of domination?<sup>106</sup>

These are just some examples of how Indigenous artists brought their strength and resistance in rejecting racism and colonialism to the public through their art.

#### **iv. Art promotes awareness and action (activism)**

Indigenous art is a powerful tool for bringing awareness to critical matters, and as a platform for those who want to inspire others to action. This can motivate people to action.

There are many artists in Canada whose work gained so much recognition that they gained the

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<sup>105</sup> Farrell Racette, "Making Stories," 41.

<sup>106</sup> Sherry Ferrell Racette, "'This Fierce Love': Gender, Women and Art Making," in *Art in Our Lives: Native Women Artists in Dialogue*, eds. Cynthia Chavez Lamar, Sherry Farrell Racette and Lara Evans, (Sante Fe: School for Advanced Research press, 2010), 28.



public's attention, which pushed the government towards serious action, including the creation of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Some of such art can be considered activist art. Helen Klebesadel defines activist art as, "historically specific...[and which] aims to address particular cultural, political and social concerns with a view to producing concrete social change."<sup>107</sup>

Klebesadel argues that:

the arts and culture can teach our citizens to be critical thinkers that can analyze social messages and decide for themselves what they believe; The arts are a place where we share our differing belief systems in ways that allow us to learn to understand each other, and they help us to define our values as communities, and as a larger society; The arts can be a place of original discovery and deep social criticism.<sup>108</sup>

Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin discuss the idea of "aesthetic action" which they define as "how a range of sensory stimuli – image, sound, and movement – have social and political effects through our affective engagements with them...and to what degree these impacts results in change."<sup>109</sup> The use of activist art and social media has become a popular and quick way to advocate for a cause. Erin Ynes talks about how seal hunting has been poorly and incorrectly portrayed in media, pointing out that the seal hunt is traditional and a means of survival for those who live in the arctic. Ynes created a "#selfie" movement to help inform those who did not understand – such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Humane Society International – of the custom, and how the way traditional Inuit peoples hunt

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<sup>107</sup> Helen Klebesadel, "Helen Klebesadel: A Muse and her Artist," (blog), *WordPress*, August 28, 2016, accessed on August 9, 2017, <https://klebesadel.wordpress.com/>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin, "Introduction," in *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, eds. Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 2.

seals is humane.<sup>110</sup> The movement worked, as both organizations clarified that their opposition was specifically to commercial seal hunting.

Quilts have been used as a means of sharing and motivating human rights movements, as well as to mark important human rights events, to honour those that have played important roles in fighting for human rights, and to express feelings and emotions that help spread the message of human rights campaigns.<sup>111</sup> Most of those who create these types of quilts are from marginalized communities who rarely have an opportunity to have their voices heard, let alone to be recorded for posterity. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw women increasingly fighting for their rights, especially in political affairs. Quilting was one way “women became, in fact, not only witnesses to but active agents in important historical change.”<sup>112</sup> It is argued that:

When Western European and U.S. quiltmaking was introduced into indigenous cultures by missionaries, traders, and colonists, within those Native contexts, quiltmaking both mirrored the traditions of the majority populations and was appropriated for distinctive indigenous purposes. While many individual indigenous quiltmakers have produced work that expresses personal memories of our ideas about human rights violations they and their own communities have experiences.<sup>113</sup>

Alice Olsen Williams, an Anishinaabe quilter from Curve Lake First Nation in Ontario, Canada, made a quilt called *Tree of Peace Saves the Earth* (1991) which commemorated the Oka Crisis, during which the Mohawks resisted further taking of their land. Williams incorporated the design of Mohawk teachings of the White Root of Peace into her quilt. The Mohawk

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<sup>110</sup>Erin Ynes, “Arctic Cultural (Mis)Representation: Advocacy, Activism, and Arctic Expression throughout Social Media,” *Public* 54, Indigenous Art: New Media and the Digital, eds. Heather Igloliorte, Julie Nagam, and Carla Taunton. (Winter 2006): 100.

<sup>111</sup> Mary Worall Macdowell, Lynne Swanson, and Beth Donaldson, *Quilts and Human Rights*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2016):4

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

teaching of the Great Tree of Peace is in reference to stories of a peace that existed all over the land. Williams wanted to give thanks to the Mohawk people as they fought against insults, oppression, and violence, but at the same time, brought awareness to the world about the lack of rights Indigenous people had; that their cultures, languages, and beliefs were in real jeopardy of dying out completely.<sup>114</sup>

Indigenous people have frequently engaged in environmental activism, fighting against corporations and governments. Art has been important instrument in this fight. Alex Janvier's work *Eagle Insect* (1974) addressed the effects of pollution on the animal world through the use of colour symbolism. Two black dots represented death for both the eagle and the insect, while green dots were meant "to mourn the demise of other animals already made extinct by the effects of global pollution."<sup>115</sup> A group of four young artists from Cape Dorset painted a wall mural in Montreal to make people aware of the harms of climate change. Saaki Nuna, Tommy Quvianaqtuliaq, Johnny Samayualie, and Salomonie Ashoona called their mural *Qanuqtuurniq*, meaning "to be innovative and resourceful". "It depicts a stylized face protruding from an abstract Northern landscape that includes sea mammals, caribou, an iceberg and igloo". They were inspired by Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an Inuk activist on global warming and the Inuit perspective, which she believes includes the human perspective on the story, not just land and animals.<sup>116</sup>

Indigenous artists have fought to raise awareness of the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls for well over thirty years. An astounding number of missing and

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>115</sup> Houle, *The Art of Alex Janvier*, 32-33.

<sup>116</sup> Sima Sahor Zereh, "Young Inuit Artists from Cape Dorset Unveil Mural about Climate Change in Montreal," *CBC News*, August 9, 2016, accessed July 26, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-mural-montreal-cape-dorset-nunavut-artists-1.3712470>.

murdered Indigenous women and girls have been uninvestigated by authorities. Thanks to activists and artists, as well as the families and friends of the victims, the public became aware of the crisis and began asking questions. Christi Belcourt, a Métis artist, wanted to pay tribute to the more than 800 missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. *Walking with our Sisters* consists of more than 1,700 pairs of vamps (moccasin tops) that were decorated and donated by many women. The vamps are purposely not sewn into the moccasins to reflect the unfinished lives of these women. The exhibition is travelling throughout the country to help people become aware of the crisis of violence that Indigenous women face.<sup>117</sup>

Nagam discusses the artwork *Vigil*, performed by Rebecca Belmore, and the video installation of this performance, *the named and the unnamed*, which takes place in the city of Vancouver to highlight the missing and murdered Indigenous women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in which Indigenous women make up the largest percentage of the population. The performance aims to call attention to this and "confronts the viewer with the painful and terrible feelings that each of these murdered women might have experienced." The installation takes place in a back alley in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside:

where we first see Belmore is crouching on the ground with her arms covered in ink. These inkblots appear later to be the names of all the missing and murdered women. She begins by placing red rubber gloves on her hands and vigorously attempts to wash and scrub the back alley of all its grime and dirt. Then she moves over to a bag and begins to pull out and light each tea light rapidly; she continues to lean over while individually lighting each candle in her white tank top and rugged washed-out jeans. Each flame represents one of the murdered women. A person then joins the performance and assists in her efforts to finish lighting the candles. While these candles are being lit, Belmore begins the visceral engagement with the viewer by screaming each murdered woman's name out, and then ripping a rose or flower stem through her teeth. This act continues until the viewer becomes uncomfortable with the pain Belmore is experiencing and

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<sup>117</sup>"Moccasin Tops Honour Missing, Slain Women in New Art Exhibit," *CBC News Manitoba*, March 21, 2014, accessed on June 29, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/moccasin-tops-honour-missing-slain-women-in-new-art-exhibit-1.2582162>.

communicating. Once the repetition of this act is finished, she undresses and puts on a flowing, red, ankle-length dress. Belmore washes her hands and face before she walks over to a telephone pole and begins to nail sections of her dress to the pole; she then violently rips her dress away, struggling each time as she nails more sections to the pole. She continues this act over and over again. During this act, the viewer can hear and feel her struggle and exhaustion. Eventually, her dress is shredded into a bunch of pieces, and she almost drops with exhaustion. Belmore limps over to an old pickup truck in her white tank top and underwear and leans on the truck while the song “It’s a Man’s Man’s Man’s World” by James Brown blasts out. This performance is a powerful and gut-wrenching experience that positions the colonial gendered body in the forefront in order to confront the colonial injustices experienced by indigenous women. The colonial gaze is confronted in Belmore’s performance because this artwork embodies the physical pain and suffering of the Aboriginal women who had been murdered and unaccounted for in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. It forces the viewer to become aware of Belmore’s body and the murdered bodies that she represents. Belmore’s performance becomes a tool to expose the injustices of the colonial relationship that indigenous women face in Canada. Charlotte Townsend-Gault describes Belmore’s performance as “crimes against the body, the native body, the woman’s body . . . embodied in, enacted by, or inscribed on her own body.”<sup>118</sup>

Nagam explains that these acts which:

represent both the history of indigenous women’s bodies as being objects of the British Empire and the current colonial relationship to the Canadian state. Thus, Belmore’s work becomes a site where the colonized body is present in the city of Vancouver and tells the story of the colonial relationship through the visual image of the performance. The act of Belmore screaming out each murdered woman’s name represents the connection of the colonial body to indigenous stories of place because she draws on the relationship to the networks and on the relations of land, stories, and place. Belmore’s actions confront the site to make certain that the colonized body is visible in the city.<sup>119</sup>

Artist Jaime Black created an art movement that is now quite familiar on a national level: the REDdress project, which places red dresses in different environments, indoors and outdoors, as a way to communicate to the Canadian public the critical level of violence against Indigenous

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<sup>118</sup> Nagam, “(Re)Mapping the Colonized Body,” 151-153.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 153.

women and girls in Canada. Black hopes that this project can help battle racism and create a space for voices that have largely gone unheard.<sup>120</sup> Black handed out red satin ribbons to families at the MMIWG Saskatoon hearings (November 21-23, 2017), which she stated was about “having loved ones represented and heard and to bring visibility to the issue...it makes for a really amazing conversation between people who may not be experiencing any violence in their families and people who are directly experiencing it.”<sup>121</sup>

There are other artists that have been inspired by the REDress project and have done projects with the red dress as its main theme, with Black’s consent. A 17 year old jingle dancer, Tia Wood, was inspired by the REDdress project, and called for dancers in her troupe to wear red dresses to participate in an old style jingle dance at the 2017 Gathering of Nations.<sup>122</sup> Alberta artist Terry McCue was so moved by the REDress project and the crisis of the violence against Indigenous women that he created an exhibit of sixteen paintings on canvas called *Ripples of Loss*, in which each painting is of a skeletal woman wearing a red dress, placed in scenes of what they could have become. For example, his painting *Demanding Justice* is of a skeleton woman wearing a red law robe, implying that she was destined to become a lawyer. This is McCue’s way of honouring the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Jaime Black, “REDdress Project,” Lecture. University of Manitoba, June 21, 2016.

<sup>121</sup> Laura Woodward, “Red Dress artist behind red ribbons tied around Saskatoon to address MMIWG,” November 22, 2017, *CTV News Saskatoon*, accessed on December 1, 2017, <http://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/red-dress-artist-behind-red-ribbons-tied-around-saskatoon-to-address-mmiwg-1.3690164>.

<sup>122</sup> [theindigenouamericans.6i2sru](http://theindigenouamericans.6i2sru), “Women in red: A stunning performance of the red dress jingle dancers honors missing women (Video),” *The Indigenous American*, July 29, 2017, accessed on August 3, 2017, <https://www.theindigenouamericans.com/2017/07/29/women-red-stunning-performance-red-dress-jingle-dancers-honors-missing-women-video/>.

<sup>123</sup> Gareth Hampshire, “This is what we lost: Alberta artist honours missing, murdered, Indigenous women and girls,” November 19, 2017, *CBC News Edmonton*, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-exhibit-edmonton-1.4405060>.

**v. Art provides an opportunity to heal for those who have suffered trauma and their descendants and to reconcile<sup>124</sup>**

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation did research on how art can help heal Indigenous people from trauma. The research showed that not only did art in general help with healing, but that engaging in traditional artistic practices helped artists reconnect with their Indigenous identity, and thus offered additional healing benefits.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, The Aboriginal Healing Foundation found that, “Art therapy has been a tool used by Aboriginal people since time immemorial. For Aboriginal people, arts and crafts have always been an intrinsic part of our communal culture. We used art in every part of our daily lives; from making clothing to decorating ceremonial objects.”<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, The Aboriginal Healing Foundation referenced an expert, Stephen K. Levin, who stated that art is important because “There is in the use of art a capacity for self-expression that is desperately needed by those who suffer intensely.”<sup>127</sup> Also referenced was Bill Stewart, a Yukon psychologist who said “Art can be used to express emotions safely, ideographically. People learned in residential schools that you are punished for speaking, so they

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<sup>124</sup> David Garneau, “Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation: Art Curation, and Healing,” in *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, eds. Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 30-32. It is important to note that not everyone believes in reconciliation. David Garneau points out that “saying reconciliation means that there was conciliation or a respectful relationship between Indigenous people and Canada prior to residential schools, which of course there never was.” Furthermore, Garneau notes that the term “reconciliation” is term created by churches that used it when discussing that “reconciliation is a sacrament of the Catholic Church. Garneau states that “Exhibitions of Indigenous art shown within a dominant culture space are always informed by the worldviews of the managers of those spaces. Reconciliation exhibitions held in these institutions are also likely to be designed within the colonial narrative: reconciliation rather than conciliation.”

<sup>125</sup> Aboriginal Healing Foundation, *Dancing, Singing, Painting, and Speaking the Healing Story: Healing through Creative Arts*, Research Series, (2012):21.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

lost their voice, they lost their capacity to express themselves. Art became the process of regaining voice – stories can be told in pictures, in music and in movement;”<sup>128</sup>

The work of brothers Abraham Anghik Ruben and David Ruben Piqtoukun, who are known as pioneers in the field of Inuit art, have drawn directly from their experiences as students of the residential school system to inspire their artwork. Igloliorte says that, “For the majority of students who attended residential school, the wounds inflicted by the system have left deep scars that continue to affect many aspects of their daily lives; so, from these two artists who have poured their memories and emotions into their artwork, we may be able to learn much about the power of self-expression to heal and fortify.”<sup>129</sup> Igloliorte shares that it was when Ruben met Alaskan Inupiaq artist Ron Senungetuk from the Native Arts Centre at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, that he really began his healing journey from his eleven years at spent at a residential school. Now Ruben creates artwork that brings awareness to social concerns that are important to him, including *Kittigazuit* (1999–2000), for example, narrates in the abstract a community decimated by foreign disease; and *The Last Goodbye* (2001) depicts with vivid clarity the pain he remembers his mother had experienced as she sent her two older children to residential school.<sup>130</sup>

Robert Houle’s *enuhmo andúhyaun* (2012) focuses on his memory of his time spent in Sandy Bay First Nation/*Kawikwetawankak* residential school. He has described how his art helped him “confront his ‘fear and shame’ and then overcome them”. Houle further discusses how he was “horrifically abused by both the nuns and the priests at the school” and “Although this was a means of healing for Houle, he does not consider it reconciliation. He interprets

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 27

<sup>129</sup> Igloliorte, “Inuit Artistic Expression as Cultural Resilience,” 132.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.



reconciliation as ‘an imposed Judeo-Christian concept of forgiveness that elides and excludes indigenous peoples’ concepts of memory and transformation.”<sup>131</sup>

Peter Morin is a performance artist and researcher. His performance, *this is what happens when we perform the memory of the land* at the TRC National Event in Montreal (April 2013), was about “a system of filters that encounters, organizes and acquires information. The performance, and subsequent writing, is not about providing, or achieving, any form of forgiveness for past transgressions but instead attempts to focus on mapping out the experience of reconciliation inside and outside the Indigenous body.”<sup>132</sup> Morin argues that his performance “attempts to acknowledge the strong work of residential school survivors and how their voices create a resonance with change.”<sup>133</sup>

The Living Healing Quilt project, commissioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), was a tribute to Indian Residential School Survivors, by Indian Residential school survivors. It was coordinated by Alice Williams of Curve Lake First Nation, and it brought together Inuit, Métis, and First Nation Survivors who contributed quilted squares that were sewn together and which created three quilts: *School of Shame*, *Child Prisoners*, and *Crimes against Humanity*. All four quilts share stories of loss, trauma, isolation, recovery, healing, and hope through women’s eyes. Uniquely, Williams had reached out to former residential school Survivors, their families, and their friends to create quilt blocks that reflect upon the residential school experience. The word spread and Williams had enough blocks to sew

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<sup>131</sup> Robert Houle, *enuhmo andúhaun (the road home)*, University of Manitoba School of Art Gallery, 2012, 6.

<sup>132</sup> Peter Morin, “*this is what happens when we perform the memory of the land*,” in *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, eds. Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 67.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

the first three quilts.<sup>134</sup> Each block itself is a story that conveys symbolism and emotions. One block is embroidered with flowers made by Indigenous children while at the Assiniboia Residential School in the 1960's, and which was saved by a student's mother. Another block depicts a child hanging from the rafter at the Shingwauk Industrial School, between two pine trees and above the purple wampum belt of the Iroquois Confederacy. Another square has a teal background, and it has an embroidered mother bear holding her cubs in one arm, warding off a gold Christian cross with the other. Some blocks were created by intergenerational Survivors and their blocks were no less impactful. One had a photograph of a young girl, who was the contributor's, mother stitched into the block.<sup>135</sup>

As demonstrated by these very passionate Indigenous artists, art has the ability to impassion people to action towards very important subjects such as dangers to the environment and the critical levels of violence and death among Indigenous women and girls. This is just a small sample of how Indigenous artists use this medium to not only share their truth and experiences, but to heal from the traumas they have suffered.

Colonial practices and aggressive assimilation policies severely impacted Indigenous people of Canada by nearly eradicating Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledge and leaving behind legacies of violence, alcoholism, drug addictions, broken homes, and serious mental and physical health issues. Archival records of this history, and Indigenous history in Canada in general, foreground the perspective of the Canadian government and churches. There is much work to be done to decolonize and debunk many racialized beliefs and ideas about

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<sup>134</sup> Kirsty Robertson, "Threads of Hope: *The Living Healing Quilt Project*," *English Studies in Canada* 35:1 (March 2009):87-89.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-91.

Indigenous people. Archives collecting artwork created by Indigenous artists and adding it to the historical record is a way to do that. Indigenous artists can use their art to share their culture and knowledge, to expose false history and reveal their truth and experiences, to serve as a platform for combating racism and challenging old colonial narratives, to attract attention to problems Indigenous people face and encourage people to action, and finally by providing an opportunity for Indigenous people to heal from those traumas caused by colonialism. All of these types of art created by Indigenous artists offer invaluable historical knowledge in Canadian history from Indigenous perspective, and provide unique opportunities for archives to decolonize.

## Chapter 2

### **The Role of Archives, Archivists, Archival Theory, and Human Rights and Indigenous Rights**

*“Archives have the power to privilege and to marginalize. They can be a tool of hegemony; they can be a tool of resistance.”*<sup>1</sup> – Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook

It is critical to discuss the important role archives and archivists play in how records are acquired, interpreted, and made available to the public, including those of marginalized communities. Indigenous information professional Jessica Loyer noted that “There is great trauma enabled and captured by the archive,” but went on to say that the archive also can exist as a source “of liberation.”<sup>2</sup> An archive is usually run by governments or institutions, and very rarely by the people it is asked to represent. Both as institutions and as tools of knowledge, archives are places where materials are found that contain or recount information. Therefore, it is of considerable importance to discuss the role of archives as institutions, and the role of archivists and the power they wield. It is particularly imperative to address the specific impact these positions have had on how Indigenous knowledge has been acquired by non-Indigenous Canadians, interpreted, and made available to the public. It is important to understand how the role of the archive and the archivist contribute to gaps in available records, and to the colonial representation of Indigenous history that is still observed today.

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002):13.

<sup>2</sup> Greg Bak, Tolly Bradford, Jessie Loyer and Elizabeth Walker, “Four Views on Archival Decolonization Inspired by the TRC’s Calls to Action” *Fonds d’Archives* 1 (2017): 14.

This chapter will examine different ways to decolonize archives and Indigenize history in Canada that have been proposed by archivists and other professionals across the world. This will be accomplished by examining archival theory, a variety of methods of including Indigenous people and communities in archiving processes, and implementing both international and national Indigenous protocols created for decolonizing purposes.

## **2.1 The Power of Archives: Trust, Truth and Authenticity**

Archival records are often imagined as textual records on paper. Although this is not wrong, archival records can also be photographs, videos, garments and other textiles, artifacts, artistic expressions, digital objects, and much, much, more. Rather than itemizing the forms that records take, it is more profitable to explore what archival institutions are in terms of the functions that they perform and how they preserve, translate, and communicate knowledge.

First, it is important to remember the value and power of an archive as institution. One of its powers is that it is a “trusted”<sup>3</sup> institution in terms of purportedly neutral historical knowledge, authentic records, and objective staff. A report by the Research Libraries Group and the Online Computer Library Center specified that an archive is “trusted” by designated communities when the archive provides access to their records, when they use third parties that have a good reputation, and when third parties have a similar mission as the archive. The archive must also have proven practices, a program for certification, and a mechanism for assessment and measurement. Furthermore, the archive is to be trusted when it is able to demonstrate that its records are reliable and authentic, meaning that they have not been altered since being deposited

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<sup>3</sup> I put the term trusted in quotation marks because I believe it to be a very subjective term that can mean many things in different situations.

in the archives.<sup>4</sup> In his critique of this report, Greg Bak questioned the notion that public archives are automatically trusted by the public, and that trust in one aspect of the archival record means that the entire archival institution is trusted. He argues that there are Indigenous communities who do not trust the archives in terms of theory, systems management of the records, and absences of records created by Indigenous people, but will nonetheless use archival records, often read against the grain to gain authentic information to use in legal suits such as land claims.<sup>5</sup>

Earning trust will be essential if, moving forward, archivists are to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, for it is not technical processes that earn trust but our social interactions. Archival institutions are beginning to put efforts into creating stable, long term relationships with Indigenous communities. This includes both describing new collections and re-describing old collections in respectful ways, inclusive of Indigenous cultures and perspectives. A prime example of this is Library and Archives Canada (LAC), where a \$12 million dollars has been set aside to hire seven Indigenous archivists to work in Indigenous communities, to allow LAC to place control of relevant archival materials and collections within these communities. Johanna Smith, director of public services at LAC, states “Instead of being centralized in Ottawa, materials could remain in their community. So would the copyright - a big shift and a step toward recognizing the concept of ‘cultural copyright.’ It's about saying how can we connect those dots a little bit differently to put some agency back in the hands of the individual whose voice was recorded. It's a community sense of belonging to that object”<sup>6</sup> This is

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<sup>4</sup> Research Libraries Group, “Trusted Digital Repositories: Attributes and Responsibilities an RLG-OCLC Report,” (May 2002):9-11, accessed on August 18, 2018.

<https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/activities/trustedrep/repositories.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Greg Bak, “Trusted by whom? TDRs, standards culture and the nature of trust,” *Archival Science* 16 (2016):377.

<sup>6</sup> “Archivists look to 'decolonize' Canada's memory banks,” *CTV News*, February 19, 2018, accessed on September 08, 2018, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/archivists-look-to-decolonize-canada-s-memory-banks-1.3809132>.

just one example of how archives can begin to engage in trustful relationships with Indigenous communities.

## 2.2 Power over knowledge, relationships and memory

Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook locate the power of the archive as an institution amidst the records they hold and explore how archivists themselves wield that power. Schwartz and Cook contend that archival records are all about power: “about maintaining power, about the power of the present to control what is, and will be, known about the past, about the power of remembering over forgetting,” and to “wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity, over how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and societies.”<sup>7</sup> This is done, they say, when archivists appraise and select, arrange, describe, and preserve records that they think have value. Loyer agrees with this, but goes even further by stating power is also expressed in the way opening hours are structured, by what kinds of objects and behaviors are allowed and encouraged in the public space of the archives, and by how security works. It even includes, Loyer suggests, the “types of biases in the education and credentials required for staff and the acceptable types of professional development that staff are encouraged to pursue.”<sup>8</sup>

If knowledge is power, Schwartz and Cook demonstrate how records have so much more to offer than just historical content; they also reflect the purpose of creation of the record, the desires and requirements of its creator, as well as the legal, technical, organizational, social, and cultural-intellectual context in which the creator was operating, and under which the records are

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<sup>7</sup> Schwartz and Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power,” 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Greg Bak, Tolly Bradford, Jessie Loyer and Elizabeth Walker, “Four Views on Archival Decolonization Inspired by the TRC’s Calls to Action” *Fonds d’Archives* 1 (2017):14.

accessed in the present. All of these have meaning and relevance. Schwartz and Cook discuss how resistance to power affect archives as influenced by Foucauldian thought:

Throughout time, new media of record have brought about not only changes in the storage and communication of information, but also changes in concepts of time and space, as well as in our ways of knowing, thinking about, and articulating our relationship to the world around us. Such revolutions in information technology are of interest, not only because they have changed what archives collect, but also because they have changed the role of archives in society. It is not enough to respond to the former; we must also give due consideration to the latter.<sup>9</sup>

Joanne Evans, Sue McKemmish, Elizabeth Daniels, and Gaven McCarthy reinforce this statement by explaining how both the records, and the institutions that keep them, are places of power, expressed through the laws, policies, culture, ethics, theories, and models upon which they are founded.<sup>10</sup> Evans et al. suggest “The way archival and recordkeeping professionals appraise, document and provide access to records always involves a level of activism against or support for the power structures built into existing archival infrastructures.”<sup>11</sup>

The power of the archival record is the memory it keeps – or rather, enables. Carmen Ruschinsky argues “Records and archives are not memories in themselves, but they are vehicles of memory. They are ‘touchstones’ that are partly found, partly created, singled out and imbued with meaning.”<sup>12</sup> Schwartz and Cook consider that archival records, because of the decisions archivists make through “archival appraisal, description and preservation, has essentially created the ‘character and composition’ of archival holdings, and so too societal memory.”<sup>13</sup> Yvon

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<sup>9</sup> Schwartz and Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power,” 6.

<sup>10</sup> Joanne Evans, Sue McKemmish, Elizabeth Daniels and Gaven McCarthy, “Self-determination and archival autonomy: advocating activism,” *Archival Science* 15 (2015):339.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Carmen Ruschinsky, “Meaning-Making and Memory-Making in the Archives: Oral History Interviews with Archives Donors,” *Archivaria* 84 (Fall 2017):104.

<sup>13</sup> Schwartz and Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power,” 3.



Lemay and Anne Klein, citing Eric Ketelaar, further that argument and suggest that “The simple fact that archival documents are in storage vaults does not capture the memory. It is rather by virtue of their selection, preservation and articulation that they are able to serve socially as triggers of memory and knowledge.”<sup>14</sup> These authors argue that it is the archivist’s choices around selection, arrangement and description, and discovery and access, which create memory from the record, rather than the record itself.

### 2.3 The power of influence and resistance

Michelle Caswell promotes activist archives as a form of human rights archiving. Caswell argues that archives, as institutions, need to collect records actively in order to promote rights of victims, to commemorate painful events of marginalized communities, and to promote awareness of these histories.<sup>15</sup> Absences say something as well. Adele Perry explains that the absences in the archive are not “neutral, voluntary or strictly literal... [But] are silences borne of and perpetuated by violence and radical inequality.”<sup>16</sup> Caswell suggests that record-collecting must be done from a survivor’s or victim’s perspective by promoting their rights and “must actively forge a path ahead that leads to meaningful and contentious dialogue and debate... that

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<sup>14</sup> Yvon Lemay and Anne Klein, “Mémoire, archives et art contemporain,” *Archivaria* 73 (2012):116.

<sup>15</sup> Michelle Caswell, “Defining human rights archives: introduction to the special double issue on archives and human rights,” *Archival Science* 14 (2014):207-213. There are a few human rights based archives that do this in Canada including: National Centre for the Truth and Reconciliation Archives (Accessible); Canadian Museum for Human Rights (currently not accessible, but used to inform Museum artifacts), the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Accessible by late 2018); Digital Archives for Marginalized Communities (Will be accessible at some point in the future).

<sup>16</sup> Adele Perry, “The Colonial Archive on Trial: Possession, Dispossession, and History in Delgamuukw v. British Columbia,” in *Archive Stories: Fact Fictions, and the Writing of History*, edited by Antoinette Burton, (Durham&London: Duke University Press, 2005): 345.

might favor forgetting and elision over memory and commemoration, and that helps societies acknowledge painful pasts and reconceptualize the future.”<sup>17</sup>

It is important to think about the role of the archivist as well. Ruschensky highlights the dichotomy an archive faces due to the commonly-held notion that they are an objective and impartial collecting institution. Jeannette Bastian articulates that archivists are ““documenters of society,” [who] have ‘significant roles to play’ in representing, transmitting, and providing access to knowledge of events, places, and persons to be remembered.”<sup>18</sup> Archivists actively decide the records that are accepted into the archives, how to describe them, the language used, and who gets access to them. Tom Nesmith also insists that archivists play a major role in determining the meaning of the record by stating “that archives impose a vast temporal extension of the meaning-making process, and that archivists intervene constantly to direct an often forgetful, neglectful society’s attention to the records, archivists arguably have a greater impact on the evidence the record conveys than the initial or literal inscribers do. In other words, archives may actually make a greater contribution to the creation of the record than the inscriber.”<sup>19</sup>

Archivists’ voices are heard loud and clear in the choices that archival institutions have made through the appraisal of records collected for the institution, through the descriptions of its records, and how the records are made available to audiences. Most of these voices are not representative of the communities and records they serve. There are some exceptions: for

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<sup>17</sup> Michelle Caswell, “Defining human rights archives: introduction to the special double issue on archives and human rights,” *Archival Science* 14 (2014): 209. These suggestions are in line with United Nations Joint-Orientlicher Principles, which I will discuss in more detail later.

<sup>18</sup> Carmen Ruschensky, “Meaning-Making and Memory-Making in the Archives,” 124. These views are also expressed by Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook in Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002):1-19

<sup>19</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives,” *The American Archivist* 65, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 35.

example the Lesbian Herstory Archive in New York, New York, trains lesbians from its community to have the skills and knowledge to be the archivists of their archives, thereby “breaking the elitism of traditional archives.”<sup>20</sup> The American Mukurtu is a digital content management system that works specifically with Indigenous communities to create Indigenous archives for their communities. Mukurtu leaves all the choices, descriptions, and accessibility of the records in the hands of the community, truly giving them their own control and voice in their records.<sup>21</sup> As discussed earlier, LAC is in the process of hiring seven Indigenous people as archivists to work in their own communities, to preserve languages and oral stories.<sup>22</sup> These are some of the exceptions that are currently out there.

#### **2.4 “Archival Captive” Revisited: Colonial Records and Indigenous Peoples.**

As the role of an archive and archivist has been briefly discussed, and how the power they have over information and knowledge has been explored, it is now essential to see how archival power has shaped Canadian historical records, specifically with respect to Indigenous peoples.

When talking about Indigenous archives and records, it is important to acknowledge differences between Indigenous and Western worldviews and social memory practices. Rita-Sophia Mogyorosi argues that there are important differences between western social memory, focused on archival records, and Indigenous social memory. Indigenous social memory is experienced, “through their stories, their internal and external landscapes of being and

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<sup>20</sup> The Lesbian Herstory Archives, “History and Mission,” accessed on June 27, 2018, <http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org/history.html#mission>.

<sup>21</sup> Mukurtu, “Showcase,” see the Peoples Plateau Project, Voices of Amiskwaciy, and Catawba Indian Archives as some of the examples of this Indigenous led archives, accessed on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, <http://mukurtu.org/showcase/>.

<sup>22</sup> Library and Archives Canada, “Jobs,” accessed June 27, 2018, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/news/Pages/2018/indigenous-archivists-needed.aspx>.

becoming.”<sup>23</sup> Mogyrosi suggests that “there are no boundaries and no beginning or end points. In short, there is no periodization of history.”<sup>24</sup> Also, Mogyrosi mentions other differences including the fact that Indigenous people rely upon both intangible experiences (oral traditions, songs, dances, ceremonies) and tangible objects (wampum belt, totem pole, pictograph, inuksuk’s, and writings on birch bark) using their own methods and protocols to preserve their knowledge.

In a discussion about ethical research involving Indigenous communities, Kristen Thorpe also addresses differences in Indigenous social memory by reminding us that Indigenous social memory relies upon a “living archive”. Thorpe “refers to an Aboriginal community archive [as] containing both tangible and intangible records. The living Aboriginal archive holds records that may be transmitted orally by members of the community or passed on through art, dance or storytelling – that is, they are not captured in particular physical or digital form but are transmitted through interaction and connections between people.”<sup>25</sup>

What Thorpe calls the “living archive” of Indigenous community has been under threat of erasure ever since contact. Mogyrosi argues that, as a result of Euro-Canadian mistrust of Indigenous ways of living in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Indigenous memory, knowledge systems, and culture had come under direct threat through assimilation policies of literacy programs, Christianity, discrimination, racism, residential school system, diseases, dispossession

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<sup>23</sup> Rita-Sophia Mogyrosi, “Coming Full Circle? Aboriginal archives in British Columbia in Canadian and international perspective.” (Master’s thesis, University of Manitoba, 2009), 17-18. It is also important to note that ways of archiving can be affected by different Indigenous cultures, languages, customs, religions, celebrations, locations, communities and beliefs.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>25</sup> Kirsten Thorpe, “Aboriginal Community Archives: A Case Study in Ethical Community Research,” in *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, eds. Anne J. Gilliland, Sue McKemmish, and Andrew J Lau, (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2017), 900-934. They speak of projects like: The Trust and Technology Project (2004–2008), and The Who Am I? Project (2008–2012) as examples of participatory archiving.

of lands and geographic displacement.<sup>26</sup> Mogyrosi suggests that one challenge of creating an “Indigenous archive”<sup>27</sup> is that most of the time it is created reactively, fighting for something like treaty rights, land rights, or human rights. Such “Indigenous archives” are intended to be “recognized” and “taken seriously” in the eyes of Euro-Canadians. Indigenous people were forced to create an archive “in the context and the eyes of legislation, courts of law, and Euro-Canadian Society itself,...to make headway, to be recognized, to simply prove they did in fact exist and occupy certain lands before the arrival of Europeans, they had to develop...Euro-derived archives.”<sup>28</sup>

William T. Hagan argues that the bulk of Indigenous records in non-Indigenous archives were inscribed by non-Indigenous people, including reports, journals, letters and diaries. He notes that most of these records are not sympathetic to Indigenous peoples’ points of view, even though they may be very useful to Indigenous peoples in uncovering their histories and asserting their rights. “The historical Indian may be the captive of the archives, but the key to those archives is in the hands of non-Indian historians and ethno-historians.”<sup>29</sup> Terri Janke and Livia Iacovino also argue that Indigenous people were excluded from making these records, and that the law granted power to record history to record makers. This meant that the record makers could ultimately decide the use and presentation of the records concerning Indigenous people. Therefore, Indigenous people would have to fight very hard to be included in the process and to have any input regarding their own records.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Mogyrosi, “Coming Full Circle?,” 29-30.

<sup>27</sup> Here I am not discussing the idea of a traditional Indigenous archive, and the complexity of what that would even mean, but rather, discussing the need for Indigenous people and communities to gather archival records for specific purposes.

<sup>28</sup> Mogyrosi, “Coming Full Circle?” 70.

<sup>29</sup> William T. Hagan, “Archival Captive – The American Indian,” *The American Archivist* 41:2 (1978):138.

<sup>30</sup> Terri Janke and Livia Iacovino, “Keeping cultures alive: archives and Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights,” *Archival Science* 12 (2012): 161.

The perspectives of Indigenous people are poorly represented in Canadian archives. Records were collected on Indigenous people by the Canadian government through the *Indian Act*, residential schools system, and treaties, as well as from non-governmental sources like journals, diaries and reports kept by missionaries and by employees of the Hudson Bay Company, the North West Company and by other corporations such as Manitoba Hydro. These records often were collected without Indigenous consultation, and without Indigenous voices; therefore these historical records were decontextualized. Hagan notes that some Indian agents would purposely write incorrect accounts to demonstrate how well they were doing, but when a new agent would come in, he would write a more accurate and totally different account. Further complicating the historical record, Indian agents would witness various ceremonies or protocols, misinterpret them, and report back misinformation. For example, “In the ceremony, a warrior would demonstrate his willingness to make sacrifices in the common interest by casting off his dearest possession, a favorite wife. The agent, however, failed to appreciate the significance of the warrior's action and saw in it only evidence of immorality and lack of stability in Indian marital relations.”<sup>31</sup>

Sue McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead and Lynette Russell address these types of records and explain that “these are the products and consequence of colonization, dispossession, removal and the relentless surveillance to which Indigenous people were subjected, but they are also potentially valuable sources for the recovery of Indigenous knowledge.”<sup>32</sup> The dilemma with these records is that they are considered by many to be primary records, which are housed in “official” or “government” archival institutions. This classification of the documents led many

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<sup>31</sup> Hagan, “Archival Captive,” 137.

<sup>32</sup> Sue McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead, and Lynette Russell, “Distrust in the archive: reconciling records,” *Archival Science* 11 (2011): 226.

people to believe that the information contained in these records is the objective, exhaustive and complete truth. This affords the documents inappropriate power, influence, and weight, both in the court systems and in the eyes of the public. Hagan suggested one of the ways to mitigate this is to practice what is now called reading against the grain, which helps to overcome the lack of Indigenous perspectives in these records. This approach has had some success, Hagan stated, not only for some sense of “historical identity...self-image and psychological well-being,” but also for validating millions of dollars of land claims.<sup>33</sup>

Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows remarks that Indigenous cultures use representations like pictographs, wampum belts, masks, totem poles, button blankets, birch bark scrolls, burial disturbances, songs, ceremonies, and oral stories to draw implications from the past.<sup>34</sup> Borrows knows that many settlers struggle to believe that oral stories are truthful. To discern truth from oral stories, Borrows suggested looking for a degree of consistency within the stories and accounts; speaking to people of different generations; speaking to people from different but closely associated communities; and comparing oral accounts to written accounts of the same event “to show where one or the other may have gaps, errors, or other deficiencies as proof of past events.”<sup>35</sup> Borrows examines the difficulties of admitting oral history as testimony in the Canadian courts, as they do not conform to evidentiary standards, but contends that the *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* case demands that “although the doctrine of aboriginal rights is a common law doctrine, aboriginal rights are truly *sui generis*, and demand a unique approach to

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<sup>33</sup> Hagan, “Archival Captive,” 139.

<sup>34</sup> John Borrows, “Listening for a Change: The Courts and Oral tradition,” *Osgood Hall Law Journal* 39:1 (Spring 2001):18.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

the treatment of evidence which accords due weight to the perspective of aboriginal peoples."<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore,

the Court instructed judges to adapt the laws of evidence so that Aboriginal perspective on their practices, customs and traditions and on their relationship with the land, are given due weight. This approach allows a judicial decision maker to give oral histories 'independent weight' and place them "on an equal footing with the types of historical evidence that courts are familiar with. The Court noted that these modifications to the rules of evidence were necessary to the litigation of Aboriginal rights if to do otherwise would 'impose an impossible burden of proof on Aboriginal peoples, and render nugatory any rights they have' because 'most Aboriginal societies did not keep written records.'<sup>37</sup>

Adele Perry offers judgment with specific references to the archival records and use of oral history in the *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* court case, acknowledging that archival records play significant roles in Indigenous land claims, and that the absence of archival records, specifically treaties, have required compensation through "negotiating through 'competing sets of archives and ways of interpreting them.'"<sup>38</sup>

Raymond Frogner, an archivist who studied the North Saanich Treaty of 1852, claims that treaties have huge legal and documentary weight, but also "Canadian Aboriginal treaties number among the most politically charged archival documents to represent Canada's collective identity."<sup>39</sup> Frogner makes reference to the many debates that surround treaties, which he argues reveal that the "strong and conflicting opinions indicate the wide spectrum of legal and political values attached to, and enflamed by, these cultural representations of colonial experience."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.,22-24.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Perry, "The Colonial Archive on Trial," 325.

<sup>39</sup> Raymond Frogner, "'Innocent Legal Fictions': Archival Convention and the North Saanich Treaty of 1852," *Archivaria* 70 (Fall 2010): 48.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.



Perry specified that Judge Allan McEachern, overwhelmed by the amount of testimony and archival paper records in the trial (approximately 56,000 pages) along with “the tight bonds between literacy, archives, and colonial authority in the making of history are reinforced by and reflected by the legal traditions of the British common law, most especially by the hearsay rule.”<sup>41</sup> Perry notes that the “hearsay rule deems information not given directly by a witness unworthy of legal consideration. The result is that oral tradition, which necessarily circulates between individuals and generations, is, for the purposes of the courts, invalid.”<sup>42</sup> In his final judgment, McEachern ruled against the admissibility of oral tradition because the “adaawic and kungax lacked a consistent method, mixed myth and histories, contained too many historical anomalies and inaccuracies, and often were at odds with each other and scientific evidence.”<sup>43</sup>

In the later first decade in 2000s, Drew Mildon noted that, due partly to the Delgamuukw case, the courts were no longer arguing whether to accept oral history as testimony, but rather how much weight to give it. It is acknowledged that oral testimony can offer evidence of ancestral practices and their significances that would not otherwise be available.<sup>44</sup> Mildon quotes Justice Moxley who asserts, “the oral history won’t have weight unless it is proved that oral history has an authoritative place in the traditions of that specific culture...Judges in Canada cannot take judicial notice of the unique cultural traditions of each of the various First nations in Canada that give authenticity to their oral history.”<sup>45</sup> Making oral tradition admissible in court is only one phase in a longer and continuing struggle to have Indigenous social memory accorded respect equal to non-Indigenous archival memory.

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<sup>41</sup> Perry, “The Colonial Archive on Trial,” 334.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.,336.

<sup>44</sup> Drew Mildon, “A Bad Connection: First Nations Oral Histories in Canadian Courts,” in *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory, Practice, Ethics* (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008):84-85.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 86.

Chief William, speaking at the *Tsilhqot'in v. Canada* trial notes “The problem is that story, legend, law, and ritual do not break down into neat packages and it may require years of culture-specific training to differentiate.”<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Justice Vickers, seeing the Indigenous peoples point of view, also notes the complications of notions of truth in textual evidence. He correctly acknowledges that written evidence can be inaccurate as well, and that disrespect for Indigenous people was a common theme that ran through historical documents.<sup>47</sup>

Frogner cites Mary Ann Pylypchuk’s assessment of the courts’ use of Indigenous evidence, out of context, and in fragments, which “undervalues and misrepresents Aboriginal mnemonic traditions.”<sup>48</sup> Frogner also notes Shauna McRanor’s evaluation which says “since the dominant juridical system of Canada is firmly rooted in the Western model, the rights and privileges of First Nations – as these are conceived by aboriginal rules – have been seriously compromised by alien laws which devalue their oral records as proof for establishing their facts.”<sup>49</sup> Frogner declared that “archival interpretations demonstrate that the archival record of the colonial experience is a relativized truth, and only an Aboriginal interpretation of the document can address this cultural relativism.”<sup>50</sup> Frogner further declares that the unclear juridical context of Indigenous colonial records, maintaining that “uncertainty over the legal jurisdiction in colonial societies complicates the first step in the description of colonial records. To respond, archivists must describe colonial records within the Aboriginal context of their creation as a contextual balance to their traditional description. It is possible to juxtapose a

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>48</sup> Frogner, “Innocent Legal Fictions,” 50.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

profile of contemporaneous Aboriginal societies with our descriptions of traditional, colonial records.”<sup>51</sup>

This historical process of archiving has proven itself to be implicated within the framework for colonial power. Mick Gooda indicates this in his critique about archives containing Indigenous artifacts and knowledge, saying “Laws and practices to protect these records, for example through intellectual property regimes, are informed by Western thought and legal traditions. This has impeded our peoples’ ready access to these records and repositories of culture and denied our structures of ownership, control and regulation.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, Indigenous people were not only excluded in the creating process of the records concerning them, they have also revealed that they also do not feel very welcome in archives<sup>53</sup>, or they cannot access the records because they do not have access to the internet.<sup>54</sup> This means they are not able to answer or respond to the information and knowledge shared about them and their history.

This summary of the colonial state of Indigenous historical records in Canadian archival institutions is a foundation for exploring how archival theory might advance the decolonization of Indigenous archives. Hagan emphasizes that archivists have the power to “facilitate or frustrate” the user, because materials are so “varied and vast” that only those familiar with the holdings can exploit them fully. Furthermore, Hagan states that the lack of user access to stacks, the rationing of materials (although he understands why), and intimidating surveillance and

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>52</sup> Mick Gooda, “The practical power of human rights: how international human rights standards can inform archival and record keeping practices,” *Archival Science* 12 (2012): 143.

<sup>53</sup> See Hagan, “Archival Captive ,”

<sup>54</sup> Many reserves or communities in the north still do not have great internet services, see Government of Canada, “Broadband Internet Service Coverage in Canada in 2014,” *Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission*, accessed on October 08, 2018, <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/internetcanada.htm>.

security in the reading room all lead to heavy dependency of the user on the archivist, who only rarely is an Indigenous person.<sup>55</sup>

## 2.5 Archival Theories

Decolonizing archives requires postmodern thinking on the ways archivists conceive and handle their records. For most of their history, Canadian archival institutions have not been overly sensitive to questions of how Indigenous communities are represented in archival records, in the representation of those records through archival description, or in the systems of access that allow researchers to discover and make use of the records. Despite these failures of archival practice, it may be that evolving notions of archival theory provide a way forward. In this, the introduction of postmodernism into archival theory has been key. In the 1990s archival thinkers including Brien Brothman, Verne Harris, Tom Nesmith, Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook began to explore how postmodernism might be incorporated into archival theory and practice.

Brothman argued that “For archivists to abstain from cultural awareness and criticism is tantamount to professional irresponsibility. It amounts to a shirking of the unique and positive task that each generation of archivists has, or should have, of continually replenishing its intellectual resources and reaffirming its cultural station.”<sup>56</sup> In 2001 Cook suggested “postmodernism seeks to emphasize the diversity of human experience by recovering marginalized voices in the face of such hegemony, and hence its emphasis across a whole range of academic disciplines on issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and locality.”<sup>57</sup> According to Cook, postmodernism:

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<sup>55</sup> Hagan, “Archival Captive,” 142.

<sup>56</sup> Brien Brothman, “Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice,” *Archivaria* 32 (1991): 90.

<sup>57</sup> Terry Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives,” *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001): 17.

seeks, in short, to de-naturalize what society unquestionably assumes is natural, what it has for generations, perhaps centuries, accepted as normal, natural, rational, proven – simply the way things are. The postmodernist takes such ‘natural’ phenomena – whether patriarchy, capitalism, the Western canon of great literature, or the working of archives – and declares them to be socially or culturally ‘constructed’ and thus in need of deconstruction and reformulation to reflect better the diversity of the present time.<sup>58</sup>

Brothman posits that archivists need to drop the appearance of being “neutral catalysts, as supports and servants” and to be critically engaged in cultural self-analysis, understanding that administrative history and practice are “evolving social and historical phenomena” with respect to the records.<sup>59</sup> Cook believed that the postmodern archivist must search for deeper related meanings behind the archival record, look for the context behind the content, look at the administrative structures and relationships that helped create the record, and understand the times and places where it was created.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Tom Nesmith, Terry Cook, and others wrote a series of articles that articulated a clear vision of what would come to be known as archival postmodernism. Nesmith suggests that postmodernism “helps us to see that contrary to the conventional idea that archivists simply receive and house vast quantities of records, which merely reflect society, they actually co-create and shape the knowledge in records, and thus help form society’s memory.”<sup>60</sup> Archival postmodernism has allowed archivists create new methods, protocols, and practices that contribute to the decolonization of archival records and institutions.

These ideas rendered problematic the traditional notion of archivists and archives as objective and impartial, mere collectors, an idea promoted by early archivists like Hilary

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>59</sup> Brothman, “Orders of Value,” 90-91.

<sup>60</sup> Nesmith, “Seeing Archives,” 27.

Jenkinson, and maintained by many since.<sup>61</sup> This can no longer be our stance. Since archiving is an inherently and inevitably political action, one that is shaped by personal biases and contexts, archival theorists such as Andrew Flinn and Ben Alexander have argued for activist archiving (or to be an activist archivist). Flinn and Alexander argue that activist archiving is when an archive or archivist rejects the idea of collecting as a neutral or objective function, but rather actively documents activist groups or campaigns as an “integral part of their social movement campaign.”<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Alycia Sellie, Jesse Goldstein, Molly Fair and Jennifer Hoyer promote activist archiving saying that it helps marginalized communities by forging “new relationships between parallel histories, reshape[ing] and reinterpret[ing] dominant narratives, and challenge conceptions of the archive itself.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, “Beyond maintaining a space (whether virtual or physical), activist archives promote community empowerment and social change.”<sup>64</sup>

Krista McCracken suggests that grassroots archiving has real potential to complement and enhance (Indigenous) knowledge in traditional archives. “Groups who have been marginalized by mainstream society and mainstream archival repositories have found that the establishment of community archives can contribute to greater self-representation and historical authority. Community archives can have an ‘impact on exclusion and perhaps even contribute to the healing trauma of alienation and disempowerment.’”<sup>65</sup> McCracken mentions Jeannette Bastian’s argument that access to archival records plays a crucial role in community memory and

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<sup>61</sup> See Terry Cooks article for further history of archival thinking. Terry Cook, “What is past is prologue: a history of archival ideas since 1898 and the future paradigm shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17-63.

<sup>62</sup> Andrew Flinn and Ben Alexander, “‘Humanizing an inevitability political craft’: Introduction to the special issue on archiving activism and activist archiving,” *Archival Science* 15 (2015):332.

<sup>63</sup> Alycia Sellie, Jesse Goldstein, Molly Fair and Jennifer Hoyer, “Interference Archive: a free space for social movement culture,” *Archival Science* 15 (2015):454.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.

<sup>65</sup> Kirsta McCracken, “Community Archival Practice: Indigenous Grassroots Collaboration at the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre,” *The American Archivist* 78:1 (2015):182.

constructs of identity. Through such access the community directly interprets its own past, which can include written accounts as well as oral traditions, public commemorations and artifacts.<sup>66</sup>

There are other ways archives can work with communities and partners. Mary Stevens, Andrew Flinn, and Elizabeth Shepard suggest that archives could work with source communities, especially those that are marginalized, to share in the responsibility for the management of their own collection as a way of ensuring of operating in a less hegemonic way.<sup>67</sup> A larger institution can offer training in preservation techniques, digitization of materials, documentation skills, understanding of copyright issues, and provide ways to raise money in an attempt to give voice to the marginalized through archiving and to support community archiving. For example, marginalized people could benefit from understanding the various grants available and how they could be used as tools to teach others about them and their history. This approach helps build a healthy reciprocal relationship with the community.<sup>68</sup>

A branch of thinking from community archiving is participatory archiving. This theory invites Indigenous people and communities to add their knowledge to archival records in which they have an interest. Participatory archiving is not a new subject.<sup>69</sup> Stacy Wood, Kathy Carbone, Marika Cifor, Anne Gilliland, and Ricardo Punzalan assert that it adds context, authenticates and

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>67</sup> Mary Stevens, Andrew Flinn and Elizabeth Shepard, "New frameworks for community engagement in the archive sector: from handing over to handing on," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16 (2010):61.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>69</sup> See Isto Huvila whose article introduces important ideas in the early 2000's. Isto Huvila, "Participatory Archive: towards decentralized curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualization of records management," *Archival Science* 8 (2008): 15-36;

adds content to records. This helps the community to use archival records to better “comprehend the past, understand the present, and prepare for the future.”<sup>70</sup>

Many archivists have engaged in discussions around participatory archiving.<sup>71</sup> Jesse Boiteau explains that participatory archiving “enables the public to help shape the records in a way that is rarely done in larger archival institutions”, but requires that “archivists must surrender a certain amount of archival authority to the user.”<sup>72</sup> Boiteau recognizes with specialized archival records, like those at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), participatory archiving will be “especially important to help document the multiple voices of those who access the records related to the Residential School system. By doing so, the NCTR could layer multiple experiences and narratives to a single record for a more balanced and contextually rich document, photograph, or video.”<sup>73</sup> A good example of creating multiple

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<sup>70</sup> Stacy Wood, Kathy Carbone, Marika Cifor, Anne Gilliland and Ricardo Punzalan, “Mobilizing records: re-framing archival description to support human rights,” *Archival Science* 14:3 (October 2014): 408.

<sup>71</sup> See Danielle Allard and Shawna Ferris, “Antiviolence and Marginalized Communities: Knowledge Creation, Community Mobilization, and Social Justice through a Participatory Archiving Approach,” *Library Trends*, 64:2 (Fall 2015):360-383; Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan, “Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections,” *Archivaria* 63 (Spring 2007): 87-101; Anna Maria Tammara, “Participatory Approaches and Innovation in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums”, *International Information & Library Review*, 48:1 (2016): 37-44; Victoria Szabo, Stefania Zardini Lacedelli & Giacomo Pompanin, “From Landscape to Cities: A Participatory Approach to the Creation of Digital Cultural Heritage”, *International Information & Library Review*, 49:2 (2017): 115- 123; Gregory Rolan, “Agency in the archive: a model for participatory recordkeeping” September 2017, Volume 17, Issue 3, pp 195–225; Cassie Findlay, “Participatory cultures, trust technologies and decentralisation: innovation opportunities for recordkeeping”, *Archives and Manuscripts* 45:3, (2017) 176-190; Jon Newman, “Revisiting Archive Collections: Developing Models for Participatory Cataloguing,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* Vol. 33, No. 1, April 2012, 57–73; Livia Iacovino, “Shaping and reshaping cultural identity and memory: maximising human rights through a participatory archive”, *Archives and Manuscripts*, 43:1(2014) 29-41; Michelle Caswell, “Participatory archive: towards decentralised curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualisation of records management,” *Archival Science* 8 (2008) 8:15–36; Michelle Caswell & Samip Mallick, “Collecting the easily missed stories: digital participatory microhistory and the South Asian American Digital Archive”, *Archives and Manuscripts*, 42:1, (2014) 73-86; Jesse Boiteau, “The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: the pursuit of Archival Decolonization,” M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2017, [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/bitstream/handle/1993/32225/boiteau\\_jesse.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/bitstream/handle/1993/32225/boiteau_jesse.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

<sup>72</sup> Jesse Boiteau, “The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Pursuit of Archival Decolonization,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2017), 92.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 93.



descriptions through a participatory archival project is the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal.<sup>74</sup> Through this project, Indigenous communities were able to add traditional knowledge to archival descriptions, and to add tags and comments to digital photographs. The community was able to make decisions regarding levels of access and flag culturally sensitive material.<sup>75</sup> Although Boiteau highlighted the benefits that come with participatory archiving, he also notes challenges archives have faced when implementing participatory archival approaches, such as financing, availability of appropriate software (and software support), and inability to find people who combine traditional knowledge with specialized skill sets.<sup>76</sup>

Archival description privileges the archivist's voice, which can dominate marginalized voices. Ruschensky called for a method that could overcome the archivist voice as the one users hear in the descriptions. Ruschensky concluded that an interview with the donor of a record could be attached to the donation in an attempt to accurately include and represent different voices. Ruschensky felt that having donors discuss their records would address concerns around accountability, impartiality, power and agency, participation and community, and finally memory and representation.<sup>77</sup>

Ruschensky's proposal of introducing the donor's voice as a means of reducing the power of the archivist's voice in archival description may work very well in relation to working

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<sup>74</sup> Mukurtu, Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, "The Plateau Peoples' Web Portal is a collaboration between the Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, Plateau Center, and College of Arts and Sciences at Washington State University and the Spokane Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation," accessed on March 5, 2018, <http://mukurtu.org/project/the-plateau-peoples-web-portal/>.

<sup>75</sup> Stacy Wood, Kathy Carbone, Marika Cifor, Anne Gilliland and Ricardo Punzalan, "Mobilizing records: re-framing archival description to support human rights," *Archival Science* 14:3 (October 2014): 411.

<sup>76</sup>Boiteau, "The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Pursuit of Archival Decolonization," 118-124.

<sup>77</sup>Ruschensky, "Meaning-Making and Memory-Making in the Archives," 106-107.

with Indigenous materials because it could add an Indigenous perspective on the archival record. Why is this important? Wood et al. insist it is the archives' responsibility to be accountable and transparent so survivors of repressive regimes can trust that the archival institutions will not extend colonial repression. Furthermore, Wood et al. advocate, "that archival description plays [a role] in elucidating to the user the reliability and continued authenticity of the materials in the custody of the archives. Many records survive incidentally or accidentally but are crucial in human rights proceedings and can be used effectively in human rights contexts...description can aid in indicating how materials might have survived."<sup>78</sup> Archival postmodernism, activist archiving, grassroots/community archiving, free training from larger institutional archives, participatory archiving and adding donors voices to their archival records are all methods to help decolonize archival records. That being said, there is more archives can do to inspire greater change within their archive.

## **2.6 International Principles, Human Rights and Indigenous Protocols**

There has been a spotlight, both nationally and globally, on the treatment of Indigenous people in their own country, and how their Nation's official records reflect their Indigenous history, or more accurately, not reflect the truth of their history. There have been international and national groups that have published Indigenous protocols to facilitate decolonization in archives. The decolonization process can be advanced with policies, procedures, methods, and protocols that support best practices when handling and caring for Indigenous materials and knowledge.

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<sup>78</sup> Wood et al., "Mobilizing records," 412.

## 2.6 (a) The Joinet-Orentlicher Principles (UNJOP)

Although they are not widely referenced in the archival literature, the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles on the Preservation and Access to Archives Bearing Witness to Human Rights Violations have enormous implications for archives and archival theory. In 1997 French Jurist and human rights expert, Louis Joinet submitted a report about records describing human violations and abuses, and about how they should be protected:

- (a) Protective and punitive measures against the removal, destruction or misuse of archives must be put in place, (b) Establishment of an inventory of available archives, including those kept by third countries, must be undertaken in order to ensure that they may be transferred with those countries' consent and, where applicable, returned; (c) Adaptation to the new situation of regulations governing access to and consultation of archives, in particular by allowing anyone they implicate to add a right of reply to the file.<sup>79</sup>

Essentially, Joinet proposed that an archive must: facilitate access to relevant records for the marginalized or violated community; create measures for preservation of these records; build relationships between archives, the courts and extrajudicial commissions of inquiry; and take measures relating to the management of the archive with respect to restoration or transition to democracy and/or peace.<sup>80</sup>

It was subsequently noted that the principles needed updating in light of international law, a task to which the United Nations appointed Diane Orentlicher.

Orentlicher characterized human rights archives as:

collections of documents pertaining to violations of human rights and humanitarian law from sources including: (a) national governmental agencies, particularly those that played significant roles in relation to human rights

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<sup>79</sup> Nathan Mnjama, "The Orentlicher Principles on the Preservation and Access to Archives Bearing Witness to Human Rights Violations," *SAGE Publications*, 24: 3 (2008): 215.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

violations; (b) local agencies, such as police stations, that were involved in human rights violations; (c) state agencies, including the office of the prosecutor and the judiciary, that are involved in the protection of human rights; and (d) materials collected by truth commissions and other investigative bodies.<sup>81</sup>

The resulting Joinet-Orentlicher Principles attest to the power of archival records and outline the responsibilities of archivists that result, including the need to provide avenues for victims to access records about themselves created by state, military, intelligence, and police services. Furthermore, The Joinet-Orentlicher Principles also push for penalties for those who falsely conceal, destroy, or remove important records from archives, especially those from agencies that are responsible for the protection of human rights and security agencies.<sup>82</sup>

### **2.6 (b) OCAP**

OCAP was established in 1998 during a meeting of the National Steering Committee (NSC) of the *First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey*, a precursor of the *First Nations Regional Health Survey*. OCAP, which stand for ownership, control, access and possession, is a First Nations response to colonialism. OCAP is a mechanism for First Nations to regain control over information and research created and collected about them. The first principle, ownership, means that the First Nation person or community has the right to their own cultural knowledge as they do their own personal information. The second principle, control, dictates that if there is to be any research done on their community, then Indigenous peoples must have control over all aspects of the research, the management of the resulting information, and how the information will be used in the present and in the future. The third

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

principle, access, refers to the right of Indigenous peoples to access any information about themselves, individually or as a group, no matter where that information may be held. The final principle, possession, refers to the physical control of the data, “the way ownership can be asserted and protected.”<sup>83</sup>

OCAP is a foundational piece of literature, created prior to UNDRIP and TRC’S Calls to Action that supports working relationships between researchers, archivists and Indigenous communities and people. The Principles of OCAP show how an archive can create policies and protocols that advance respectful ways to collect and manage Indigenous archival records. Based on the four principles the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Legacy Archive made sure of the following:

- To implement continuing consent with no ownership over property, just guardianship, so that the donor can always withdraw donation from the archive.
- A donor can inform archive how their donation will be described, viewed and accessed.
- There was always a full discussion with donors on what the Legacy Archive is and its benefits to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, such as education, outreach and commemoration.
- Explaining how the Legacy Archive works and how the stories/truth will be accessible nation wide.
- Respecting cultural protocols, access and procedures (for example, by adding questions about these to the accession form).

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<sup>83</sup> First Nation Information Governance Centre, “Home,” accessed December 15, 2018, <https://fnigc.ca/ocapr.html>.

These are just some of the ways OCAP has informed the NI-MMIWG Legacy Archive and continues to be a foundational guide that can help an archive create a respectful relationship with Indigenous communities with respect to their archival records.

### **2.6 (c) Protocols for Native American Archival Materials**

In 2007, the Society of American Archives (SAA) created a task force to review protocols it should incorporate into policies for Indigenous materials. The First Archivist Circle published the final version and incorporated ten main protocols at the suggestion of the task force. After much delay and one failed attempt, the SAA announced in August 2018 that it had formally endorsed these protocols and apologized for failing to do so earlier. The protocols advance some excellent ideas and can serve as a strong foundation when an archives seeks to decolonize its practices, holdings and relationships with Indigenous communities. The biggest challenges these protocols pose are for long-established archives with Indigenous materials donated long ago, perhaps with complex or constraining legal deeds of gift – or with no deed of gift at all. I will identify the main protocols and propose some ideas of how they might contribute to improve archival management of Indigenous records. I will then relate some of the objections to the protocols, voiced by some archivists and others who claimed an interest in the records that the protocols address.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Australia has also created a set of protocols for Indigenous materials for libraries and archives created by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resource Network (ATSILIRN) that was updated in 2005. Many are similar to the First Archivist Circle protocols, but there are additional ones relating to governance and staffing. These look at how records and documents are governed within the institution and how institutions should go about hiring staff and management, all of which influence how these institutions incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the program and the involvement of Indigenous people and their perspectives at higher levels. See Kirsten Thorpe, *Protocols for libraries and archives in Australia: incorporating Indigenous perspectives in the information field*, Paper presented at [IFLA WLIC 2013 - Singapore - Future Libraries: Infinite Possibilities](#) in Session 125 - Education and Training with Library Services to Multicultural Populations and Indigenous Matters Special Interest Group, 5.

The first protocol is “Building Relationships of Mutual Respect” which recommends archives build meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities by having respectful consultations “through dialogue and cooperation.”<sup>85</sup> This would lay the foundation of how materials would be used, shown, or repatriated based on both the community’s and institution’s needs, and help develop stewardship models that are beneficial to both parties. Second is “Striving for Balance in Content and Perspectives.” This protocol suggests that the archive and the Indigenous communities have their own priorities and proposes ideas on how to preserve and share knowledge, so as to find balance between both parties’ needs.<sup>86</sup> Third is “Accessibility and Use,” which requires equality of access for “all patrons, in accordance with the law, cultural sensitivities, and institutional policy,” thus placing Indigenous cultural restrictions on a par with law and policy.<sup>87</sup> Fourth is “Culturally Sensitive Materials,” which speaks to the unfortunately common practice of archival institutions providing access to culturally sensitive materials without consent from the Indigenous community, and proposes that an archive should respect the community’s wishes with regard to access restrictions for culturally sensitive materials.<sup>88</sup> Fifth is “Providing Context”, which analyzes existing descriptive standards and terminology and proposes more culturally appropriate and accurate language.<sup>89</sup> The sixth is “Native American Intellectual Property Issues,” which explores the problems of copyright from an Indigenous perspective, noting that much of Indigenous traditions, cultures and protocols are not recognized by Western law.<sup>90</sup> Seventh is “Copying and Repatriation of Records to Native American Communities,” which examines the need to return property, including records, to Indigenous

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<sup>85</sup> First Archivist Circle, *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials*, 2007, accessed on February 13, 2018, <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/PrintProtocols.pdf>, 5.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

communities, particularly when the records are fundamental to their identity and heritage.<sup>91</sup> Eighth is “Native American Research Protocols,” which proposes ethical and legal standards when Indigenous communities and peoples are the subject of research conducted by people from outside the community.<sup>92</sup> Ninth is “Reciprocal Education and Training,” which encourages archives to participate in cross-cultural training and different approaches to “designing and deploying knowledge management systems.”<sup>93</sup> The final protocol stresses “Awareness of Native American Communities and Issues,” and highlights the importance of archives understanding how their holdings might affect Indigenous communities.<sup>94</sup>

When these protocols were first proposed in 2007 they elicited a range of responses from the American archival community and from individuals and organizations outside of the SAA. These responses illuminate concerns if compliance with the protocols were made mandatory. Some points raised in the responses include: tensions between intellectual property and open access, and the complexity of addressing this when dealing with backlogged and retrospective materials; that the protocols might be used to support litigation against archives that do not or cannot comply with them; concerns over restricting previously accessible materials; fears that giving privilege to one stakeholder community might cause trouble with other stakeholders, especially if overriding donor agreements around copyright, access and transfer; and fear that the protocols, if ignored, could result in lawsuits, bad publicity therefore less funding and donations.<sup>95</sup> These are all very real and serious concerns for archives, and although creating

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>95</sup> Please see Society of American Archivists, “Response to SAA Protocols,” American Archivists Council Meeting, February 7 – 10, 2008, Washington, DC, Report: Task Force to Review Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, (Prepared by Task Force members Frank Boles [Chair], David George-Shongo, and Christine



trusting and respectful relationships with Indigenous communities is extremely important, legal, ethical, and financial concerns are not to be overlooked..<sup>96</sup>

## **2.6 (d) United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**

UNDRIP was adopted by the assembly of the United Nations (with four exceptions – Canada, Australia, United States and New Zealand<sup>97</sup>) on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2007.

The declaration did not create new or special rights for Indigenous peoples, but rather clarified how existing laws applied to specific “cultural, historical, social and economic” circumstances of Indigenous peoples.<sup>98</sup> Brenda Gunn, of the Indigenous Bar Association, emphasizes the importance of the declaration because it was created by Indigenous people themselves, and recognizes Indigenous peoples rights as individuals and as a collective.<sup>99</sup>

One way to overcome the challenges of the colonizing archive, argues Mick Gooda, is for archives to implement articles from UNDRIP, which he suggests can be used as a type of quality assurance for archives. Gooda, who is a member of the Gangulu people of Central Queensland in Australia, believes that the right to self-determination; participation in decision-making; free, prior, and informed consent; resetting relationships; and cultural rights are the key points an archival institution can take from UNDRIP. These key points can decolonize the archive and empower Indigenous people as substantive agents and record keepers in their own communities,

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Weideman):55-139, accessed on July 14, 2018. <http://files.archivists.org/governance/taskforces/0208-NativeAmProtocols-IIIa.pdf>, for all responses to the SAA protocols.

<sup>96</sup> Ricky Punzalan, “SAA Council Endorses the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials,” *Native American Archives Section*, Society of American Archivists, Newsletter, August 13, 2018.

<sup>97</sup> Australia and New Zealand would lend support in 2009 to UNDRIP; the United States would do so in 2010, and Canada would endorse it in 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Brenda Gunn, *Understanding and Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: An Introductory Handbook*. Indigenous Bar Association, 2016. Accessed on July 6th, 2018, [http://www.indigenousbar.ca/pdf/undrip\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.indigenousbar.ca/pdf/undrip_handbook.pdf), p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

as well as in non-Indigenous archives. Gooda suggests that the right to self-determination allows “Indigenous peoples to be central players in record keeping processes from the beginning. Their voices, aspirations, cultures and their value and knowledge systems must be respected and accommodated. The onus is on the institutions of archiving and record keeping to evolve in order to accommodate Indigenous peoples, rather than on Indigenous peoples to conform to mainstream practices.”<sup>100</sup> Additionally, he stresses that Indigenous people or communities participating in the decision making process improves the lives of that people and community. Gooda suggests that “Free, prior and informed consent recognizes Indigenous peoples’ inherent and existing rights and respects our legitimate authority to require that third parties enter into an equal and respectful relationship with us.”<sup>101</sup> Gooda claims that resetting relationships with Indigenous peoples, intended to apply to governments, can apply to archives as well. Finally, Gooda proposes that archivists provide technical expertise to Indigenous communities in a “process of working together in a negotiated space, which recognises and celebrates our differences ... In this regard, the process or the means is as important as the ends.”<sup>102</sup>

UNDRIP emphasizes inclusivity, individuality not assimilation, and the rights to practice and revitalize cultural traditions and customs. Furthermore, UNDRIP promotes the right of Indigenous peoples to develop and teach their spiritual and religious ceremonies, and to develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, writing systems and much more. UNDRIP articulates Indigenous rights to maintain education control and protect

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<sup>100</sup> Gooda, “The practical power of human rights,” 145.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 147.

their intellectual property and the absolute requirement for freely given, prior and fully informed consent to any activities or practices that impinge on Indigenous lands and cultures.<sup>103</sup>

UNDRIP is an excellent resource for archives to incorporate into policies that address the management of Indigenous archival records, or records that incorporate Indigenous knowledge. Several of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action identify UNDRIP as the "framework for reconciliation" (e.g. Call 43, 46 and 92). Calls 69 and 70 specifically enjoin archives to apply UNDRIP and the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles.

Greg Bak identifies some of the challenges of implementing UNDRIP, even while acknowledging its importance. Bak argued that "The description of UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation by the TRC underlines the importance of the Declaration, including those articles that touch on the work of archives, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada to move forward in a good way." Bak notes that even technical standards such as *The Rules for Archival Description* resist simple tests for compliance, suggesting that the TRC provided Canadian archives with a mighty challenge in complying with the manifold dimensions of UNDRIP in terms of the huge variety of laws, lands, languages, cultures and religions among Indigenous peoples of North America.<sup>104</sup> Bak further notes that many Indigenous records are identified by Canadian archives as having simple, "mono-lineal provenance," represented as being created by and belonging to sponsoring agents like the Hudson's Bay Company and the federal Department of Indian Affairs. Applying UNDRIP Article 31 to such records is very difficult under Canadian law, which recognizes individual ownership but not communal ownership, and which recognizes

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<sup>103</sup> United Nations, *United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples*, (2007), accessed on January 30, 2018, [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> Bak et al., "An Archival Overview of the TRC's Calls to Action," 4-6.

as records creators – and as the owners of associated intellectual property – the churches, corporations and government agencies that enforced Canadian colonialism, but not the Indigenous communities about whom colonial records were created.

Another challenge comes with Article 11.1. Although an archive may engage with Indigenous people and respect one person or community's wishes with regard to culture, spiritual practices and traditional beliefs, there may be others who are of the same faith or community who have different beliefs. Like any culture, there are differences in the evolution of traditions. It is not clear who, within an Indigenous community, can determine whether something can be recorded or not, and whether extant recordings should be repatriated, destroyed, opened or closed.

Article 12.1 opens one of the hottest debates as it raises legal versus ethical obligations. Repatriation of spiritual objects and ceremonial materials has been a difficult question for both Indigenous communities and archival institutions. There are legal documents that dictate how materials are managed and accessed, such as donor agreements. Can archives legally repatriate items that were donated by settler organizations and individuals? Although ethically the answer is easy, in reality there are legal hurdles and challenges, many of which were raised in the SAA's discussions of the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* in 2007-08.

It is simple to acknowledge the desirability and benefits of implementing UNDRIP. This brief discussion raises just a few of the challenges of implementing UNDRIP. I have not addressed some of the most general objections, such as the near-universal underfunding of archives and other cultural institutions, the lack of education on the subject among archival staff, and the lack of professional resources on these topics to support archivists.

## 2.6 (e) Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

TRC's Final Report had many calls to action that could evoke or provoke change with respect to the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in order to support the way towards healing and reconciliation. Many of the calls require improved records creation and keeping by various levels and agencies of government. Several more could be quite beneficial if implemented in an archive's policy.<sup>105</sup> Bak acknowledges that the "TRC's Calls to Action require all of us to engage in archival decolonization."<sup>106</sup> Tolly Bradford suggests that the TRC's Calls to Action demands far more than just decolonization, maintaining that:

Archivists must continue to work with – and also actively create and describe – the records of policy makers, teachers, and the state officials, and recognise that these records also play a vital role in telling this story of residential schools and colonialism in Canada. Only when these records are placed alongside Indigenous voices, can we hope to learn something of the "truths" of the residential schools history.<sup>107</sup>

The TRC's Calls to Action build upon policies, principles and protocols that came before, and especially the Joinet-Orentlicher principles and UNDRIP. Several of the Calls were addressed to archives specifically. I will now discuss a selection of the Calls that offer opportunities for archives to advance decolonization. I will conclude by describing some challenges in responding to them.

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<sup>105</sup> Although some of the *Calls to Action* below are aimed at government agencies, I found that these ones would also work well in any archives, therefore I have added them into our Indigenous Protocol Policy. [? Whose Indigenous protocol policy – the Inquiry?]

<sup>106</sup> Bak et al., "An Archival Overview of the TRC's Calls to Action," 7.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

Call 13 states “We call on the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal Rights also includes Aboriginal language rights.”<sup>108</sup> Archives can encourage donations in Indigenous languages, and can partner with Indigenous institutions and communities to help preserve their languages through curricular support for language teaching and learning.

Call 62 states:

We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.<sup>109</sup>

An archive can work with an Education Coordinator to use artistic expressions and Indigenous archival records as resources of knowledge to be used in the education curriculum. Education coordinators can engage children, youth, educators, parents and education leaders in the communities with the aim to change the narrative and reality regarding the treatment of Indigenous people in Canada.

Calls 69 and 70 enjoin Canadian archives, and particularly Library and Archives Canada, to implement the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles and UNDRIP. Bak expresses that doing so would make it impossible for Canadians to deny gross human rights violations, like the residential school system, and allow archives to become the “bastion against the deniability of the harms inflicted through the residential school system.”<sup>110</sup> An archive can support this Call to action by implementing articles from UNDRIP and by shining light on human rights violations

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<sup>108</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Calls to Action*. (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Website), accessed on March 13, 2018, [https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf), 2.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>110</sup> Bak et al., “An Archival Overview of the TRCs Calls to Action,” 4-5.

experienced by Indigenous peoples, as in the residential schools system, whose legacy includes increased and critical rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA<sup>111</sup> community. Moreover, archives can affirm that policies affecting the accessibility, preservation and custody of Indigenous records will only proceed with the freely given, fully informed and prior consent of the Indigenous individuals and communities in question.<sup>112</sup>

Call 77 states “We call upon the provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the NCTR to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the NCTR.” The opportunity that this Call offers to Canadian archives to decolonize their holdings is self-evident.

Call 79 reads:

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include:

- i. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada’s national heritage and history.<sup>113</sup>

This Call offers the opportunity for archives to decolonize by accepting artistic expressions as Indigenous archival records. As suggested in Chapter One, accepting Indigenous art as archival records could specifically address questions of truth; sharing tradition and culture and the true

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<sup>111</sup> I use the acronym 2SLGBTQQIA because that is the one MMIWG Inquiry is officially using. It stands for Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersexual and Asexual.

<sup>112</sup> Bak et al., “An Archival Overview of the TRC’s Calls to Action,” 9-10.

<sup>113</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Calls to Action*, 9.

history of Indigenous people in Canada, including their fight for treaty rights, their experiences in residential schools and the many horrific legacies that followed such as the 60's scoop, including the continued forced removal of children through Child and Family services, and the critical levels of violence, especially towards Indigenous women and girls, and the 2SLGBTQIA communities. Archives can work with artists and donors to share stories and interpretation of artistic works alongside their donation and by recording (either by audio, video or written text) the story and the meaning behind their art donations so that the archival records truly reflects the donor's voice. This will, thereafter, provide the user of the archive with a more engaged, emotional and powerful experience of the artistic expression. While this would be beneficial for all archival donations, it is particularly important for donations of Indigenous art and art-related records, since settler institutions and archivists may be unfamiliar with the specific traditions and conversations expressed in the art and records.

Call 92 states:

We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.<sup>114</sup>

This call to implement this article from UNDRIP will be the most problematic one for many institutions and business who may put capitalism before environmentalism and social justice.

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<sup>114</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Calls to Action*, 9.



## Implementing the TRC's Calls to Action

Through their national associations, the Canadian archival community has put together a task force to investigate how archives as institutions had responded to the TRC's Calls to Action. The survey on *Reconciliation Action and Awareness in Canadian Archives* was published in 2017. Out of the 150 surveys they sent out, 82 completed surveys were returned. Out of the 82, 15.5% have responded to UNDRIP; 3.5% have responded to the Joint-Orentlicher Principles.<sup>115</sup> There are very real challenges for archives to make these changes, including insufficient funding, lack of staff time, lack of resources, lack of experience, and lack of knowledge, as well as the fact that many archivists had not heard of the Joint-Orentlicher Principles before the final report. There is very little archival literature providing guidance on how to implement these documents, which demonstrates how far archives need to go to fully engage in decolonizing the archive.<sup>116</sup> Those that reported being engaged described outreach activities through exhibitions, developing deeper knowledge of local communities, public programs, and consultations with donors.<sup>117</sup>

## Conclusion

In 2016, archival scholar, Michelle Caswell published online a list for “Identifying and Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives” which she wrote for her *Archives, Records and Memory* class at UCLA. Caswell's list has some excellent pointers for Canadian archivists who seek to decolonize their work and institutions. Caswell identifies elements of white privilege in

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<sup>115</sup> Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce of the Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, *Report on the Results from the Survey on Reconciliation Action & Awareness in Canadian Archives*, accessed on July 19, 2018, (2017):9, <https://archives2026.files.wordpress.com/2018/06/survey-report-1-june-2018.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 8.

archival functions and the actions we can take to dismantle them. Many of these are shared with the SAA protocols discussed in this chapter, addressing education, employing Indigenous people, use of accessible and non-offensive language, having Indigenous and other communities participate in archival description and management, and understanding Indigenous culture and traditions. Additionally Caswell calls upon archivists to actively combat racism within the archives, and the archival profession, by: intervening when racist language is used; making personal anti-racist values known; “stop perpetuating the myth of archival neutrality;” holding professors accountable for white supremacy in the classroom; and calling on archivists to “disrupt whiteness as a default or ‘neutral’ category.”<sup>118</sup> As with the TRC’s Calls to Action, Caswell’s list offers an opportunity for archivists to support social justice in their workplace. How will Canadian archivists respond? With denial? By being offended? Or by acknowledging past harmful practices and turning a new leaf?

The role of the archive, and the archivist, is a powerful one which comes with much responsibility. Archives have the power to hurt through hateful colonial words, perspectives, and representations, or to be helpful and raise awareness by providing records that help users understand the past in context. Loyer states that “they are pathways for Indigenous people and communities to recognize injustice and begin to heal, and for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to begin the difficult work of reconciliation and decolonization.”<sup>119</sup> Postmodern archival theory opened the door for marginalized communities to be heard, and archivists are accepting the challenges that this entails. Inclusivity in appraisal and description can help communities to

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<sup>118</sup> Michelle Caswell, “Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives: An Incomplete List of White Privileges in Archives and Action Items for Dismantling Them,” in *Archives, Records, and Memory* class, Fall 2016, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, accessed on September 15, 2018, [http://www.gracenbrilmeyer.com/dismantling\\_whiteSupremacy\\_archives3.pdf](http://www.gracenbrilmeyer.com/dismantling_whiteSupremacy_archives3.pdf).

<sup>119</sup> Jessie Loyer, “Ceding Space and Bearing Witness to Trauma in Memory Institutions,” 17.

preserve Indigenous knowledge and to have their interpretations of history heard. However, there is much more that can be done to decolonize archives in Canada. UNDRIP, the TRC Calls to Action, and other Indigenous protocols offer ways to decolonize archival theory, practice, and policy, making the archive a much more inclusive place. If we are serious about decolonizing the archive, and Canadian history, we must develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and communities. We can look to these types of protocols as we do so.

It is time to let go of old norms and ideals of what an archive should be, such as quiet and objective, as they are ideas of the past. It is time for Indigenous peoples' voices to be included, heard, and respected instead of silenced in this country's archives. We must actively seek out and accept non-traditional archival records, such as art, which allow Indigenous nations to share their traditions, culture, politics, and truth on their own terms. I must agree with McKemmish, Faulkhead, and Russell, who suggest that the greatest challenge for the future of archives is:

Today, in Australia we see oral and written records existing within all communities and flowing from one format to the other, constantly interacting and growing into a living archival continuum. The historically static nature of institutional archives, and their dominant relationship with the discipline of history, can be viewed as antithetical to achieving this vision of what the archive of the future might be. The challenge is to develop systems that can allow the coexistence of multiple knowledge systems and forms of record, enabling records to continue the life they were meant to live, flowing back into people and then into a recorded form again, be it written, imagery, music or song.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Sue McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead, and Lynette Russell, "Distrust in the archive: reconciling records," *Archival Science* 11 (2011): 227.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Archival Standards, Best Practices and Viable Options for Digital Preservation and Digital Content Management Systems/Archival Description for Indigenous Records**

In this chapter I will discuss Canadian standards and best practices that offer recommendations for digital preservation systems and digital content management systems, or archival description systems, for Indigenous records. I will begin by looking at Canada's accession and description standards and the degree to which they accommodate Indigenous cultural needs, if at all. Next, I will discuss the importance of digital standards, such as the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) and metadata standards including Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS), asking whether they incorporate the full contextual history of a record, which is something integral to Indigenous history. I will then briefly discuss some best practices that are optional in Canadian archives before focusing on the importance of having a digital preservation and digital content management system/archival description application for an archive. Finally, after a discussion between two viable options on digital preservation systems and on the digital content system/archival description application as an access point for the digital preservation system that would do well for a decolonizing archive, I will offer my recommendation on the most suitable option.

#### **3.1 Archival Standards and Best Practices**

Archival Standards are important as they increase consistency among archives across Canada, thus improving reliability of both knowledge of records and access to records. Furthermore, archival standards help solidify best practices; they improve service for users, facilitate exchange of information between archives in a smooth way at a local, national and international levels, and provide for coherent and consistent collection of information.

### 3.1 (a) Accession Standards

It is important to know what accession records do in order to understand why it is important to have standards in this field. The Canadian Council of Archives' National Archival Accession Standard Working Group has stated that "An accession record captures important information in the accession process, including the nature of acquired archival material and its source. Accession information supports the preliminary physical and intellectual control of acquired material. This information supports subsequent archival functions including arrangement and description, preservation, and access."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore:

The Canadian Archival Accession Information Standard (CAAIS) specifies the information elements necessary for documenting the accessioning process in an archival repository. Typically archives accession aggregates of records, rather than single items, though single item accessions can also be accommodated by this standard. An accession record created in accordance with this standard reflects the completion of the accessioning process, while also accommodating updates to existing accession records after other related processes have occurred"<sup>2</sup>

Accession records collect information about the repository, creator of the record, custodian of the record, donor, date of donation, extent and quality of material, language of material, material assessment, legal rights, associated documentation, and action taken on donation. All of these reveal much of the contextual information valued by archivists, but also by users. This helps reflect, the context in which the record was created, who it was intended for, and it helps us understand from what perspective it was created from. All of these aspects are integral to understanding Canadian history holistically.

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<sup>1</sup> National Archival Accession Standard Working Group, "Canadian Archival Accession Information Standard Consultation Draft: September 2017," Canadian Council of Archives, accessed on July 31, 2018, [http://archivescanada.ca/uploads/files/Documents/CAAIS\\_ConsultationDraft\\_Final.pdf](http://archivescanada.ca/uploads/files/Documents/CAAIS_ConsultationDraft_Final.pdf), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### 3.1 (b) Description Standards

#### RAD

The Canadian standard for archival description is the *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD). The latest version was issued in 2008 and provides theoretical frameworks and practices from which many archives follow and define the way descriptive practices should be carried out. “Rules governing description can be viewed as a set of instructions, as specific as possible, that embody standards in a particular context with the object of producing consistency in the descriptive process.”<sup>3</sup> The working group modified RAD based on the principles of archival theory. The first is “that records created or accumulated by one records creator must be kept together and not intermixed with the records of other creators, often referred to as respect des fonds.”<sup>4</sup> The second was “the way archives are described depends on their arrangement. Implicit in the archivist’s observance of respect des fonds is the assumption that the way a creator ‘automatically and organically created and/or accumulates records’ will affect the way archivists arrange a fonds. A fonds cannot be described until it has been arranged.”<sup>5</sup> Lastly, “that all descriptive work must proceed from the general to the specific. In order to place the description of a series that is part of a fonds in context, one must have a description of the fonds of which the series is a part. Users must know the context in which the records they are consulting have been created. It is incumbent upon archivists, therefore, to have intellectual control of their holdings first at the fonds level, before proceeding to lower levels of description.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Canadian Archivists, *Canadian Archival Standard: Rules for Archival Description*, Revised Version 2008, (Ottawa: 2008): xvii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

In February 2016 the Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD) had a national meeting on the future of RAD. It released its Report with Recommendations on May 26, 2016.

These recommendations included:

- The international standards were not intended to replace national standards but to provide a common framework for them.
- There is value in providing more detailed guidance than the international standards offer.
- There may be specific concerns relevant to a Canadian context that Canadian archivists want the standard to address (e.g. First Nations materials, bilingualism).
- Retaining a national standard preserves a certain freedom of action for Canadian archivists, who would otherwise be dependent on a remote international organization<sup>7</sup>

This is important because it highlights that the Canadian description standards are not at a high enough level, or inclusive enough for all materials in archives, especially if focusing on Indigenous archival materials.

#### **ISAD(G)**

The International Congress on Archives (ICA) has created a suite of descriptive standards. The most important of these, ISAD-G (General International Standard Archival Description), brings together twenty-six elements that purposefully “ensure the creation of consistent, appropriate, and self-explanatory descriptions; facilitate the retrieval and exchange of information about archival material; enable the sharing of authority data; and make possible the integration of descriptions from different locations into a unified information system.”<sup>8</sup>

ISAD (G) offers further categories of description like creator, reference code, level of description, and description control. These added elements make a lot of sense for an archive

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian Committee on Archival Description, *National Meeting on the Future of RAD: CCAD Report with Recommendations*, (May 26, 2016) accessed on August 1, 2018, [http://www.archivescanada.ca/uploads/files/CCAD/CCADReport\\_2016-05-26\\_en.pdf](http://www.archivescanada.ca/uploads/files/CCAD/CCADReport_2016-05-26_en.pdf), 2.

<sup>8</sup> International Council on Archives, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description*, Second Edition, 19-22 September 1999, accessed on December 15, 2018, [https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS\\_2000\\_Guidelines\\_ISAD%28G%29\\_Second-edition\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS_2000_Guidelines_ISAD%28G%29_Second-edition_EN.pdf), 7.

especially a human rights archive. Having a creator is significant, because there are times where the creator is different from the donor and this will clarify and keep the provenance of the archival record transparent.

The reference code would be important on a global level, especially for research purposes and exhibit loan purposes. Level of description is a critical element, and can keep information organized, and easier to be accessed by the user. Description control is also a section that would be very helpful for an archive, especially one that believes in transparency and tracking the narrative of the archivist. Even though ISAD(G) is an international standards, it can be used in concert with national standards such as RAD.

### **RiC – Records in Context**

Records in Context (RiC) is a conceptual model for archival description which is looking to address both archival description and records management because in many cases they overlap. RiC is being developed as the foundation for the next generation of the ICA's international descriptive standards. RiC argues for cooperation between records management and archivists, and not just for description purposes, and seeks to address opportunities and challenges created by emerging technologies such as linked data. The expert group argues

RiC's primary audience is the archival community, so the model takes as its point of departure established archival description principles and practices. At the same time, the model takes into consideration emerging communication and network technologies that open up new opportunities to improve descriptive practices, as well as ongoing scholarly and practical critiques of archival description principles and practice. While the current ICA description standards largely emerged in a world of nondigital records, RiC aspires to address description not only of traditional analogue records but also electronic records.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> International Council on Archives-Expert Group on Archival Description, *Records in Context: A Conceptual Model for Archival Description (Consultation Draft v0.1)*, September 2016, accessed on December 15, 2018, <https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/RiC-CM-0.1.pdf>, 2.



RiC will be of interest to allied cultural heritage communities because of the integrated access to cultural heritage held by libraries, archives, and museums that are increasingly the focus of professional communities, policy makers, funding agencies, and user communities.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1 (c) Open Archival Information System (OAIS)

Descriptive standards apply to all types of archival records. Digital archives have additional standards, including the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) which advocates for minimum responsibilities including:

Negotiate and accept appropriate information from information producers; obtain sufficient control of the information to ensure long term preservation; determine scope of the Designated Community; ensure the information is understandable by the Designated Community without assistance of the information producers; follow documented policies and procedures to ensure the information is preserved against reasonable contingencies, and enable information to be disseminated as authenticated copies of the original or as traceable to the original and make the information available to the Designated Community.<sup>11</sup>

Within the OAIS model, there are five functional entities that identify key processes needed for most systems dedicated to preserving digital information. They are: the Ingest function, the Archival Storage function, the Data Management function, the Administration function, and the Access function.<sup>12</sup> OAIS developed an open forum of archival concepts needed for long-term preservation of electronic records. Christopher J. Michael also argues that this standardized model, having common entities and processes, has economic benefits through shared system

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<sup>10</sup> International Council on Archives, *Records in Context*, 2-3.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Lavoie, *Meeting the challenges of digital preservation: The OAIS reference model*, accessed on July 31, 2018, <https://www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2000/lavoie-oais.html>.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

components. OAIS has formed the foundation of numerous architectures, standards and protocols, influencing system design, metadata requirements, certifications, plus other issues surrounding digital preservation.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.1 (d) Preservation of Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS)**

A particular challenge for digital archives is the lack of metadata standards in terms of archival terminology that adequately describe all aspects of a digital record. This has led to multiple standards being used together, resulting in inconsistent practices, which is even more problematic when dealing with Indigenous material objects.<sup>14</sup> Information such as provenance, dates, and other contextual knowledge is so important that it is critical to understand and capture different types of metadata to ensure accessibility and preservation of cultural heritage information. Metadata has three key features according to Anne J. Gilliland, and they are:

- Content (relates to what the object contains or is about and is *intrinsic* to an information object)
- Context (indicates the who, what, why, where, and how aspects associated with the object's creation and is *extrinsic* to an information object)
- Structure (relates to the formal set of associations within or among individual information objects and can be *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* or both.)<sup>15</sup>

Gilliland states that metadata has a crucial role for preserving the evidential value of archival records, organization, and description. It assists researchers with their analysis and understanding of the records, is used for search and retrieval of records, disposition of original objects, and finally it can validate and authenticate the archival records.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Christopher J. Michael, "7 Key Functions of OAIS Reference Model for Digital Archiving," *Paragon*, June 27, 2016, accessed on August 5, 2018, <http://www.consultparagon.com/blog/functions-of-oais-reference-model-for-digital-archiving>.

<sup>14</sup> Chris Zaste, "Another Bit Bytes the Dust: The Technological and Human Challenges of Digital Preservation", M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, (2016):34

<sup>15</sup> Anne J. Gilliland, "Setting the Stage," in *Introduction to Metadata*, ed. Murtha Baca, (Getty Research Institute, 2008) accessed on August 1, 2018, <https://www.getty.edu/publications/intrometadata/setting-the-stage/,2>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 3, 13-14.

Gilliland highlights interesting facts about metadata including that metadata can be recorded in analog formats, and that metadata may come from a variety of sources besides the creator of the record. This includes being generated automatically by the medium it is being created on or inferred through a relationship to another resource such as a hyperlink.<sup>17</sup>

Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS) is an international working group creating standards for developing metadata for digital preservation. In 2005 it released *Data Dictionary for Preservation Metadata: Final Report of the PREMIS Working Group*, a third revision of which was released in June 2015. Angela Dappert, Rebecca Squire Guenther, and Sébastien Peyrard suggest that having common standards is important for multiple reasons. First, it creates a best practice community; second, it provides opportunity to learn from the insights of others; third, it gives space for the development of tools to make metadata creation and management easier; and finally, it creates an opportunity for organizations to easily exchange information with each other.<sup>18</sup> Dappert et al. further note that PREMIS was developed with the idea that repositories were OAIS compliant, but PREMIS goes beyond OAIS minimum standards. In PREMIS 3.0, broader categories of information are provided, and it also allows for recording of information about digital objects that occur prior to ingest in the repository. Furthermore, PREMIS allows for the description of physical objects such as hardware, and about the software and hardware environments that support the digital objects. Dappert et al. likewise explain that it is quite the advantage to have this rich data, which covers the entire lifecycle of the digital objects, even before they entered the preservation repository.<sup>19</sup> Dappert et al. mention that PREMIS is “intended to be a community resource which is free and open for anyone to use

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>18</sup> Angela Dappert, Rebecca Squire Guenther, Sébastien Peyrard (eds.), *Digital Preservation Metadata for Practitioners: Implementing PREMIS*, (Switzerland: Springer, 2016):3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 26.

who is preserving digital objects. It provides guidance to persons and institutions that are establishing or managing a repository of digital objects that need to be preserved for the long term. As such, anyone can use the specifications and in doing so, others will understand the same language and be able to exchange information in a common way.”<sup>20</sup>

### **3.2 Why it is important for an Archive to have a Digital Preservation System**

Ivornatte Chitambo, Kaiso Mabe and Andrea Potgieter assert “The value gained from the preservation of human knowledge lies not with the preservation of the past but rather with the way in which this information can be accessed by individuals today.”<sup>21</sup> José Barateiro declares the purpose of digital preservation is “to optimize the information life-cycle management, from the creation to the dissemination and use of the information objects, for long periods of time.”<sup>22</sup> Barateiro suggests that this should be done through risk management, which identifies, analyzes, and evaluates vulnerabilities of digital objects and this then protects them for future use.<sup>23</sup>

When looking at preserving digital art, Richard Rinehart and Jon Ippolito felt they needed a different approach to digital preservation. Rhinehart explains that preserving art is a complex challenge as artists “ensure that their media creations are about as complex as you’ll likely find; not necessarily technically but because what artists do is to complicate the work at every level—conceptually, phenomenologically, socially, technically; they think very specifically about the relationship between media and meaning and then they manifest those ideas in the digital

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>21</sup> Ivornatte Chitambo, Kagiso Mabe and Andrea Potgieter, “The Role of Digitization in Knowledge and Content Management,” 2016. “The Role of Digitization in Knowledge and Content Management.” Paper presented at Proceedings of the 17th European conference on Knowledge Management, Ulster University, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, 1-2 September 2016, accessed on March 28, 2018. [file:///C:/Users/Petra/Downloads/ECKM2016\\_Proceedings.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Petra/Downloads/ECKM2016_Proceedings.pdf), 174.

<sup>22</sup> José Barateiro, “Designing Digital Preservation Solutions: A Risk Management-Based Approach,” *The International Journal of Digital Curation* 5:1 (2010):5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 6.

object.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Ippolito adds that the experience the user has with the art has nothing to do with the perfect checksum of the digital object because digital fixity, while essential for the decoding of the digital object, has little to do with the context of the original artwork:

We can run checksums on the Riverside ‘King Lear’ till the cows come home, and it still won’t tell us that boys played women’s parts, or that Elizabethan actors spoke with rounded vowels that sound more like a contemporary American accent than the King’s English, or how each generation of performers has drawn on the previous for inspiration.<sup>25</sup>

Rinehart and Ippolito have demonstrated that art is very difficult to preserve digitally, and it is very important to capture not only the physicality of the art, or the digital art, but also contextually, the meaning of the art as described by the artist, but at the same time the contextual meaning of the digital art is nothing if you do not preserve the digital art.

### **3.3 Open Source vs. Proprietary Systems**

There are two different approaches to software for digital preservation systems. A proprietary system requires payment of licensing fees, and usually comes with only one single source for technical support, the vendor that sells the system. Proprietary systems have the advantages and disadvantages that come with having a single source for the system, upgrades and support. Alternatively, an open source system is free (or may have inexpensive license fees), has multiple sources for technical support, including free online communities or paid support, and has adaptable software to suit an organization’s needs. Users of an open systems can modify the software to address problems and fix bugs without having to wait for a new software

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<sup>24</sup> Trevor Owens, “Collecting and Preserving Digital Art: Interview with Richard Rinehart and Jon Ippolito,” *The Signal*, November 26, 2014, accessed on March 31, 2018, <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2014/11/collecting-and-preserving-digital-art-interview-with-richard-rinehart-and-jon-ippolito/>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

release.<sup>26</sup> Katherine Noyes suggests that open source is better for many reasons including its flexibility, customization, and enhanced security. Open source systems are often better quality because users have made improvements over time. Moreover, open source is built around professional standards where proprietary software often is not. Noyes cites Archivemata and Bitcurator as examples of open source systems with superior support options, including online communities, FAQ's, forums and Wikis. Finally, Noyes ends with cost; the low cost of having open source software (some licensing fees, hiring of IT) is nowhere near the cost of a proprietary system which has licensing fees, mandatory virus protection, support charges, upgrade expenses, and other costs of being “locked in” to a proprietary software.<sup>27</sup>

Both free open software and proprietary software have much to offer an archival institution in terms of tools and applications but both also have challenges, I will look at both types of systems, specifically I will research Archivemata and Preservica as possible options for digital preservation systems for archives with Indigenous records.

### 3.4 Archivemata

Archivemata is a free, open source digital preservation system using micro services and a web-based dashboard.<sup>28</sup> Artefactual Systems, the private company that wrote the original code base for Archivemata and that maintains and updates the code base on behalf of the Archivemata community, states that:

All Archivemata code is released under a GNU Affero General Public License (A-GPL 3.0) – giving you the freedom to study, modify, improve, and distribute

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<sup>26</sup>Kate McCarthy and Rebecca Grant (2014), ‘Choosing Content Management Technologies’. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, “Choosing Content Management Technologies,” accessed on March 28, 2018, <http://dri.ie/sites/default/files/files/choosing-cms-technologies-2014.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Katherine Noyes, “10 Reasons Open Source Is Good for Business,” *PCWorld*, November 05, 2010, accessed on March 31, 2018, [https://www.pcworld.com/article/209891/10\\_reasons\\_open\\_source\\_is\\_good\\_for\\_business.html](https://www.pcworld.com/article/209891/10_reasons_open_source_is_good_for_business.html).

<sup>28</sup> Archivemata, “Home,” accessed May 23, 2018, <https://www.archivemata.org/en/>.

it. We believe that an important part of preservation is transparency, and that memory institutions should be able to demonstrate at every stage what happens when they process cultural heritage materials for preservation. Archivemata code is always freely available, and our documentation is also released under a Creative Commons Share-alike license.<sup>29</sup>

Artefactual suggests that Archivemata is flexible and customizable. By this they mean there are many decision points in the preservation process giving the user more control. Such choices include format identification, recording the original order of the directories ingested, identifying private and personal information such as social insurance numbers or telephone numbers, extracting contents of packages and forensic images, transcribing content, and more.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, Artefactual suggests that Archivemata “offers many ingest workflows: metadata and submission documentation import, zipped and unzipped Bag ingest, digital forensic image processing, SIP arrangement, manual normalization, and dataset management.”<sup>31</sup> Archivemata is compatible with hundreds of formats and has advanced search and storage management. It has the ability to integrate with third party systems that manage digital objects, and it has a very active user community, with nodes on Github, a Google Discussion forum, Twitter, a Wiki maintained by Artefactual, and a Redmine issue tracker. The conversations at these nodes are current, indicating that Archivemata is being actively used and maintained by many organizations.<sup>32</sup>

Chris Zaste notes that “The goal of Archivemata is to provide a comprehensive and OAIS compliant digital preservation system to information professionals who may have limited technical experience and/or resources.”<sup>33</sup> Bak explains that Artefactual, the developers of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Archivemata, “community,” accessed on May 23, 2018, <https://www.archivemata.org/en/community/support/>.

<sup>33</sup> Zaste, “Another Bit Bytes the Dust,” 62.

Archivemata, have placed OAIS-based digital preservation within reach for many archives through its open source platform. Bak suggests that this means many smaller institutions can develop their own digital preservation systems in structural collaboration with open source software such AtoM, Archivemata, BitCurator and Fixity. Bak explains the many benefits of open source software for small institutions including sharing the costs of developing the code base among institutions, collaborating with others on sector specific systems, and being able to make community-wide improvements through special project funding.<sup>34</sup> Zaste states that Archivemata has an intuitive user interface that is easy to navigate and select digital objects for preservation; can initiate workflows with minimal user interaction; and that the system can automatically add descriptive and preservation metadata.<sup>35</sup>

Although there are many benefits, there are some challenges when working with Archivemata. Bak claims that even though it is a free and open source software, there are still costs involved. Implementing Archivemata can, in the end, cost as much as propriety software; the costs are just in different places. Initial set-up is less expensive, but costs rise when the digital preservation system needs to come into place with institutional and user needs.<sup>36</sup> Bronwen Sprout and Mark Jordan noted that the Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL) faced some when they implemented Archivemata including: making sure Archivemata is consistent with the privacy policies of its institution; remembering that smaller institutions do not usually have digital preservation frameworks which define priorities and policies; and integrating Archivemata with content repositories may require working with IT.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Greg Bak, "How Soon Is Now? Writings on Digital Archiving in Canada from the 1980s to 2011," *The American Archivist* 79:2 (Fall/Winter 2016):307.

<sup>35</sup>Zaste, "Another Bit Bytes the Dust" 89.

<sup>36</sup>Bak, "How Soon Is Now?," 307.

<sup>37</sup> Bronwen Sprout and Mark Jordan, "Archivemata As a Service: COPPUL's Shared Digital Preservation Platform," *The Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 39:2 (2015):242.



Zaste's experiments with Archivemata in 2014 revealed uneven performance when processing large digital objects like videos and high definition images. Further, while Archivemata can produce PREMIS compliant metadata, this metadata is inert: it is not actionable and cannot be modified.<sup>38</sup>

Although Zaste identified some challenges of using Archivemata in 2014, many Canadian archives have overcome these challenges by contracting out support for the system to Artefactual Systems or other providers. Some small institutions that have found success with Archivemata are: City of Vancouver Archives; Simon Fraser University Archives, Queen's University Archives, and Faculty of Medicine Archives at University of Manitoba.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.5 Preservica

Preservica is a proprietary digital preservation system. It runs as a single integrated application that can be installed on the institution's own infrastructure, or is available as cloud-based software-as-a-service provided by the vendor (also named Preservica). It is supported to ISO 9001 standards and compliant with ISO 27001:2013 and it is designed to support operations in regulated industries and to satisfy the requirements of Europe's General Data Protection Regulation.<sup>40</sup> A digital preservation system for archives, Preservica offers:

active file format preservation (always readable and usable content), trusted living archive (flexible information and archive management with audited provenance for every file), automated content acquisition (out-of-the box ECM package adapters, upload flexibility & open APIs), flexible deployment (scalable cloud or on-premise solutions and no vendor lock-in), safe and intelligent storage (multiple self-healing copies, multiple locations, multiple cloud vendors with 100% durability & integrity guaranteed), secure authenticated access (controlled and immediate access for expert and non-expert users, internal & public), catalog synchronization (Integration with collection management tools), and policy driven

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<sup>38</sup>Zaste, "Another Bit Bytes the Dust," 90.

<sup>39</sup>Bak, "How Soon Is Now?," 308.

<sup>40</sup> Preservica, "Digital-Archive-Software," *Active Digital Preservation for Archives*, accessed on August 3, 2018, <https://preservica.com/digital-archive-software>.

actions (Classification and policy control for permissions and information disposition).<sup>41</sup>

Records can be uploaded directly to Preservica through the web interface. Non-experts such as volunteers can easily add new records, information, and assets through Wizard. Preservica ensures information security as it transfers assets directly to Preservica Cloud Edition, asserting that “transferring your information assets to Preservica ensures they remain findable, readable, and usable when required, even if that’s in 30 years or more.”<sup>42</sup> The system has the ability to preserve emails with out-of-the-box adapters, and archive web pages with Web ARChive (WARC).<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the open source Archivemata, Zaste was not able to download the Preservica code and create his own implementation of the system. Instead he could only read the Preservica website and other publications, as I have done, and draw conclusions based on the company’s own description of its product. Among the benefits stressed by Preservica in their literature are ease of use and customizability. Preservica, like Archivemata, has been adopted by many organizations.<sup>44</sup> Preservica uses a software platform that incorporates the key data-preservation principles of usability, accessibility, security, and authenticity. Once digital data has been created and stored, it is continually checked not only to prevent the obsolescence of file formats, but also to confirm the integrity of the data and metadata and ensure it has not been manipulated.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Preservica, “Content Acquisition,” accessed on August 3, 2018, <https://preservica.com/digital-archive-software/automated-content-acquisition>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Zaste, “Another Bit Bytes the Dust,” 65.

Zaste describes some of the challenges or drawbacks of using Preservica, the first being that it is cloud based. Since “cloud” computing and storage is simply computing on another computer, located elsewhere and accessed over the internet, cloud-based storage may mean the organization’s records are stored in a foreign country and are therefore subject to that country’s laws and regulations; this can be highly problematic for some archives.<sup>45</sup> The other problem Zaste mentions is that Preservica will store multiple organizations’ records in the same cloud or server, therefore opening up the risk of other organizations accidentally accessing your records.<sup>46</sup> Zaste also mentioned the difficulty when ingested files failed the appraisal which then required staff to remove records manually from Preservica, which was a “long and tedious process”.<sup>47</sup> Cloud storage makes digital records easily accessible, but at a cost – both financial and in terms of opening up an organization to accidents and errors caused by having computer processing happen outside of the organization itself. Cloud-based systems may deliver ease of use, but Zaste maintains that they are not a “replacement for careful planning and clear digital preservation policies.”<sup>48</sup> That being said, Preservica is being used by highly-recognized archives like the UK National Archives, the European Commission, and the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick in Canada, among many other clients.<sup>49</sup>

In 2017, the International Institution of Social History (IISH) was choosing a digital preservation system, deciding between Archivematica and Preservica. It chose Archivematica for multiple reasons. First it claimed that Archivematica has better functionality during the pre-ingest phase, and it has a lower cost, which was very appealing for the smaller institution. This

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>49</sup> Melissa Liberatore, “Rethinking our approach to open-source data,” *The Strategist*, July 13, 2018, accessed August 2018, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/rethinking-our-approach-to-open-source-data/>.

became a significant factor as Preservica's annual licensing fees are quite high. IISH said both systems required the same one-time development costs, but Artefactual Systems (the developer of Archivemata) was willing to do a variety of development work, even beyond adapting the Archivemata code base for the specific needs of IISH, while Preservica would only work on the Preservica core software. Lower pressure on their small IT team and the increased adaptability to IISH needs, combined with these other factors, and convinced IISH that Archivemata was the best choice for them.<sup>50</sup>

Although Archivemata and Preservica have their own strengths, good reputations and a significant client base, Archivemata makes the most sense for smaller archival institutions with designated communities that are from marginalized societies. It is a free, open access, adaptive platform, it has a broad community for help, and it is a less expensive system, all of which makes it a logical choice

Having archival standards and best practices is critical for reliability of access and knowledge of archival records for consistency in archives throughout Canada. In reviewing Canada's description standards it is exceedingly clear that making Indigenous archival records inclusive to these standards is quite lacking and needs to be addressed. This has been discussed but change needs to start happening. CAAIS newest standards have vastly improved and are more inclusive of marginalized communities, from which archives have created accession forms that allow to incorporate more culturally significant contextual information, both the NCTR and the MMIWG have created Indigenous inclusive accession forms based on these new standards. Digitally, OAIS and PREMIS make sure archives are fully prepared to preserve digital objects

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<sup>50</sup> International Institute of Social History, "The Choice For A Long Term Digital Preservation System or why the IISH favored Archivemata," accessed on August 3, 2018, [https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/blogs/blog\\_choice\\_for\\_archivemata.pdf](https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/blogs/blog_choice_for_archivemata.pdf)

for long-term access and are accessible to the designated communities. PREMIS makes sure that archives capture as much of the contextual information as possible to give full perspective of the archival records – something that is Indigenous archival records.

An analysis of Archivemata and Preservica indicates that both are reasonable options for archival institutions, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. It is worth noting that there are choices available for digital preservation systems that can handle video, photographs and physical items. Some principal influencing or limiting factors for smaller archives are financial budgets, adaptability to needs, software tools, and technical support.

Digital preservation systems aid in the processing and preservation of digital records. They do not offer long-term storage (for that an archive needs to have a digital storage system, such as a server) and they do not support direct access to the preserved records by the users of archives (which requires some kind of user access system). Digital preservation systems like Archivemata and Preservica are used by professional staff to effect digital preservation measures such as virus scanning and fixity checks, format normalization and migration, the generation and management of preservation metadata and the creation of archival and access copies of the digital records. In doing so they follow the latest standards and best practices of archives and libraries (such as OAIS and PREMIS).<sup>51</sup> Barateiro argues that digital preservation means digital records must survive indefinitely without data loss, that the records must be trustworthy or authentic, that the records must always be accessible, and finally that the records are managed with an eye on the inevitable evolution of digital systems and formats.<sup>52</sup> Thus,

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<sup>51</sup> Adrian Brown, *Practical digital preservation: a how to guide for organizations of any size* (London: Facet Publishing, 2013):13-17.

<sup>52</sup>Barateiro, “Designing Digital Preservation Solutions,” 7-8.

while digital preservation systems are essential to the work of digital archiving, other systems are needed to manage storage and to allow user access to the records.

### 3.6 Access Systems

A digital content management system is usually geared towards content creation, production, and online publication. It is good for creative collaboration and modification of content, as well as general usage. Content management systems are more conducive to be collaborative for creation of content and documents, that they are better for “living documents.”<sup>53</sup> Deane Barker emphasizes “What’s important to note is that a ‘content management system’ is a specific manifestation of software designed to enable the discipline of content management.”<sup>54</sup> Barker further explains that digital content management systems core functions include; permissions, state management, workflow, versioning, dependency management, search, organization, and allows content reuse, content automation and aggregation, and increased editorial efficiency. What it does not do is create content, marketing plans, format content or provide governance.<sup>55</sup> Archival description application systems do many of the same tasks. Either one of these are needed in a digital preservation system as access points to imputing archival accession records and descriptions.

#### 3.6.1 Mukurtu

Mukurtu is a free, open source content management system. It is managed by the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation at Washington State University and funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It

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<sup>53</sup> A living document is one that is not static, but rather one that is continually being updated or edited.

<sup>54</sup> Deane Barker, “Web Content Management,” *Safari*, accessed on October 10, 2018, <https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/web-content-management/9781491908112/ch01.html>.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

was designed with Indigenous cultural heritage materials in mind. Mukurtu claims that their main aim is a “community driven approach” and to “foster relationships of respect and trust”.<sup>56</sup>

Mukurtu has many unique and collaborative features that make it stand out from other digital content management tools, such as “TK Labels” which stand for traditional knowledge labels. These allow users to label knowledge that is traditional and even sensitive, in order to restrict access according to community protocols and to let users know that these protocols need to be followed with this item or material, and that it should be used and shared respectfully. Mukurtu has tools that allow communities implementing the digital content management system to control the level of access based on cultural needs and values, from completely open to strictly controlled, whether by gender, clan, age or any other criteria. Mukurtu allows management at the level of the aggregation or at the level of the item, claiming to be able to “Create infinite viewing and sharing possibilities by selecting multiple digital heritage items and creating collections as new objects that can be selected and viewed just like single items.”<sup>57</sup>

Mukurtu runs a security feature called Roundtrip which allows the system to export and import materials and knowledge; it performs a checksum upon return to make sure no data has been changed.<sup>58</sup> Mukurtu “uses a distinct metadata scheme from digital heritage items to best represent and display linguistic content, robust search and filter tools [that] promote discovery, the ability to embed audio, images, and video, and to connect dictionary entries with digital heritage items helps highlight language and support language learners and Mukurtu CMS is

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<sup>56</sup> Mukurtu, “Home,” accessed on May 23, 2018, <http://mukurtu.org/>.

<sup>57</sup> Mukurtu, “Learn,” accessed on May 23, 2018, <http://mukurtu.org/learn/>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Unicode UTF-8 compliant to best display as many languages as possible.”<sup>59</sup> Mukurtu also has mobile capabilities with Mukurtu Mobile 2.5, launched in August 2015, which works on iPhone and iPad. The mobile app allows for integration with Mukurtu CMS 1.5 and 2.0, offline content collection and creation, Geopositioning, syncing with communities and cultural protocols from the Mukurtu site, the Mukurtu CMS standard metadata, internal documentation and online support page, in-app image, audio and video collection, full EXIF support for photographs, and preview content online.<sup>60</sup>

Mukurtu is uniquely aimed at Indigenous community archives and Indigenous archival records, both textual and digital. Kimberly Christen states that:

Mukurtu Shared will connect tribal and national repositories and enable Native and non-Native curators to responsibly, respectfully and reciprocally manage and share cultural heritage materials and encourage others to engage with the materials ... By providing a standardized, replicable workflow and shared online platform, Mukurtu Shared will, in essence, change the way federal repositories curate their Native American collections, promoting collaboration at all stages, and it will give repositories of Native culture a new model for collaborative curation.<sup>61</sup>

A few Mukurtu archival projects include Voices of Amiskwaciy, Plateau’s People Web Portal, Catawaba Indian Nation Archives and the Huna Heritage Foundation Digital Archives.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, The dictionary also has a support page with FAQ’s. See <http://support.mukurtu.org/customer/en/portal/topics/1011787-mukurtu-dictionary/articles>, accessed on May 23, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. The dictionary also has a support page with FAQ’s. See <http://support.mukurtu.org/customer/en/portal/topics/1011787-mukurtu-dictionary/articles>, accessed on May 23, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Adrian Aumen, “WSU digital archiving project receives prestigious Mellon grant,” *WSU Insider*, accessed on August 2, 2018, <https://news.wsu.edu/2017/12/21/digital-archiving-mellon-grant/>.

<sup>62</sup> Mukurtu, “Showcase,” accessed on August 5, 2018, <http://mukurtu.org/showcase/>.



### 3.6.2 AtoM

Access to Memory (AtoM) is a web based open source application for archival description in a digital preservation system. Artefactual Systems wrote the initial code base and maintains the code base on an ongoing basis, as it does with Archivematica. AtoM is an open source application, so the software is free, the source code is easily available for use and modification, and documentation is easily available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported Licence. There is also a public user forum for discussions, FAQ's and support.<sup>63</sup> The interface is based on the International Council of Archives descriptive standards, yet flexible enough to meet other descriptive standards (such as RAD, DACS and Dublin Core). AtoM can be multilingual and also be set up as a multi repository. AtoM has a section where users can share resources, guides, tutorials, customizations, camps and success stories. It has the capability of restricting access based on archives-specific criteria. This could allow archives to use AtoM to implement Indigenous access protocols.

### 3.6.3 AtoM vs Mukurtu

Atom and Mukurtu offer very exciting systems and tools to work with alongside a digital preservation system. Mukurtu was designed to implement cultural restrictions and protocols, and to work with multiple Indigenous languages. These are all very encouraging and innovative ways of including Indigenous archival records into an archival access and description system. That being said, there are drawbacks. First, their database is not based on archival descriptive standards, and descriptions within the system are not mappable. This may make it difficult to share records among archives, as when archives upload descriptions into multi-repository portals such as the Manitoba Archival Information Network or Archives Canada. Additionally, this

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<sup>63</sup> AtoM, "Home," accessed on September 13, 2018. <https://www.accesstomemory.org/en/>.

could create barriers to exiting the application if the product ceased to exist, or if the archives had to shift systems for any reason.

Mukurtu was created and beneficial for smaller collections, basically aimed at a community sized collection. For bigger collections like those at the NCTR or MMIWG, which have collected archival records at a national scale and who act as community delegated organizations and must manage access on behalf of dozens of communities, it is difficult to see how Mukurtu would implement so many distinct and varied cultural protocols. It becomes much to complex. Finally the Mukurtu community is quite small, so finding support and troubleshooting through user forums is likewise reduced. There are some FAQ's and some discussions and free help, but to a small degree.

AtoM has been around for nearly 10 years and its community has grown very large. It is widely adopted within Canada, and has a growing profile in the US, Europe and elsewhere. It has its own wiki page, social media, FAQ's, a Help page, technical support plus much more. AtoM is based on archival standards and was designed for easy integration with Archivematica. Being standards-based and having a strong community of adoption, it also offers interoperability to move from system to system.

Although both systems might do an amazing job with certain collections, looking at long term goals, it seems like AtoM is the right choice for a larger national collection, one that can be seen as growing and evolving as institutions needs are also evolving, and one that an institution can go to for a wide community of support.

### **Conclusion**

Many of Canada's archival standards and best practices are being revised to be more inclusive of Indigenous communities. Canada's accession records try to reflect a full contextual

nature of the records, understanding the perspective from which they were created. RAD's latest revision was in 2008, and Canadian archivists are working towards new recommendations for revisions reflecting the concerns of Canadian archivists today, including how descriptions treat Indigenous people in Canada. OAIS and PREMIS are stable international standards for digital preservation activities that will work for a small archival institution and one with many Indigenous archival records.

In identifying systems for digital preservation and access, the search came down to Archivematica, a free open source digital preservation system, and Preservica, a proprietary system. Although both offer useful features and both offer challenges, Archivematica with its low initial costs, large user community and adaptability of programming, made the most sense. An access point is needed for Archivematica and the field was narrowed down to AtoM. It is an open source application that has been widely used in Canada, was designed to work with Archivematica, and is geared towards archival national standards. Mukurtu, also a free open source content management system that aims specifically at archival records that are Indigenous in nature, has unique tools to accommodate different cultural protocols, but AtoM's broader scale and adherence to national and international archival standards make it the preferred choice for a larger archive with a national collection

## Chapter 4

### Case Study: Creating a Legacy Archive of Artistic Expressions for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

I was hired at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG Inquiry) to create a Legacy Archive. This archive is comprised mostly of artistic expressions collected as part of the truth gathering process. I was also tasked with creating safe, representational spaces where witnesses could feel comfortable telling their truth, whether in a public or private setting. To design an archive, I began by creating a Legacy Archive policy, based upon the MMIWG Inquiry's mission and mandate. As part of the mandate, the MMIWG Inquiry aims to:

examine and report on the systemic causes behind the violence that Indigenous women and girls experience, and their greater vulnerability to violence, by looking for patterns and underlying factors that explain why higher levels of violence occur. The commissioners have been mandated to examine the underlying historical, social, economic, institutional and cultural factors that contribute to the violence.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the MMIWG Inquiry states its mission is to:

**Discover the truth:** by gathering stories. These truths will weave together to show us what violence really looks like for Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

**Honor the truth:** through public education.

**Give life to the truth:** by creating a living legacy through commemoration and artistic expressions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, "Mandate," (Website) *Resources*, accessed on March 8, 2018, [file:///C:/Users/Petra/Downloads/fact-sheet-what-is-the-national-inquiry%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Petra/Downloads/fact-sheet-what-is-the-national-inquiry%20(1).pdf).

<sup>2</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Facebook*, "Do you know the National Inquiry's Mission?" *Timeline Photos*, 2017, accessed on March 8, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/MMIWG/photos/a.367701940261946.1073741828.361462917552515/524740757891396/?type=3&theater>. To do this, the inquiry implemented a call out for artistic expressions. Their hope was that not only would these artistic expressions serve as a commemoration to these women so they would not be forgotten, but also to contribute as inclusive voice that is telling a story and truth and can be used for public

Once it was established that the MMIWG Inquiry would collect artistic expressions as evidence and commemoration, the Legacy Archive was created to care for and honour them. The Legacy Archive appraisal policy establishes what will be included in the collection (See Appendix 1). The MMIWG Inquiry understands how important it is to be inclusive, therefore it created an archive that allows art by all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in any language, from all parts of the country, as long as it addresses Indigenous subject matter that relates in some way to the legacy of the critical violence of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, as well as two spirited 2SLGBTQQIA communities. This would include Indigenous historical knowledge, culture, language, acts of resistance, activism, honouring those are who missing and murdered, acts of commemoration or reconciliation, and art as a means of healing.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4.1 MMIWG Inquiry Legacy Archive Policy**

The uniqueness of this policy is that it includes decolonizing Indigenous protocols for archives. Beginning with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), I implemented Articles 8.1, 11.1, 12.1, 15.1, 15.2, and 31.1.<sup>4</sup> The Legacy Archive will be inclusive and will collect all artistic expressions that share Indigenous knowledge, especially materials used to relay knowledge about Indigenous traditions, culture, acts of resistance to colonialism, special events, and historical truths (UNDRIP Article 8.1). The Legacy Archive will preserve any artistic expressions that are donated, including records of performative arts, ceremonies, sculpture, written text, paintings and much more. Although the

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education. Link to the call out for artistic expression, <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/files/call-for-artistic-expressions.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Please see Appendix I, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Legacy Archive Appraisal Policy.

<sup>4</sup> This is TRC's *Call to Action number 69*.

Legacy Archive maintains and protects archeological and historical sites, the Legacy Archive will encourage and support any cultural traditions and customs that are part of the donation (UNDRIP Article 11.1).

The Legacy Archive will adhere to all ceremonial and traditional protocols that go with the donation, as per donor's request. Further, the Legacy Archive will adhere to all access and privacy restrictions, based on any cultural, spiritual, and ceremonial traditions as instructed by the donor (UNDRIP Article 12.1).

The Legacy Archive acknowledges, and is aware of, the diversity of Indigenous cultures and Nations, and will be sensitive to, and stay away from, any type of pan-Indigenous teachings and descriptions of any artistic expressions donated (UNDRIP Article 15.1).

The Legacy Archive will collect many different types of artistic expressions that speak back to colonial practices, the harsh legacies of those practices, and the historical truths of the critical high rates of violence against Indigenous Women and Girls, as well as 2SLGBTQQIA communities. An archive can commit to collecting a wide range of Indigenous archival records that speak to the discrimination Indigenous peoples face, and to demonstrate how these archival records can combat prejudice and racist beliefs. The Legacy Archive will do this in a trauma-informed and respectful way.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Legacy Archive will consult an Indigenous Advisory Circle<sup>6</sup> to help promote the message and knowledge of the Legacy Archive. The Indigenous Advisory Circle will discuss how Indigenous archival records are accepted and integrated into an archive, and how best to describe them, care for them, provide access to them,

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<sup>5</sup> See Michelle Caswell, "Toward a survivor-centered approach to records documenting human rights abuse: lessons from community archives." *Archival Science* 14, no. 3-4 (2014): 307-322, for more information on this approach.

<sup>6</sup> This will be discussed a little later in the chapter.

and make sure all of this is done in a trauma-informed way (UNDRIP Article 15.2). The Legacy Archive will consult and respect decisions made by donors about accessibility to the donation, use of the donation, and about the intellectual and cultural property rights (including rights about copying and sharing) that apply to the donation.

I also sought to incorporate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, specifically those aimed at archives, into the Legacy Archive's protocols. The Legacy Archive will accept archives in any language, especially those that are in any Indigenous languages, and the Legacy Archive will take on the responsibility of getting the records translated into English and French. This makes the records accessible to the public across the nation, but the Legacy Archive primarily aims to preserve the record in the donor's preferred language (TRC Call 13). The Legacy Archive will integrate Indigenous values, practices, and ceremonies into the processes of archiving, including use of language and the handling of Indigenous objects. Further, I will work with donors to share the story about their donation; a variety of recording options (either audio, video or written text) are available to preserve the donor's statement about their art and its meaning, so that donations truly reflect the donor's voice. This provides the user with a more engaged, emotional, and powerful relationship with the artistic expression (TRC Call 79).

I implemented into the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Legacy Archive policy, Calls to Action 43 and 44, and many articles from UNDRIP so that the archive will inform a donor about the nature of this archive, how the records donated to their archive will be used, and recognize the conditions under which knowledge can be ethically and legally acquired. With that, the Legacy Archive will always allow a donor to change

her/his/their minds about her/his/their donation in any capacity (continuing consent)<sup>7</sup> and apply standards of free, prior, and informed consent. The power of ownership will always stay with the donor (UNDRIP Article 31.1). The Legacy Archive will always be respectful of the relationship, and honour the donation for which it was given.

This policy was also written with the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles (UNJOP) in mind. Many of the stories told at MMIWG Inquiry hearings and by the donors describe experiences that are, or border on, human rights violations and abuses. It is critical that these records are created carefully, with measures for long-term preservation, and accessibility to the victims and families is essential.<sup>8</sup> It is because of this that I have conducted a survey of digital preservation systems, to ensure that these records are kept safe and accessible.

The Legacy Archive has also implemented the best practice protocols for Indigenous archival materials that were published by the First Archivist's Circle, known as *The Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* (discussed in Chapter Two). These protocols establish the importance of building relationships of respect and understanding the wishes of the community/people; they stress the importance of discussions of education for the public and understanding of issues surrounding the Indigenous people/communities. The Legacy Archive has implemented these protocols throughout its policy, but also throughout the archive itself, including in the paperwork and in staff conduct requirements, both with other staff and with donors. All staff must be familiar with the history of residential schools, their legacies, and the stories of survivors. Also, all staff members must attend some hearings to fully comprehend who

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix II, MMIWG Legacy Archive Consent Form, particularly highlighted text.

<sup>8</sup> Mnjama, "The Orentlicher Principles on the Preservation and Access to Archives Bearing Witness to Human Rights Violations," 215.



they are creating the Legacy Archive for and why. When the archivist sits down with a donor, it is important that the donor trust them with that donation and that the archivist commits to the promises made in the accession form.

#### **4.2 MMIWG Inquiry Legacy Archive Accessions Form**

The Legacy Archive implemented these protocols by adding cultural questions into the accessions form, to ensure both the donations and the wishes of the donor are respected.<sup>9</sup> In addition to compiling information identified in the Canadian Archival Accession Information Standard (CAAIS), the Legacy Archive asks extra questions about the donor's nation, community, language, cultural protocols and restrictions to be followed, and any other cultural procedures we should be aware of. These questions provide additional historical and cultural knowledge, and they add contextual information that is needed for the Legacy Archive to advance the ongoing and always incomplete decolonization of the colonial records. It is not mandatory for a donor to answer these questions, if she/he/they are not comfortable. As part of the ongoing process of free and informed consent, this is always explained to them prior to filling out the form. Nonetheless, most are quite happy to include answers to these questions, and to have their information included in the archive.

#### **4.3 MMIWG Inquiry Legacy Archive Indigenous Advisory Circle**

After putting the Legacy Archive policy and accession forms into place, the next step was to create an Indigenous Advisory Circle. It is imperative that this archive has an Indigenous voice. When it comes time to do outreach, education projects, and exhibits, it is critical that Indigenous voices choose the artistic expressions from the collection to tell stories from the

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<sup>9</sup> Please see Appendix III, specifically the highlighted portion of Legacy Archive Accession Form.

perspectives of Indigenous women and girls and members from the 2SLGBTQQIA community's perspective. I worked closely with Indigenous staff at the MMIWG Inquiry as they are very familiar with the territories we have visited; they are also familiar with some of the artistic expressions donated at the hearings. It is beneficial that MMIWG Inquiry has employees from across the country, and who bring with them knowledge and culture from all over Canada. The Indigenous Advisory Circle currently has seven people, all from different walks of life, that can really contribute to the diversity of Indigenous nations and culture. This diversity can be reflected in exhibits we create, both digitally and physically. With that diversity in mind, the Indigenous Advisory Circle includes an Elder, a chief-in-waiting, two grandmothers, two artists, two two-spirited people, and a spiritual woman who is familiar with medicines and other traditional knowledges. The Circle has representation from First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations, and from regions of the North, West Coast, Prairie Provinces, and East Coast.

This advisory group will also provide advice on contributions that were donated anonymously, some of which have very little information about their provenance. The Indigenous Advisory Circle may recognize designs or materials and will help fill in some contextual gaps, and also provide advice on how to care for these donations, based on their spirituality and sacredness. The Indigenous Advisory Circle, especially the elders, grandmothers, and the spiritual woman, may play a role doing blessings, smudging, or other cultural/spiritual ceremonies on the artistic expressions. Furthermore, they can advise on the materials used for a particular artistic expression and the best way to preserve them.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Please see Appendix IV, a document on the roles and responsibilities of an Indigenous Advisory Circle.

#### 4.4 Archival Needs

Once the foundations for the archive were set, I embarked on nearly a year of travelling with the Inquiry collecting artistic expressions, before returning to the office to fully assess and process the resulting collection, and to consider the possibilities for a digital preservation system, and either a digital content management system or archival description system.

The Legacy Archive is comprised of both digital and analogue artistic expressions. The collection currently has over 385 pieces and continues to grow. It is a diverse collection including digital music, written poetry, canvas paintings, an etched glass vase, books, quilts, a miniature wooden red river cart, a sacred rattle, a turtle medicine bag, Métis sashes, Miskwaabimaag (sacred red willow baskets), baby swaddle and baby booties, a miniature Birchwood canoe, silk scarf, seal skin boutonnière, an oral story, wall murals, red dress pins, installation art, wooden painting, metal framed-wooden piece star blanket, Faceless dolls, performance art saved digitally on hard drive, and a statue with 1200 polished stones with names of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls carved into them. These artistic pieces are made out of various materials including Birchwood bark, felt, paper, turtle shell and hide, beads, feathers, wool, cotton, polyester, leather, stained glass, ceramic, softwood, Caribou antler, glass, buttons, cedar, and organic material. Currently, the total physical space of Legacy Archive is 6.3 cubic meters.

There are also digital materials in this collection. Some are music videos and DVDs submitted by artists; some are short videos given by donors who discussed their donation; another is a video of a cultural entertainment night held at the Vancouver hearings; the remainder are digital photographs. This digital content is approximately 100 GB.

Additional digital materials to be included are the Public Hearings, Institutional Hearings, and Expert Panels. The total digital content of this material is approximately 42 TB.

Furthermore, this collection will be accompanied by all archival documents attached to each donation, plus other documents that recorded the cultural processes and procedures of MMIWG Inquiry at community hearings. This collection will also include all official documents and reports released by the MMIWG Inquiry, including the Executive Summary, Interim Report, Research Plan, Paths of Inquiry, Lexicon, Legal Path, Open Call for Artistic Expressions, the Final Report, and other documents.

This collection has been processed into the archives and has in its accession records how to care for it in Indigenous ways, including traditions and protocols. Many of the items describe how they are to be blessed or smudged when they have been used. This collection also includes a section of donor video statements about their artistic expression and why they have donated to the MMIWG Inquiry. These have become part of the accession record as well as the artistic expression. These donations represent the stories and truths from family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community. They speak to culture, lost traditions, ceremonies, stories, spirituality, beliefs, healing, pain, anger, loss and truth.

With this eclectic mix of archival records, it becomes a challenge to preserve, manage and make accessible the Legacy Archive when the National Inquiry has a total lifespan of only two years. In determining the type of software system best suited to this archive, consideration must be given to both the immediate and future needs of the Legacy Archive.

## 4.5 Archive Challenges

The Legacy Archive presents many challenges when determining if a digital preservation system and digital content management system/archival description system should be used. Ideally, archival needs would have been planned for from the beginning. However, for the MMIWG Inquiry, there was no plan in place. It would have been difficult to plan ahead, given that the amount and types of artifacts to be collected, and over what period, were unknown. The MMIWG Inquiry was initially contracted to operate for two years, and only one and half years of that was engaging with the public when art donations would be accepted. A two-year extension was requested, but only six months of that was granted. It is very difficult to plan ahead for digital preservation needs when so little information is available.

Another challenge was limited staffing. As the sole archivist for almost a year, my priority was to be on the road collecting artistic expressions at community hearings and working on the ground with donors. This left little time in the office to work on paperwork and other archival duties, which created a back log of work that was high priority.

The structure of the MMIWG Inquiry was designed to incorporate a massive influx of donations in a short amount of time (385 artistic expressions in less than two years). This large volume in a short time makes it difficult to complete all of the necessary steps in the accession process to prepare for ingesting items for digital preservation. Necessary paperwork includes condition reports, ensuring all standards are met, following all of the Indigenous protocols that the donor has requested, and all of the Indigenous procedures we have implemented through policies. One of the human challenges for digital preservation is making sure to get the copyright consent from the donor so there are no questions about how best to exhibit the donation or

otherwise make it available.<sup>11</sup> This is something we were aware of, and it was addressed in all of the consent forms.

Finally, the Legacy Archive faces challenges that all archives face, those of software obsolescence, data vulnerabilities, natural disasters, and lack of staff and time. With all these challenges, it is clear that there will not be enough time to fully implement either a digital content management system or digital preservation system before the Inquiry draws to its close. Instead, the most pressing task is to ensure all archival records, textual, physical and digital are up to standards so that the next custodian of the Legacy Archive will have everything they need to care for the Legacy Archive and to continue on its journey.

#### 4.6 **Community Hearings: Preparing Safe Spaces for Gathering Truth**

My second role as an archivist for the MMIWG Inquiry has been to set up the community hearing spaces with displays of artistic expressions and ceremonial items. This helps witnesses and their supporters feel represented and safe, so they can tell their truth. Primarily, it makes it look like less like a courtroom space, and more like a room where one is supported and loved. Decorating the hearing space with Indigenous artistic expressions begins with surrounding the space with quilts that have patches with special messages made by Indigenous community members. There is a blanket on the floor and in the middle of the blanket the Miskwaabimaag basket is placed. The MMIWG Inquiry describes the importance and the role of the basket as:

The basket was gifted to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to assist the Commissioners as they gather the stories of loved ones, families and survivors of violence. For many Indigenous people throughout the world, baskets are used to gather things that support our *mino-biimaadiziwin* (the good life of all beings).

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<sup>11</sup>Zaste, "Another Bit Bytes the Dust," 32-33.

*Miskwaabimaag* (red willow) is used by many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island. It is often used in ceremony to demonstrate respect and to provide spiritual protection. The red willow used for this basket was harvested near the *Manito Api* sacred site – a place where Indigenous people have gathered for ceremony for thousands of years.

The basket represents *kwe* (women); it symbolizes our continued connection to land, language and culture through the ceremonies and teachings of our Grandmothers. It is a visible reminder of women’s important role in building, strengthening and repairing relationships. As the National Inquiry undertakes its work, it will hold all of the truths that are gathered by the Commissioners; these stories are teachings that will help to identify ways we can work together towards a collective good life.<sup>12</sup>

The basket is surrounded by many objects including a copper cup filled with water which represents elements of this earth; there are medicines of tobacco, sage, lavender, and sweet grass, all used to smudge with, to purify the space - before and after each testimony (depending on the territory – some do not smudge, and some smudge with different medicines); then there are artistic expressions that represent different nations including: birch bark biting, moccasins, woodland art, sealskin owls, qulliq, birch bark canoe, caribou antler on a decorative base, Métis sash, a mini red river cart, various rocks and stones, a replica *amauti*, and a cedar woven hat. Finally, spaces are left on the blanket so families can put items down for their own comfort. This is a unique role for an archivist, and it has become central to the hearing to have a space for the witness that is comforting when they are telling their truth, which is full of tragedy, heartbreak and terror.

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<sup>12</sup> Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, “Miskwaabimaag Basket,” accessed on March 20, 2018, <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/files/fact-sheet-information-about-the-miskwaabimaag-basket.pdf>.

Further, the archives has implemented and respected the custom of the gift of reciprocity.

The MMIWG Inquiry states:

Gift-giving has been, and continues to be, used in ceremony as means to recognize important events, redistribute food and material wealth, and to build and honour social, economic and political relationships. It is an honour to share what one has, just as it is an honour to receive. By practicing this indigenous law of reciprocity, the National Inquiry is hoping to decolonize its approach. The gift of seeds is a way of acknowledging each individual's time and experience and healing. Gift giving demonstrates respect for the stories shared and encourages the telling of the same in a truthful, empowering and safe/healthy manner, respectful of cultural protocols and practices.<sup>13</sup>

As the Senior Archivist it is my duty and honour to ensure that this reciprocity occurs. I ensured that every witness and their supports who share their truth received a tobacco tie, which is customary for sharing knowledge (unless they are Inuit or First Nations from the west coast, who do not share that custom) and a gift of reciprocity which we gave seed packets of a flower or medicine that grows in the witnesses' community (unless they are Inuit – because flowers are not an appropriate gift in their culture, so they instead receive either Arctic cotton for a qulliq or Labrador tea; witnesses from Labrador and Newfoundland received Labrador tea also). As an archivist, it is important to remember to offer a gift of reciprocity when you receive a gift/donation from an Indigenous donor. These small gifts are very important gestures that represent understanding and respect of Indigenous culture.

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<sup>13</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, (Website), *Resources*, "Gifts of Reciprocity," accessed on March 14, 2018, <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/files/fact-sheet-gifts-of-reciprocity-the-national-inquiry-seeds-project.pdf>.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, my role as archivist for the MMIWG Inquiry has been a unique and inspirational journey. I was tasked to create a Legacy Archive with artistic expressions from which I created an Indigenous-based archival policy, with accession and description standards that addressed the Joint-Orentlicher Principles, UNDRIP, TRC Calls to Action as well as other Indigenous protocols and best practices. I also experienced many connections with donors who have experienced such horrific trauma, yet demonstrated such resilient strength, and who put their trust in us to care for their story (artistic expression, archival records, etc.). This reinforced my resolve to care for and respect these gifts in the right way. I made sure that I had an offering of sacred tobacco (a tobacco tie) if appropriate, and also had ready a gift of reciprocity which demonstrates that we have taken the time to acknowledge some notion of understanding of cultural protocols, even if only in partial. This helped build a relationship of respect and trust. The MMIWG Inquiry currently has over 385 artistic expression items that translate Indigenous knowledge, culture, language, truth, history, pain, resilience, commemorations, reconciliation, activism, hope, awareness and healing.

These perspectives on Canadian history need to be heard and need to be in our archives. As archivists we can help in so many ways. We can be inclusive in regards to the types of records that we collect; we can be respectful and honour the protocols of the records we receive; we can learn more about Indigenous culture, particularly about the territory we are in, and include respectful ceremony or traditions that those particular nations participate in when it comes to knowledge transfer. We can offer guardianship rather than demand ownership. And most importantly, we can be allies in this fight for truth, and for decolonization of Canadian history, by accepting Indigenous art in archives as a medium of evidence.

## Conclusion

By first creating trustful and meaningful relationships between the archive and surrounding Indigenous communities, we can begin the process of decolonizing the archive. Then with the inclusion of Indigenous art as a social memory medium in the archive, this expedites the decolonization process and effectively provides a platform for Indigenous voices in Canadian history. Indigenous Art can “Give Life to the Truth,”<sup>1</sup> by preserving Indigenous knowledge and culture, by resisting colonial violence, by revealing the historical truth, by encouraging activism and rallying together. Finally, it can offer healing to those that have suffered from colonial trauma.

Many global Indigenous rights and human rights instruments like the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles, UNDRIP and TRC’s Calls to Action, advocate for archival protocols and policies to be inclusive and fair to Indigenous Nations in Canada. In terms of archival records about Indigenous people these organizations lay down solid ground work for archival institutions to help introduce new and innovative ideas and ways to work with Indigenous communities to better include them in management and description of their own records. There have been archivists who have picked up on these very ideas, or have come up with their own, such as activist archiving, participatory approaches and using donor voices for description purposes. They have built trusting relationships with Indigenous communities in order to begin reconciliation between them, and to work on decolonizing the archival institution.

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<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the MMIWG’s Inquiry mission statement as released on Facebook, “Give Life to the Truth by creating a living legacy through commemoration and artistic expressions,” accessed on March 20, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/MMIWG/photos/a.367701940261946.1073741828.361462917552515/524740757891396/?type=3&theater>.

Archival standards, and best practices, such as OAIS and PREMIS, are good foundational points for building an archive. Accession standards have been revised to be more comprehensive and more contextual, which is more inclusive for marginalized communities. RAD is not where it needs to be and leaves little space to include any Indigenous description (like language, protocols, culture, etc.) but is in the beginning of the process of revision based on archivists concerns. Looking to best practices and archival standards for archival records can prepare a transitory archive to be received at a permanent archive to ensure a smooth transition.. Finally, an archive will need a good digital preservation system and content management/archival description system to best accept, describe, preserve and make accessible these very important records.

The case study of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls demonstrates how these archival theories, standards, best practices, and Indigenous rights and human rights helped frame and launch the Legacy Archive, but also can add to the conversation about how archives can become more culturally aware of the different Indigenous nations around the country and how to be more inclusive in conversations when accepting donations from Indigenous people or communities.

Although there can be challenges to including physical objects (in this case Indigenous art) into an archive because of space restrictions, environment control issues and insurance policies, the flipside is that instead of changing records to decolonize them (by changing names, terms, and context) we can add to the archival collection by including Indigenous art and its Indigenous perspective to combat those colonized histories in the archive and acknowledge a non-western approach to social memory keeping.

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## Appendix I

### National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Legacy Archive Appraisal Policy

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## **Mission and Mandate of the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Legacy Archive**

The mandate of the Legacy Archive is to collect artistic expressions that incorporate the mission of the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls which speaks the truth by honouring the lives and legacies of Indigenous women, girls and members of the LGBTQ2S community. This encompasses three goals:

1. Finding the truth
2. Honouring the truth
3. Giving life to the truth as a path to healing

**It is our goal to provide those sharing their stories with a culturally safe space that they can access with support surrounding them. Our work is connected to the land and rooted in traditions that have kept Indigenous communities strong for thousands of years.**

## **The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Legacy Archive Appraisal Policy**

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Legacy Archive (NI-LA) collects, preserves and makes accessible Artistic Expressions that were donated throughout the duration of its contract. This policy applies to all archive collections stored, managed and maintained by NI-LA. It applies to collections owned by the NI-LA as well as those deposited under long term loan/deposit agreements.

1. Appraisal is the process of selecting records of continuing archival value for permanent preservation and identifying those of little or no value as archival records so that the latter may be disposed of. It is not practicable, in terms of storage space and intellectual control, to retain all records as archive. Appraisal for archival purposes concentrates largely on the historical value of a record. Historical value is informed by the evidential value (the way the record documents the history, structure and function of an organization or the life and experiences of an individual) and informational value (the way the record informs research into places, people and subjects). As a result, a strict approach to collection management is required. The aims of this archival appraisal policy are:
  - 1.1 to determine and select those records which have the highest archival value in terms of their evidential, informational or historical importance;
  - 1.2 to avoid duplication in the selection of archival material;
  - 1.3 to support the objectives and collection themes of the mandate of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;
  - 1.4 to provide appraisal methods that will integrate the appraisal of both physical and digital records, as well as any records of other medium;
  - 1.5 to be aware of usage and potential future research, but to assess these needs alongside overall collection and acquisition strategies and



- 1.6 To assess risk in all circumstances and make decisions based on full analysis of available information.
2. Appraisal will be carried out by qualified archival professionals, or by para-professionals under the supervision of a qualified archivist.
  - 2.1 Appraisers should additionally be aware of potential levels of interest from our core user groups, and where possible retain material which will add significantly to main research topics such as genealogy and local history.
  - 2.2 Appraisers should consider keeping material which may not exactly conform to any established criteria, but which does have information which is of interest, or which may be presented in a lively or engaging way.
  - 2.3 Appraisal decisions made after a collection has been accessioned or catalogued will be recorded in the archive catalogue at the appropriate level.
  - 2.4 For new deposits and where practicable initial basic appraisal will be performed as part of the accession process to identify material known not to have a high archival value before it enters the collections.
  - 2.5 All paperwork recording the decision making surrounding appraisal will be permanently retained.
  - 2.6 Our right to appraise will be negotiated and recorded in the Accessions form for each archive collection. Items may not be accepted for the collection without a completed and signed Accessions form and Consent form.
3. The preservation of analogue and digital materials includes all management activities and strategies aimed at ensuring the integrity, authenticity, and short- and long-term availability of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls continuing memory. There are various types of preservation activities: those related to the physical management of the collection, such as storage; those involving restoration, which include preventing documents from deteriorating and repairing already damaged documents; and those associated with reproduction and the making of replacement copies, which ensure the preservation and availability of documents that would otherwise be too fragile to access. On the digital side, innovative strategies are implemented to maintain accessibility to documents in outdated formats and to ensure the originals are protected through backup and storage.
4. The NI-LA will be inclusive in its appraisal strategy, including artistic expressions from all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as part of our mission and mandate of gathering the truth and commemorating the truth about the violence against Indigenous women and girls, as well as honouring Indigenous culture.
  - i. The NI-LA will accept all artistic expressions in any Indigenous language and will be responsible for the translation.
  - ii. The NI-LA will accept all mediums of artistic expressions as long it has the capacity to preserve it. Exceptions will be made if the physicality of it is too large for the physical

space of the archive, or if the digital content is too large for the digital preservation server.

- iii. The NI-LA has the right to refuse artistic expressions if it promotes hate speech, racist ideologies or any illegal agendas.
5. The Legacy Archive will adhere to all Indigenous protocols for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Legacy Archive.

## Appendix II

### Archive Consent Form

<b>Accession No.</b>
CF A2018-

<b>Corresponding AF Accession No.</b>
AF A2018-

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NI-MMIWG) believes your artistic expression is very important and can help us educate people about violence against Indigenous women. We hope that you will consent to allowing the NI-MMIWG to use your work of art to do this education by signing the consent below.

The NI-MMIWG would like to be able to use your name, face, voice and other identifying information, and to make your work of art broadly available, to help with public education about violence against Indigenous women. If you choose not to give this consent, the NI-MMIWG will not be able to use your artistic expression except for archival purposes, in accordance with applicable privacy laws. Whether you wish to give this consent is completely your choice.

By signing this consent, the Artist acknowledges that the NI-MMIWG shall have the right to use the Artist's work, on its own or in combination with the works of others, and to use the Artist's name, face, voice, and other identifying information, on websites, in reports, in all forms of educational materials and media, in documentary films, television and radio commercials, in computer-based and all other forms of media now or hereafter known, for public education purposes and otherwise in furtherance of the mandates of the NI-MMIWG. The NI-MMIWG may edit, translate, juxtapose and synchronize the Artist's work as necessary for such purposes. The NI-MMIWG may make the artistic work available for use by third parties where the NI-MMIWG is of the opinion that the third party will use the work for public information purposes in a dignified manner that respects the Artist, including through film, TV and other media. The NI-MMIWG will take care to protect the integrity of the artistic work but will not be liable if the Artist is not satisfied with the way in which NI-MMIWG or third parties have rendered the work. If you do not want your artistic expression to be used for certain things, please fill out in the appropriate field below.

The Artist also understands that by signing this Consent, he/she will not have any legal rights or claims against those who use my identifying information, photographs or documents in the above manner.

The NI-MMIWG will ensure that any use of the Artist's work is appropriately credited in all instances that the Artist's work is used, unless the Artist advises that he/she does not wish such credit to be given.

The artist may revoke this consent at any time by providing written instructions to withdraw their consent to the NI-MMIWG. However, the NI-MMIWG cannot be responsible for any information that has been already publicly disclosed prior to the artist revoking their consent.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Middle name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of authorized agent/distributor: \_\_\_\_\_

What don't you want your art used for? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of work submitted (please check all boxes that apply)

Film/Video: \_\_\_

Novel: \_\_\_

Play: \_\_\_

Poetry/Spoken Word: \_\_\_

Photography: \_\_\_

Music: \_\_\_

Drawing/Painting: \_\_\_

Dance: \_\_\_

Installation: \_\_\_

Decorative/Traditional arts: \_\_\_

Sculpture/Carving: \_\_\_

Other(Fill in type of art): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of work: \_\_\_\_\_

Year produced: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the work been published: \_\_\_\_\_

Wording of credit to be given: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix III

### Accession Form – Donor

#### Source Information

2.1. Donor (The Name of who is donating the gift(s) ex. person, institution, etc.)

2.1.1. Donor Type (To be filled out by Archivist)

2.1.2. Creator (Who created the gift? Ex. Name of the artist, author, etc.)

Name of person in whose memory this donation is made (if applicable)

## 2.1.3. Contact Information (Address, Email and Phone Number)

Address:	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
Email:	Phone:
<hr/>	

Please indicate if you are First Nations, Inuit or Métis (if applicable)

--

Please indicate your Community/First Nation (if applicable)

--

Please indicate language: first, second, preferred

First:
<hr/>
Second:
<hr/>
Preferred:

## Notes

### 2.2. Custodial History (How did the gift come to you?)

## Material Information Section

### 3.1. When was the gift made?



Ceremony (Is there a ceremony that needs to happen when the gift is given, while it is being cared for, and when it is taken out to be seen by people?)



Is Artistic Expression a Sacred or Spiritual Object?



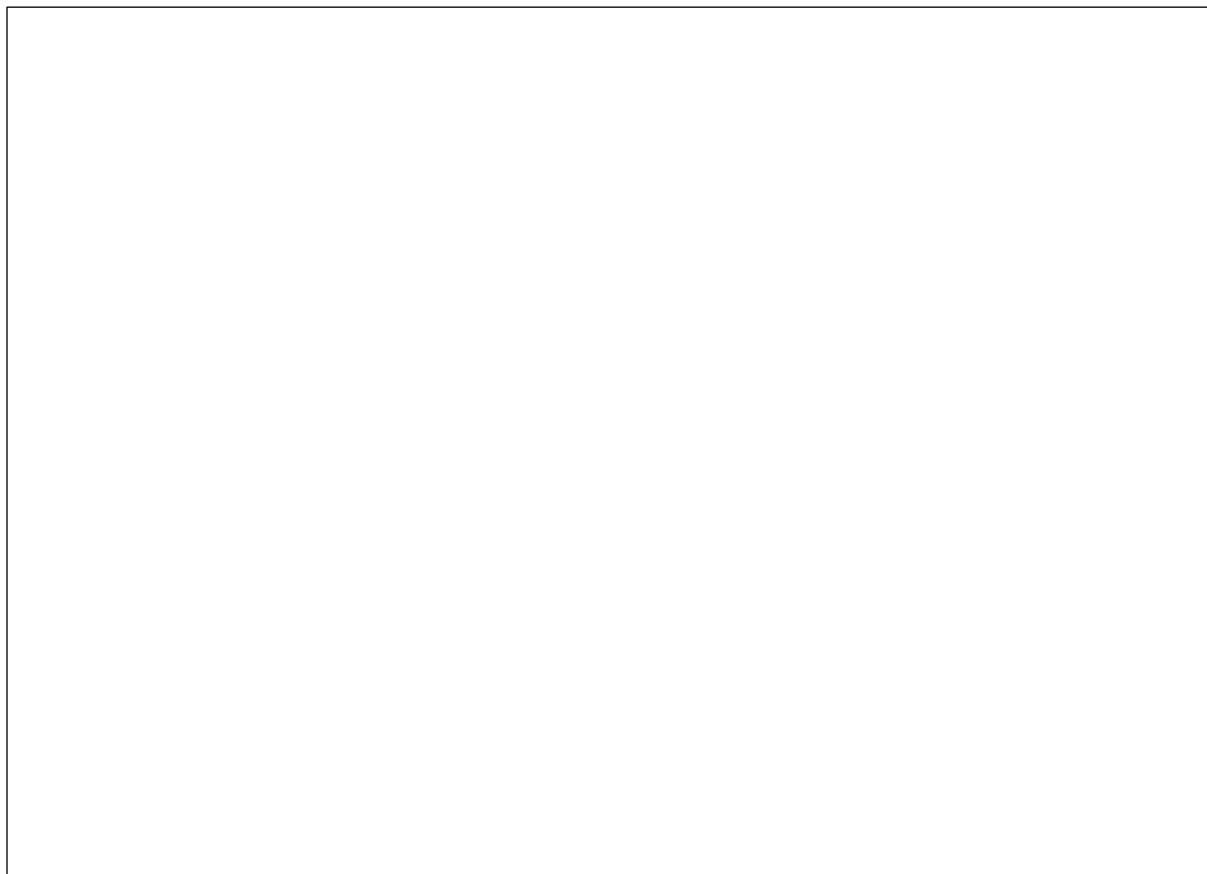
Preservation (Are there any specific handling and/or caring for instructions?)

Description: Would you like to give a description via videotape or audiotape to explain the history, story and importance of your donation, and what it represents? Y/N

Description: Would you like to write out a description to explain the history, story and importance of your donation, and what it represents? Y/N. (Provide attachment)

**Management Information Section**

Conditions of use, (If you are the creator of the archival gift), do we have your permission to use your donation for education, research, publications, public exhibits and outreach purposes?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide their response to the question above.

Conditions for access. (Are there any cultural protocols that restrict access to the gift?)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide their response to the question above.

When the MMIWG Inquiry is finished its work, would you be willing to leave your gift with a trustee that will care for it according to the instructions given in this document, or would you like the gift returned to you?

Can we contact you if we require any further information about your art or donation? What is the best way to contact you? If you are not available, can we contact someone else on your behalf (if so, can you provide their contact information)?

Do you consent to having your artistic expression publically accessible?

No \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

(If yes, then complete a consent form and attach it to this document.)

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Accessions No.**  
AF A2018-

**Accessions Form – Archive**  
**(To be filled out by Archivist)**

**Identity Information Section**

1.1. Repository

1.3.1. Other Identifier

1.3.1. Other Identifier

1.3.1. Other Identifier

1.3.1. Other Identifier

#### 1.3.1. Other Identifier Type

#### 1.3.3. Other Identifier Note

#### 1.4. Accession Title

### 1.5. Archival Unit

--

### 1.6. Acquisition Method

--

### 1.7. Disposition Authority

--

### 2.1.4. Source Role

--

**Material Information Section**

## 3.2. Extent

Type of Extent	Quantity	Types of Unit	Note



### 3.3. Scope and Content



**Management Information Section**

4.1. Storage Location

4.2. Rights Statement

4.2.1. Rights Statement Type

4.2.2. Rights Statement Value


4.2.3. Rights Statement Note

#### 4.3. Material Assessment Statement

##### 4.3.1. Material Assessment Statement Type

##### 4.3.2. Material Assessment Statement Value

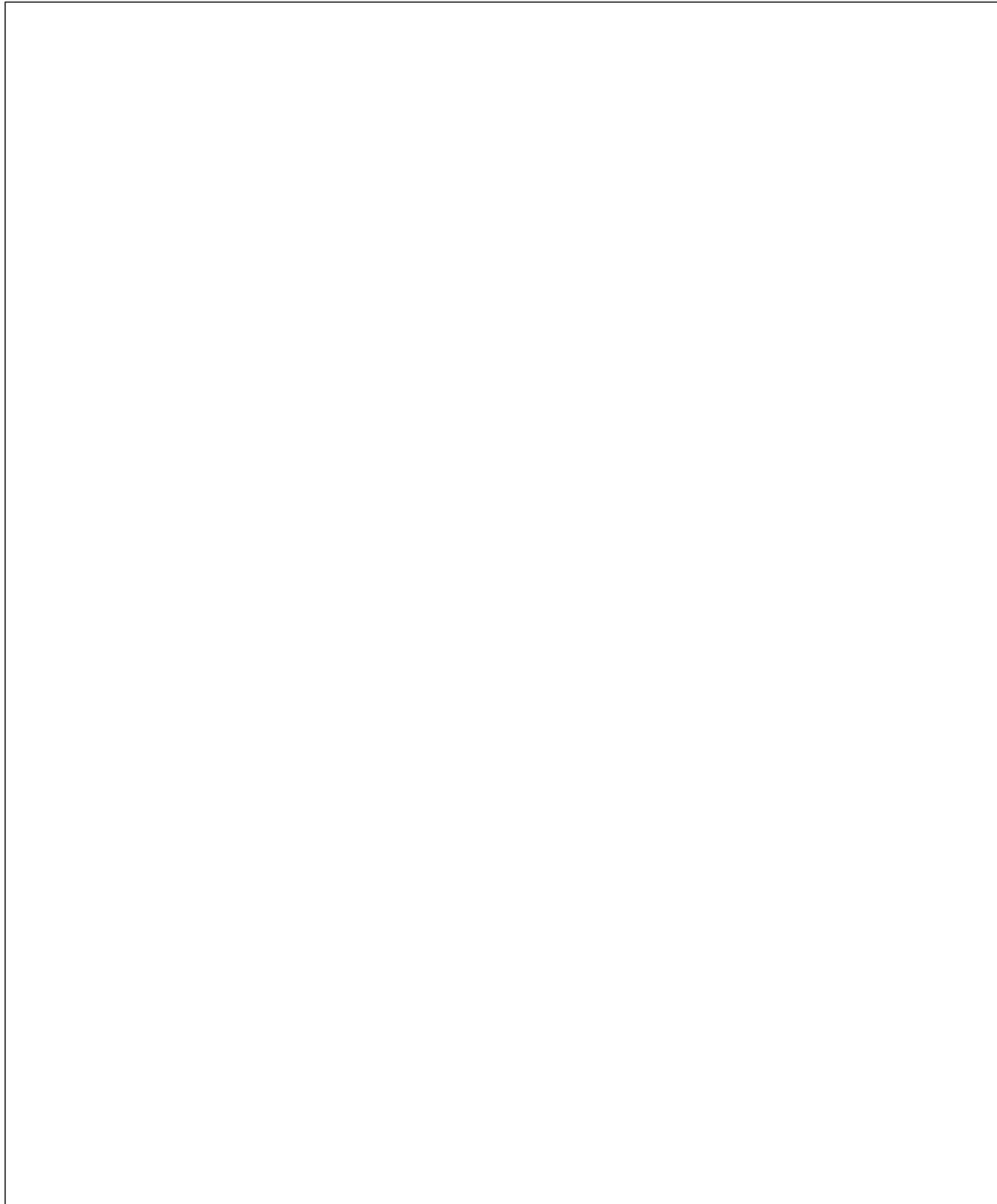
4.3.3. Material Assessment Action Plan

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to enter the Material Assessment Action Plan.

4.3.4. Material Assessment Statement Note

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to enter the Material Assessment Statement Note.

#### 4.4. Appraisal Statement

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the majority of the page below the section header. It is intended for the user to write an appraisal statement.

#### 4.5. Associated Documentation (Type, Title, Identifier, Note)

Type	Title	Identifier	Note
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**Event Information Section**

5.1. Event Statement

5.1.1 Event Type

5.1.2. Event Start Date

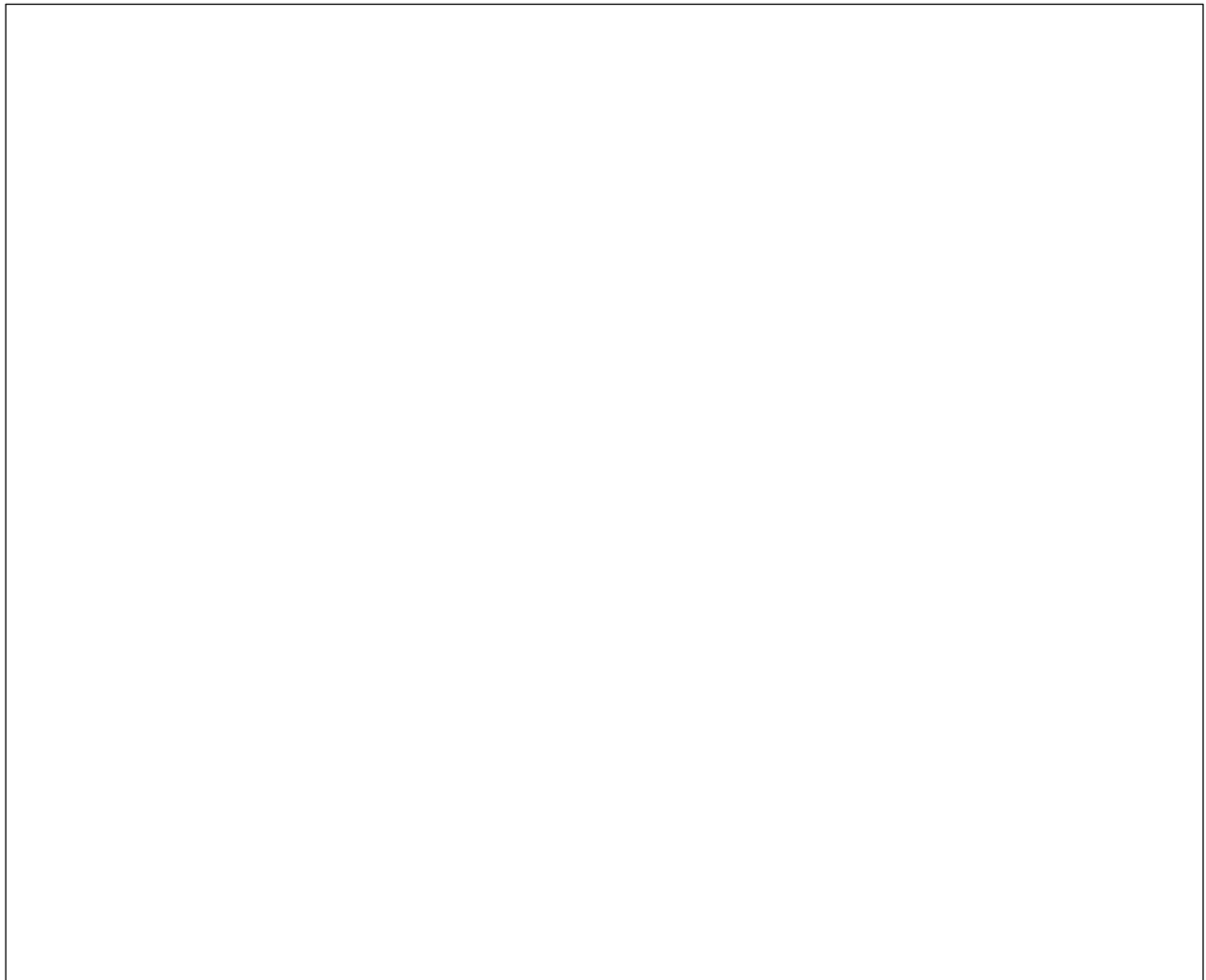
5.1.2. Event Completion Date



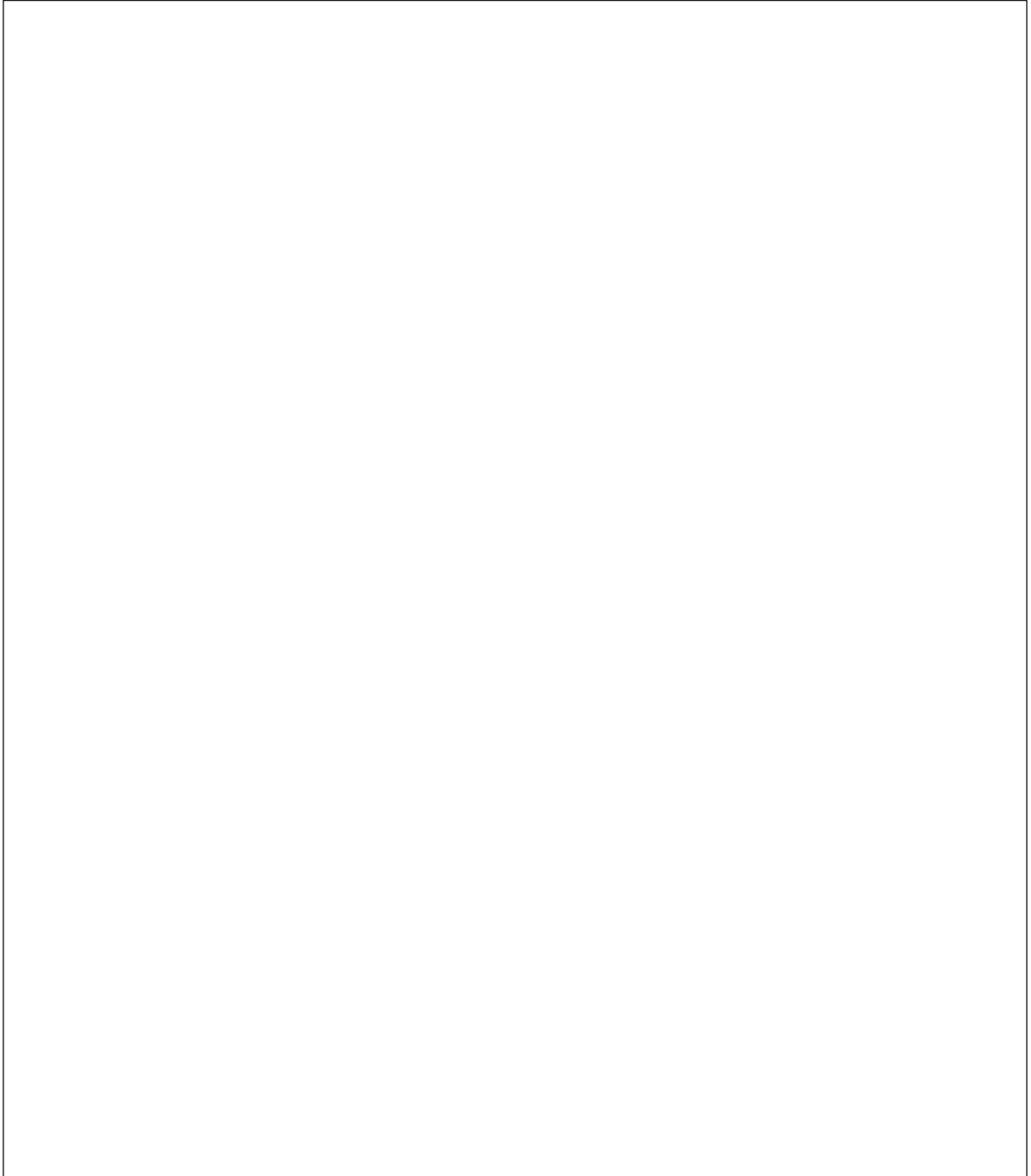
5.1.3. Event Agent



5.1.4. Event Note



**General Note**



## **Appendix IV**

### **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

#### **Advisory Circle for Legacy Archive**

##### **Why have an Advisory Circle for the Legacy Archive?**

Although I collect and maintain the collection, I think it is very important that it is Indigenous voices that guide me, the senior archivist, on how the legacy archive is used and explained, and that it is an Indigenous advisory circle that would help me with that.

Although I am not Indigenous, I will also be on this advisory circle offering any Archival advice that may come up.

##### **What will the Legacy Archive materials be used for?**

1. Be used as resources for Education
2. Be used as resources for Research
3. Be loaned out for exhibits – (Educational purposes)
4. Be used for in house purposes – Exhibits
5. Be used for online exhibits –NI-MMIWG’s
6. Be used for social media purposes

##### **What will the Archive advisory circle do?**

1. Be available to discuss with Archives for advice on donations.

Focus points include:

- Material items used, what special preservation information do I need to know (medicine and animal –; art materials –; precious metals and earth materials –)
- To discuss any ceremony, protocols or procedures that need to be performed on art. This may have been determined by donor, but not always, therefore need to look what may need to be done based on culture as advised by Grandmother, Elder and community representative (Inuit, Metis or First Nation)
- If ceremony needs to be performed on material object by Elder, I would bring it or them to annual staff meeting or hearing and ask elder to perform ceremony.

- Gather advice from them for projects. Example: if I need to select items for students for specific projects, if I am doing an online exhibit with a specific theme in mind, if someone calls to see if we have items pertaining to a certain idea etc...
- To get help getting contextual and historical information about certain objects. Not all art is given with an opportunity to give an accession form to donor; therefore many objects have very little information. It is helpful to get what information from an advisory circle.
- Finally, when need direction with what do with an artistic expression.

### **Advisory Circle**

Archivist

Artists

Traditional Medicine/Animal Knowledge/Land Knowledge

Elders

Grandmothers

Inuit Representation

First Nation Representation

Métis Representative

Regional Representation – North, West Coast, Prairies, East Coast

2SLGBTQQA