

LAND | MINE

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LAND I MINE

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OCAD UNIVERSITY

Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media, and Design, 2016

KEYWORDS

LAND, mine, rock, Indigenous, resistance, interdisciplinary, art, performance

LAND I MINE ACTIVELY DECONSTRUCTS AND (RE) CONSTRUCTS LINKAGES TO THE LAND THAT CONNECTS CITY SPACES TO THE CONSTRUCTED WILD, MATERIALS TO MINE SITES, AND BODIES TO THE LAND.

“This investigation grapples with the body, my body as it has witnessed material and metaphysical landscapes changing and continually impacted, *shaken* and consumed by corporate resource extraction. I critique how the value of land and natural resources are created and assessed through Western measures-of-wealth (social, economic, environmental, power, ownership) and how these types of evaluations impact traditional and contemporary cultural production in the Canadian wilderness, which is still considered an untapped frontier for natural resources. This project is sparked by strategies of Indigenous resistance to neo-colonization, the embodied knowledge and everyday acts of decolonization as ways to understand the imaginary Canadian true-north and industrial reverberations felt by those who live *downstream*.” — Ts̓ēma

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The work created for LAND|MINE was produced in the Native Space, Toronto, Ontario, Canada (“A Home” 68).

“[I acknowledge] the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishnabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which [I stand]” (OCAD University)

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DEDICATED TO

Etheni Matriarch, Estsū Grace Williams and my philosopher,
Estsiye Willi Williams

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INTENTION

The intention of this thesis is to investigate the following questions:

1. How can LAND be read from Indigenous and colonial settler perspectives to consider the affects on cultural/industrial negotiations?
2. Considering Tahltan lived experience, how does the value of natural resources, constructed and assessed through Western measures of wealth, impact cultural production?
3. How can artists imagine new territories, (re)map and (re)imagine stories and concepts of land to combat and question excessive consumption and violence to the LAND?



Figure 01 *Walking Artefact Ridge*, 2014

PREFACE: BLACK GOLD

When considering modern mining initiatives, the Tahltan¹ perspective is different from other Indigenous perspectives, seeing as the Tahltan have been mining obsidian ore to make blades, arrowheads and hide scrapers since time immemorial. Obsidian, also known as “Black” or “Tahltan Gold,” is volcanic glass created from the heat of an eruption. Although black is the most common colour, obsidian comes in a variety of shades, sometimes veined, marbled and speckled, depending on what minerals are mixed into the molten silica when the volcano erupts (“Obsidian” 1). It is glossy, multifaceted, sometimes with a natural golden sheen from micro-bubbles, and the sharpest natural material found in the world. These qualities make it the most valuable resource material to my ancestors. Tahltan Gold comes from Mount Edziza² a sacred ancient mining site in Tahltan territory, revered for its unworldly and untamed landscape. It is the largest and most renowned volcano located within what is known in the mining industry as the Golden Triangle in northwestern British Columbia (BC) (Lasley 28). Along with obsidian, the stratovolcano, Mount Edziza brought other minerals and natural resources to the earth’s surface now desired by mining corporations.

Today, the area surrounding Mount Edziza is commercially mined for copper, gold, jade and sometimes, with much contention, anthracite coal, a rare and sought after ore body used for the highest grade steel. The industrial

1 The Tahltan are First Nations from the mountains of northwestern British Columbia and have occupied and protected their unceded territory since time immemorial.

2 Mount Edziza is pronounced Edz-eye-za. Mount Edziza is also known as Ice Mountain because the majority of the mountaintop is covered in glaciers, which creates its own weather systems around its massive peak.

projects that tap into my nation's mineral-rich territory surrounding Edziza, sparked my investigation into the politics of LAND as a Tahltan citizen. I wrestled with the imposed legislative permitting process to question how measuring ecological capacities for development can provide a platform for me to consider and understand multiple perspectives of the industrialized landscape. I approach an evident paradoxical relationship with Indigenous cultural integrity and the rapid industrialization of Indigenous territories through my lived experience of multiplicity. I was brought up as Tahltan despite being raised outside Tahltan territory. I consider myself a modern nomad who lives in and between urban and rural places. Most importantly to my inquiry, I have found myself caught in a quandary through the mixed experience of working for commercial mines and working against them. I have participated in blockading mining companies in Sacred Headwaters³, and at the same time, I distinguish my everyday connection to those places through natural resource consumption systems. I have witnessed and lived the multiple perspectives of LAND politics through active resistance (blockading), ancestral inheritance of unceded⁴ territory and working for mining companies. My positionality has given me a unique creative responsibility to conceptually navigate industrial/cultural negotiations within various landscapes.

3 Klabona also known as "The Sacred Headwaters" by Tahltans and environmental activists is the birthplace of the Stikine, Nass and Skeena rivers— the three mega salmon bearing watersheds in north-western British Columbia (BC). It is also a place in constant contestation over anthracite coal mining projects and methane gas fracking. In 2012, against all odds, activists, lead by the Klabona Keepers, environmental activist pressured The Royal Dutch Shell Cooperation to instate a moratorium over their future development of the area. Unfortunately, other companies have stakes in the area, waiting to have a chance at the rare high-grade coal deposit, have taken over the claim and currently fighting the Tahltan Nation for control over the area.

4 Unceded is territory that is not been given up or without treaty or appropriate compensations in exchange for rights to the land.

Through my artwork and the collected theories referenced throughout my LAND|MINE thesis document, I connect to and distinguish northern mine sites as the source where material is harvested for everyday objects we utilize, value or are oblivious to. I consider how the interpretation of land from an Indigenous perspective can be considered across the push-pull relationship between cultural (Tahltan, artwork, community) and corporate industrialization.

To contextualize Indigenous perspectives on LAND politics, I have studied the work of inter-media artists Merritt Johnson, Rebecca Belmore, Dylan Miner, poet and activist Duke Red Bird and performance artist Regina José Galindo. Through their influential praxis, each artist draws upon their Indigeneity to critique neo-colonization and prove art can bring agency through conceptual frameworks that embody a lived experience. To strengthen my praxis, I draw on the philosophical influences of Métis/Anishnawbe scholar and artist Julie Nagam, Dene First Nation political theorist Glen Sean Coulthard, Blackfoot Confederacy member, academic and educator, Dr. Leroy Little Bear, Estsiye⁵ and the cultural memory of my ancestors embodied within obsidian. Mining concepts of LAND, framed through politics, art and research is the underpinning of my thesis project and supports my reflexivity as a contemporary Indigenous artist, woman and scholar.

5 Estsiye is the Tāltān word for “my grandfather”.

1.0 LAND

The contents of this paper will provide context to my art practice while I survey issues of LAND from my positionality as a Tahltan artist, woman and citizen. My praxis considers measures of wealth as defined from multicultural perspectives and is supported and inspired by Indigenous strategies of resistance to (re)tell, (re)claim and (re)conceptualize stories (old and new) of colonized land. To highlight and enforce different perspectives on land, I emphasize LAND, capitalized to indicate the ideologies and place of spiritual foundation for cultural practices based upon the research for LAND|MINE and my Tahltan personal experience on the LAND. I use the lowercase “land” to describe land as property/plot/parcel/estate, from Western concepts related to geography/resource/frontier.

The concept of LAND considers place, space, territories, foundations, mining, excavations, and digging into physical and metaphysical ground. My politic of LAND is supported by Indigenous concepts of land and place that fosters Indigenous identity production and contains cultural memory (Houle 60/61, “A Home” 73 & Little Bear 21). LAND|MINE is rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems and occupies “Native Space,” theorized by Nagam as, “a network of relationships akin to those traditionally navigated over waterways and across land” (“Carting Indigenous” 189 & “A Home” 71). The assertion of Native Space challenges the monolithic idea of Native as nature, by recognizing the embodiment and claim of Native territory inclusive of a foundation in urban spaces (city spaces built over and on Native territory) (“A Home” 71). It is imperative that the artwork I made for LAND|MINE transcends a traditional

or archetypal identity politic by assuming Indigenous bodies in city spaces, and active Indigenous bodies excavating the land for natural resources today and throughout history.

LAND|MINE actively deconstructs and (re)constructs linkages to the LAND connecting city spaces to the constructed wild, materials to mine sites, and bodies to the LAND. My thesis is divided into four sections: (1) LAND that seeks to unpack my LAND politic, (2) Mine, in relation to the operating colonial system, and also “to mine” as continuous conceptual sourcing of relevant materials, (3) Land, a theoretical framework, and (4) MINE, claiming space, through reterritorialization, performance and decolonization.



Figure 02 *Holding Riot Rock Rattles in performance, 2016*

1.1 DE'EDA EN-TSŪ KUDETHKAKE | WHERE ARE THE TRACKS OF YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S FIRE?

Cultivating obsidian's mobility within and beyond Tahltan borders serves as a significant marker for demarcating physical and metaphysical territory. Tahltan obsidian has a spiritual link to Edziza and is evident to ancient industrial and historical trading systems. Contemporary ore derived from Tahltan territory is transported elsewhere to be refined, transformed, used and touched. Tahltan Gold and other valuable minerals identify specific places to reveal spiritual and physical ties to relational space and render Indigenous ways of knowing through material agency. In LAND|MINE, I expose and exhibit how materials are related to both cultural and industrial practices

In the seminal catalogue for the exhibition *Land, Spirit, Power* (National Gallery of Canada, 1992), artist and curator Robert Houle writes about land as symbiotic with Indigenous epistemologies, insofar that the original peoples are spiritually and economically invested in the LAND. This concept does not negate colonial settlers' equal dependency on land to survive, but shifts the focus upon multiple lenses to examine the land. I theorize LAND through a macro lens to consider affect and impact of human experience. "Space," is also seen through this lens as an immediate physical vicinity. "Place," viewed through a micro lens is a personal political stance on the LAND.

My perspectives on LAND has been established by listening and responding to Tahltan Elder's stories and experiences of cultural negotiations in the face of neo-colonization⁶.

⁶ Neo-colonization in Tahltan territory has come in the form of unequal consideration for Indigenous cultural practices that includes sustainable traditional mining of obsidian and copper.

In the synthesis paper, *Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge*, Dr. Leroy Little Bear explains a transfer of knowledge from, “a dualistic perspective: content and process,” transferred from the “older generation” to “the younger generation” as an alternative non-Western education system (Little Bear 14). Indigenous pedagogy as explained by Little Bear recognizes agency in Estsiye’s stories through embodied knowledge, inherent legacies and the wisdom to harvest Tahltan worldviews.

Tahltan Elder Willie W. Williams, my grandfather (Estsiye), carries forth cultural knowledge telling me, “without the land we are nothing” and asks, “what will be left for future generations?” Estsiye is not only speaking about natural resources and the LAND, but also to jobs and sustainable industry. In his lifetime, he has witnessed the encroachment of development in Tahltan territory and an industrial transformation as our LAND is positioned, advertised and seceded to support the modern gold rush of the Canadian north. Estsiye has also seen many places in Tahltan territory that is untouched by modern industry. He has been traveling Mount Edziza on horseback for over 30 years and recalls stories of one of his favorite places, Obsidian Ridge, where the ground glitters from glass chips, pebbles and boulders produced from the volcano’s eruptions. Estsiye’s embodied and collective knowledge passed down through oral traditions, helps me to contextualize the ways we are connected to both pristine and industrial landscapes through natural cycles (weather, currents, cosmology) and resource consumption (14).

In Tāltān⁷ we introduce ourselves by saying “de’eda en-t̥sū kudethkake?”

⁷ Tāltān as spelled in the linguistic phonetic Tāltān alphabet and what language revitalization teams are currently using to signify our written language. The spelling is somewhat interchangeable

which translates to “where are the tracks of your grandmother’s fire?” or interpreted, “where on our land do you come from?”⁸ (Hotseta Na-Dene 1). “De’eda en-tsū kudethkake?” links my body to my matriarch Estsū,⁹ and to my relationship with natural elements such as fire, and objects such as obsidian that we carry with us to survive. Obsidian and my grandmother’s fire are my proxies to my place on the LAND and in the world. My place is affirmed through the Tahltan word, “Koneline” that refers to our land and minds as beautiful and enlightened. Tāhtān semantics are conceptually woven into the Tahltan worldview insofar that the pronoun “K” is used for LAND and consciousness¹⁰ (“Koneline”).

My identity as a Tahltan woman and artist is signified in the LAND|MINE exhibition by the inclusion of *Rock Proxy No. 3 (Obsidian)*, an obsidian boulder collected in August 2014 from Mount Edziza during the making of the documentary, *Colours of Edziza*. Estsiye credits Mount Edziza obsidian directly to Tahltan ancestors claim to our significant territory as evidence of the ample supply of obsidian and knowledge of its characteristics (“Territories”). I found evidence for Estsiye’s claim to Tahltan space in the form of obsidian flakes and blades on ancient trails and camp sites when working as an archaeological field

(Tāhtān/Tahltan) as speakers learn the (new) Tāhtān alphabet. For the purposes of this paper I will use “Tahltan” when speaking about the Nation and Tāhtān when speaking about the language.

8 Hotseta Na-Dene (Oscar Dennis) told me this is “the formal/politically correct way of establishing someone’s jurisdiction on the various tribal territories [in] our land. Say for instance our matrilineal grandmothers campfire tracks are in the same place” (“Grandmothers Tracks” n.p). It is true that when I am in Tahltan territory everyone asks me, who my grandmother is, so they know how to place and relate to me. According to Tahltan epistemologies, we are nomadic and connected to land and recognize this in ceremony and everyday experiences, as seen in our greeting, “de’eda en-tsū kudethkake”.

9 Estsū is the Tāhtān word for “my grandmother.”

10 In the film *Koneline: Our Land is Beautiful*, Tāhtān language expert Hotseta Na-Dene speaks about the philosophy of Tahltan language indicated the K pronoun to be for both the land and human conscienceless.

assistant at Schaft and Galore Creek mine projects (2008-10)¹¹. The parameters for archeological baseline assessments require scientists and their field assistants to gather evidence of historical and sacred sites within the vicinity of the mining project to identify what will be protected, sacrificed or negotiated in order to build a road, mine, tailings pond or mining facility. When conducting shovel tests and walkabouts, I observed Tahltan sacred sites being discovered after a bulldozed road sparked with obsidian.¹² In these moments, industrial projects are paradoxically disturbing culturally sensitive sites and at the same time funding cultural discoveries and helping to recover artefacts.

As observed in my fieldwork, obsidian chips are found and collected all over Tahltan territory. Elders consider sites with obsidian sacred for being evidence of my ancestors traveling our territory, carrying obsidian from Mount Edziza throughout our LAND and beyond through trading relationships.¹³ Thorough Tahltan cosmology, the experiences and memories of ancestral travels reside in obsidian rocks and reveal material wealth held in the LAND.

11 The Shaft Creek archaeology baseline executive summary reads: "The primary objectives of the study were to: (1) identify and evaluate any archaeological sites located with and in and adjacent to the impact zone of the proposed developments, and (2) identify assess possible impacts of the proposed developments on any identified archaeological sites" (Seip i).

12 When working for the mine, we would collect every obsidian flake and I was told by Seip that the flakes and blades were being stored in a secure location waiting for the Tahltan to build an appropriate facility to house and display the artefacts (Seip i).

13 Obsidian traveled beyond Tahltan boundaries. Tahltan Elders speak about ancient trading routes that transported Tahltan obsidian as far as Portland, Oregon, to the northern tip of Alaska and as east as Saskatchewan.

1.2 INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGIES

My research for LAND|MINE draws principally upon Indigenous methodologies. Indigenous critical research methods include, but is not limited to, alternative scholarship (artistic research), non-Western philosophy, Indigenous critical theory, languages, rituals, songs, dance, stories and poetry, all of which can be performed and embody “ceremonies [which] act as repositories of knowledge in the minds of Aboriginal peoples” (Little Bear 9). Professor Little Bear writes that “[knowledge] is not a tangible thing, but its manifestations may be tangible” (Little Bear 7). I adopt, claim and adapt Indigenous research methodologies throughout my discursive contemporary interdisciplinary art practice. My approach is material-driven and framed through a decolonial theoretical lens that considers subjectivity and agency (i.e. race, place, and access to the world). My research and tangible knowledge creation are affirmed through a *learning-to-do-by-doing*¹⁴ philosophy instilled in me through experiential learning passed on to me through the traditional practices of sewing with Estsū and hunting in the mountains with Estsiye, who knows Tahltan territory like Google maps knows the city.

Learning-to-do-by-doing is in the same stream as “Practice-led Methodology¹⁵” also supported by the “holistic concept” of “all my relations”

14 The process of *learning-to-do-by-doing* as instilled by Estsū and other Tahltan Elders while they taught me to traditionally tan a moose hide, to sew and bead. These processes are a labor of love that can not be rushed to succeed. A Tahltan way of learning is process with an emphasis on demonstration and minimal verbal instructions. I realized after *Learning-to-do-by-doing*, Tahltan methodology created a individual respect and knowledge of the material and process. This is something that could be explained through words, but has a lasting affect through experiential learning.

15 *Learning-to-do-by-doing* is similar to Practice-Led Methodology as theorized by Chapter 3 and 4 of *Art Practice and Beyond* by Graham Sullivan. Sullivan theories art research as Practice-led to understand “larger issues of of life and the universe, as well as little theories that service our practical need to expand and understand everyday occurrences” (Sullivan 65) A difference between

(Little Bear 12 & Sullivan 65-120). Little Bear explains:

[the] concept of an integrated whole of ceremonies is expressed through the assertion that everything is related. Acceptance of humanism as part of the learning process [...] Intellectual and emotional aspects of being human are accepted in ceremonial learning and activity as part of the process. Although reverential spirituality is upmost in ceremony, contextual humanness is accepted to the point of mirth and jesting (Little Bear 12).

Learning-to-do-by-doing connects the cosmological relations of objects and beings and transcends intention-less experimentation by being guided by an Elder, relying on cultural memory and having a contextual motivation beyond material for material's sake. It does, however align to a canon of artists¹⁶ claiming a space of "failure" through experimentation and material instincts. Through this process, I have learned that letting the material guide the work creates a brave beauty in the face of potential failure.

Learning-to-do-by-doing is an active process of becoming. It has inspired my disposition to performance and politics that I frame through Postcolonial theorist, Walter Mignolo's idea of the "decolonial gesture" (Mignolo 10). As a "decolonial gesture", Indigenous methodologies are ways of emphasizing knowledge through multiple avenues not limited to mainstream ideologies (10). Indigenous pedagogical theorist Margaret Kovach argues Indigenous methodologies can, "[disrupt] methodological homogeneity in research" through Indigenous perspectives, while creating conceptually accessible work for remote communities and cities alike (Kovach 12 & Wilson 33).

Practice-Led Methodology and *Learning-to-do-by-doing* is that making is overseen by Elders and teachers to actively transfer knowledge from one person to another.

16 I am speaking about the artistic trends of accepting failure like what is represented in the Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi or intentionally "failing" like in the work of Steven Starling who burns his wooden boat in an onboard stove while in open water as a performance art piece.



Figure 03 *Placing material to be appliquéd onto button blanket, 2015*

Indigenous methodologies can be “everyday acts” of cultural practice, that according to Julie Nagam and Tsalagi professor and theorist Jeff Corntassel can be any thing or action that creates new “epistemological views” (“A Home” 68). Furthermore, objects or acts that create space for contemplation can simultaneously be anti-colonial or resistant methodologies because they are also anti-assimilation. Mexican performance artist, Jesusa Rodríguez speaks about this notion in her lecture, “500 Years of Resistance.”¹⁷ She theorizes the resistant identities of local Mayan people who defy metaphysical boundaries of colonization by continuing to wear their Indigeneity as contemporary people. I witnessed this action in Chiapas, Mexico, where Mayans embroidered symbols displaying their creative knowledge of Mayan identity (Rodríguez 1). By wearing

¹⁷ “500 years of Resistance” is a recorded lecture given by Mexican performance artist, Jesusa Rodríguez in Chiapas, Mexico in 2010 as part of an annual Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics graduate summer course, of which I was a part of July and August 2015. In “500 years of Resistance” Rodríguez speaks from her position as a Mexican Indigenous person engaging in acts of resistance as active decolonization. She recognizes everyday act, such as wearing traditional clothing as acts of decolonial resistance and adding to a 500 year history of Indigenous people resisting colonization.

their traditional clothing, despite Spanish colonial efforts to eradicate traditional practices, they resist colonial imposition by an everyday political affiliation to their Mayan identity.

I am drawn to everyday cultural resistance and resurgence methodologies shortly after receiving my Tāltān name, Tsēma (“Rock Mother”) in Potlatch (2015). Potlatch is a system governed by ceremony and protocol where Tahltan take care of our business (government, inheritance). The potlatch ceremony is centered on Tahltan identity connected to LAND through recognizing familial, material and spiritual relationships. Through the process of making my button blanket, the pinnacle of Tahltan regalia, I experienced sewing as a meditative activity. Closer to potlatch, I traveled to Tahltan territory where sewing was a communal activity, a senate, a sharing circle and space to make relations between human-to-human and human-to-material. When sewing glass beads onto animal hides and shell buttons onto blankets, the painstakingly sourced material inspires a brave beauty highly valued for the time put into the project and deep respect for the animals that gave their lives¹⁸ and body for the medium. Craftivist Joe Dahn writes that it is the combination of “the making and the conceptual, and the space between the brain and the hands” that can lead the maker “in different ways” by touching and working a material to know its material potential and the potential of the maker (Dahn 164). Sewing my button blanket pushed my threshold for understanding Indigenous systems, in particular Potlatch cultures, collaborative pedagogy and my capacity for creating new objects that symbolized my Tahltan and artistic identity, which, like other

¹⁸ Here I am speaking of animal hide and pelts in particular. Some material is harvested without harming the animal it is sourced from, such as porcupine quills and mountain goat fur.

identities is always in the process of becoming. Inspired by *Potlatch* and *Sewing* methodologies, I am called to political and protocol performance (dancing my blanket) as a “decolonial gesture” and similarly to activate the body of work created for LAND|MINE through relevant contexts (Mignolo 10).

While making the artwork for LAND|MINE, I realized my everyday relationship to space, people and the LAND could be seen as through the lens of the Potlatch system. This revelation enabled me to employ Potlatch as a methodology, in order to foster more meaningful, relational artwork and the curation of space. Tahltan Potlatch considers every performance as ceremony that affirms and solidifies relationships to every thing and body. Artworks are created for gifts, function as containers for food, decor and most spectacularly as regalia, signifying an individual’s creative expression to their lineage, clan association and self-recognition. In Potlatch, every act is relational and serves to facilitate payments to witnesses and facilitators who provide an oral document.

Every performance in Potlatch ceremony is a gift (artworks, songs, ideas, territories, food) and reveals the relationships between materials on the LAND and the human experience. The exchange in Potlatch is to maintain a balanced relationship with the LAND and its inhabitants. The act(s) of political performance is a set of Indigenous methodologies to affirms one’s position on the LAND. Potlatch also sees human presence, (body, spirit and sharing our experiences) as a gift of time and energy. In Tahltan Potlatch we gift obsidian flakes chipped away from arrowheads. The gift of obsidian symbolizes ancestral knowledge and the experience of my ancestors who traveled our territory.

I reinforce Potlatch methodology through the practice of Métis artist, activist and academic, Dylan Miner's collaborative art projects¹⁹ and Nagam's text, "A Home for Our Migrations: The Canoe as Indigenous Methodology." Nagam proposes that the, "methodology of the canoe is grounded in a particular ability to see the layers of knowledge buried in the land and to hear the environment, which sings the song of the transformation of time, space and memory" ("A Home" 73). Nagam's metaphor of the traveling waterways, bears witness to ages past, "[understanding] conquest and settlement"; it is a sentiment to ingenuity, an object guided by tradition and protocol and a mobile agent (71).

Miner employs Indigenous methodologies in his community oriented art project, *The Elders Say We Don't Visit Anymore*, where he collects herbs to make traditional tea in preparation for visits with elders, children and with anyone who comes to the space (gallery). He visits to share time, stories, advice, knowledge and love. *The Elders Say We Don't Visit Anymore* question capitalistic measures of wealth understood as time = money and creates space for artistic research. Through *Visiting as Methodology*²⁰, Miner calls forth alternative epistemological lenses referred to by Corntassel as "acts of cultural resurgence" to decolonize the "everyday" (Corntassel 87).

Indigenous methodologies are integral to LAND|MINE, and guide my

19 Another collaborative art project initiated by Miner under the umbrella of Indigenous methodologies is Anishinaabensag Biimskowebshkigewag, (Native Kids Ride Bikes). In Anishinaabensag Biimskowebshkigewag, Miner intends the bikes and biking to become representative of the wanderlust of childhood that many people give up for the promises of adult industrialization (other vehicles that are faster, bigger, consuming entities) ("Red (Pedal)" 9). Yet bicycles, like Indigenous people, can represent traditional epistemologies and modernity at the same time (9).

20 *Visiting as Methodology* is what Miner calls the Indigenous methodology in his project, *The Elders Say We Don't Visit Anymore* ("Art Creates" Minor).

practice. What I learned by sewing my regalia, performing it in Potlatch and receiving my Tāltān name, was that these “acts of cultural resurgence” are resilient and validated through ceremony by those called to witness Ts’kyea (crow) clan business (Corntassel 87). Practicing Indigenous methodology connects materials and methods, foundational practices for generating new value that affirms traditional knowledge.



Figure 04 *Emergence*, 2016

2.0 Mine

(to mine, a mine)

Mining is locating raw material/natural resources to feed society's consumable systems. Mining can also be a metaphysical and physical process for research, investigations, samples and collecting material for art-making. Working for mining projects in Tahltan territory and making art in response to my position as a contemporary miner (through both uses of the word), helped me see the multiple perspectives for negotiating across cultural/industrial survival.

2.1 THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Tahltan mining practices has been maintained through the extraction of obsidian and copper ore and material refinement through traditional practices since time immemorial. Today the Tahltan make up a significant population of mining and mining support workers for projects in Tahltan territory and beyond. According to British Columbia (BC) mining minister, Bill Bennett, more First Nations, are employed by the mining industry and mineral exploration, than any other industry in BC (Bennett 25). This statistic appears in *Mining Explorers Discovering the Future of Alaska and Canada's North*, a mining magazine handed out to entice investors and potential developers at the annual Mining Roundup in Vancouver BC (2016). In this issue, a map showing 30% of BC mining projects are in Tahltan territory is highlighted. Other articles promoting new projects report on the Golden Triangle's mineral rich area that contains some of the largest gold and copper deposits in the world and are in Tahltan territories (Lasley 27-33, "Territories"). One article mentions drilling in the dormant volcanic area known as the Spectrum Range, a sacred Tahltan place where the mountains look painted in spectacular reds, yellows and black²¹. In the wake of mining disasters like Mount Polley²², environmental activists and other local people are suspicious, cautious and weary that irresponsible mining practices could destroy sacred sites, leach in our water system, or that a mine would dismantle places

21 Also see Figure 09, Mount Edziza Provincial Park #2 by © Edward Burtynsky and footnote 36.

22 Mount Polley is an open pit copper and gold mine located in the Cariboo region of British Columbia that overfilled a poorly designed tailings facility to the point of disaster. On August 4th, 2014, the dam collapsed spewing poisonous industrial excrement into adjacent water systems, devastating the ecosystem surrounding the mine. The company who owns the mineral rights to Mount Polley, Imperial Metals, was about to open their sister site, Red Chris mine that is sandwiched between Mount Edziza and Klabona.

like the Spectrum Range. Despite rallies and blockades like the Klabona Keeper standoff²³ in 2014 in the wake of the Mount Polly mining disaster, minister Bennett was hopeful, maybe even ignorant to say, “the province continues to develop and maintain long lasting relationships built on trust” (Bennett 25). The relationship with corporate mining and nation to nation negotiations is a paradigm in Tahltan territory. The push-pull negotiation between industry and traditions are compromised during events such as the Klabona Keeper blockade when Tahltan grandchildren were asking their grandparents, who are Elders blocking the road, to let them go back to work at the mine.

The LAND politics concerning Tahltan and cooperate mining is thought to be a two sided story of contemporary and traditional people, yet, it is more complex than a constructed Indigenous versus colonial settler relationship. I experienced more than a dichotomous story when sampling soil that my ancestors fought to protect while working to open a mine and later blockading sacred sites (nearby). While working for and against mining projects, I have learned the situation is more complex than a black and white or red versus white scenario. The consequences to feed into the incentives of mining/community agreements and by cooperating with mining projects to get necessary environmental permits, is that the moose, fish, medicine, and substance may never return to the mine site I have surveyed in time for the next generations to hunt, gather and harvest.

People, including myself, who dig into the land to mine it, industrialize it or potentially destroy it, may have to negotiate their cultural and environmental

23 Blockades like the Klabona Keeper/Red Chris Mine standoff, that I supported and participated in briefly attempt to bring issues to public attention, while halting the action.

ethics. Nagam addresses the complex connections to land Indigenous people have as, “ecological, spiritual and kinship based” (“A Home 71). She continues, “[each] Indigenous nation has different symbols to communicate these relations, however the overarching theme is consistent across Indigenous nations and that is the strong relationship to land” (71). This statement is relevant to a Tahltan relationship within our home territories because the land is being developed faster than any other wilderness (“Territory”). I am living far from those changes as a modern nomad currently situated in south-eastern Canada.

As described and observed earlier by Estsiye and Houle, a sense of place and homeland, changing geographies and changing landscapes not only affect traditional views instilled by ancestors and Elders, but continue to influence the politics of LAND in a modern world. A major difference from the current system to those of ancient societies is people can survive without being connected, knowing or caring where things are coming from and where they end up.

We are all connected to land no matter where we live, through dependency upon land-resource consumption, weather patterns and river systems that transfer material, many times beyond human capacities. It is important to recognize natural cycles in the wake of mining disasters like British Columbia’s Mount Polley tailings pond breach (2015) because rivers and weather succumb to the occupations of man (bridges, bulldozing, occupying, releasing toxins, excetra). Depite human-influence, natural systems continue to rebelliously flow in and out of territories without recognizing colonial borders.

Rivers are an obvious link from one place to another as carriers of material and knowledge. After the Mount Polley disaster, the Klabona Keepers

who blockaded the road to Red Chris mine (run by the same company as Mount Polley) welded signs reading, “We all live downstream!” The Klabona Keepers’ river analogy indicates the catastrophe of Mount Polley is not a localized problem, because like rivers, we are all connected to man-made toxins through the flows and fluxes of both natural and human-made systems. Furthermore, every person fuels the mining industry and is indirectly responsible for mining disasters through an unconscious participation in capitalist society’s insatiable natural resource consumption.

The LAND and its systems have the power to produce or destroy life, and humans have the ability to be world makers or new-systems creators. Estsiye advises Tahltan future generations, in order to survive on the LAND, “you have to respect the mountain... because the mountain wont respect you” (Williams). He supports the concept that we need to create and live with respect of our place in both natural and man-made systems.

The imaginable negotiation of contemporary mining politics through Tahltan ways of knowing is transferred to me by my Elders and our connection to obsidian as proxies to ancient systems and places. Indigenous praxis is demonstrated in the knowledge and practice of Estsiye who continually points to Indigenous relationships to LAND and living beings on the LAND. Through Indigenous praxis’ with my position to actively engages with issues in LAND politics, I am empowered to join the canon of theorist and artist decolonizing the institute, the land and beyond.

2.2 MATERIAL LIBRARY

I have co-opted the term “mine” to refer to the colonial enterprise, as well as my experience of gathering materials and skills to make work for LAND|MINE.

The body of work produced explores the multiple perspectives located on industrialized traditional territories and connections to those places through natural resource consumption. I respond through my active participation and bodily reaction through traditional Tahltan practices to engage with industry in the wake of neo-colonial mining projects.

Through making my art, I am motivated to create physical and metaphysical links to LAND and resource-consumption systems to initiate various ways of looking at land and subsequently one’s self. Witnessed within the gallery landscape²⁴, my goal is to transfer concepts and knowledge so the viewer can contemplate ideologies related to LAND beyond the white cube. To alleviate this transfer, I have developed a material library²⁵ as a way to question, value and insist upon linkages between Tahltan territory and the city of Toronto.

LAND|MINE’s material library consists of rocks, copper, ceramic, construction orange, rawhide, mirror, and obsidian. The library was developed from through active art making experimentations and mining natural resources.

24 I recognize the “white cube” gallery as a colonial system and that I am attempting to decolonize the space through Indigenous methodologies as a challenge. The institutional gallery space is appropriate for my work as it is a space people are accustomed to viewing and experiencing artwork. In this way I am accepting the gallery for my art that aims to decolonize spaces for the reason that those who enter the gallery space, will be mentally prepared to accept and contemplate art that seeks to position bodies on the LAND. Furthermore, I argue that the gallery is part of the land as a space built from materials from the LAND. The gallery is an appropriate venue for my work as an established place that provides a space for contemplation.

25 Material library is a term borrowed from Rebecca Belmore who speaks about favouring hair, nails and fabric to craft meaning and affect in her art practice (“Art Creates Change”- R. Belmore).

I recognize material significations coming from art historical and popular culture references (artist tropes) and from my ancestors who associated meaning and value to materials for their utilitarian and artistic potential. Their measure of economic wealth was determined by material sustenance which they proudly displayed in everyday and ceremonial adornment to assert their positionality (culture, identity, class). Tahltan identity is my conduit to place. Like my ancestors, I assert and honor my Tahltan nationhood by wearing accessories (made of beads, bone, shells, moose-hide), eating food and medicine from my territory, speaking Tāltān, representing my culture through my artwork and contact with material that represents Tahltan territory (such as obsidian, copper, jade, gold, silver, animal product). Corntassel affirms that working, interacting and respecting traditional materials realizes Indigenous ways of being (Corntassel 87). Through the power of visual language (ancestral associations and artistic tropes), I can make art from my gut to let my work speak through materials and process.

The material library I developed was determined by a solid conceptual foundation for the LAND|MINE exhibit. My exhibit has four components: (1) *Riot Rock Rattles (RRR)* placed throughout the gallery, (2) *Rock Proxies* titled *Garden Rock*, *The Wild* and *Obsidian* (3) *Land Masks*, a digital print series and 4) *Khohk'ātskets'mā* to activate the space with sound and performance (Appendix A and B).

I cast my Rock Proxies in copper, ceramic and rawhide. According to assessorial tropes, obsidian, copper and rawhide signify ancient value, wealth and production. These materials also signify the material that is currently being

mined/hunted in the north. Furthermore, obsidian, copper and rawhide are materials that connect me and those who come in contact with *Riot Rock Rattles* and *Rock Proxies* with material mined in Tahltan territory.



Figure 05 *LAND|MINE* gallery installation, looking east, 2016



Figure 06 *Rock Proxies*, LAND|MINE installation, 2016

2.3 ROCK AS PROXY

Rocks are a natural signifier of LAND because they are a piece of it. The essay “Rocks, Stones and Grandfathers”, from the exhibition catalogue for *Rocks, Stones and Dust* (2016), “devoted to rocks and their relations,” affirms rocks are “real portions of the landscape to represent itself” (Garneau 2). The exhibition’s curator John G. Hampton lists the social and artistic potential of rocks in the exhibition’s description as,

...our tools, architecture, philosophy, theology, beneath our feet, and flying far above our heads—but this ubiquity sometimes masks their ontological significance. Rocks are prototypically non-human and characteristic of the least animated objects in our world, yet stones are born, they move, age, breed, and return to dust. Some ask us to pick them up off the side of the road and carry them with us, and others invite us to stare into their surfaces to look for inner truths. (*Rocks, Stones and Dust*)

In addition to the historical ontology²⁶ of rocks, my research and practice define rocks as proxies²⁷, acting as an authoritative symbol for LAND politics, and representative of place- long existing within deep time geography. Throughout Indigenous epistemologies, rocks are commonly considered, “our grandfathers” (Garneau 1, 2). Rocks as Grandfathers are “repositories of experience” and indicative of our communal and familial spiritual relations deeply-rooted to memories of sacred places (2). Rocks as grandfathers and proxies recognize rocks as a living energy capable of the transferring knowledge. Métis artist/scholar David Garneau writes,

26 I am attracted to Wilson’s link between and definitions of Ontology, “what is real?” and Epistemologies, “how do I know what is real?” and asking these questions to justify experimentations through Indigenous methodologies (ways of creating knowledge through multiple avenues not limited to mainstream ideologies) (Wilson 33).

27 Rock as proxy or authority for LAND politics was a concept developed in a studio visit with local curator Maiko Tenaka.

Recognizing that rocks are also grandfathers is not pareidolia. We do not see beings in the form but being formed. From an Indigenous point of view, these are not projections but, rather, receptivity to the object's special being. This is not an Indigenous sense alone. Whether it is called awe, the sublime, the uncanny, beauty, and so on, most everyone experiences it (3).

In addition to being critically resourceful , LAND|MINE acknowledges the layers of meaning embodied in rock especially their role as keepers of memory²⁸. By enabling rocks to exist as proxies, I activate them as sculptures to be witnessed and performed. They have agency to carry memory, knowledge, are mementos and are proxies to places important to LAND|MINE. As objects, they link bodies to mining sites, bodies to rocks and rocks to the life cycles of LAND.

The rocks excavated for my exhibition have traveled and witnessed the places I have been. Hampton says that, “[the] practice of collecting stones as souvenirs while travelling may seem a relatively small scale geological event” (Hampton 10). Similarly, the title of my performance piece *Khohk’ātskets’mā*, also my mothers Tāltān name, describes the production of bubbles as the waves hit the shore of the Stikine river. This action, although everyday, repetitive and small scale is a natural occurrence that has carved a canyon through the heart of Tahltan territory (“The production from chaos...”, Appendix B).

28 Hampton shares that rocks “hover at the limits of an epistemological understanding of things,” and that they “represent the outer limit in the search for agency and meaning in matter” (Hampton 2). Hampton speaks to the diverse nature of rocks as a material and how it is a key medium in the canon of art.

2.4 ROCK TO ROCK

I took great care in “mining” a particular rock that would become *Rock Proxy No. 1 (The Wild)*, as it set the standard to the other stones I would collect. I looked, contemplated, weighed, shook and gauged rocks with a simple shape that had to fit comfortably in my hand so it could easily be molded, cast, reproduced and fabricated as a rattle. With the first proxy, I engineered a plaster mold that introduced me to the complexities and intricacies of the object and material. Uncovering the sophistication of this seemingly simple, unassuming object’s facets chock-full of bumps, dents, undercuts, colours, and moss was surprising and poetic. By casting it and spending time with it, I got to know the rock and

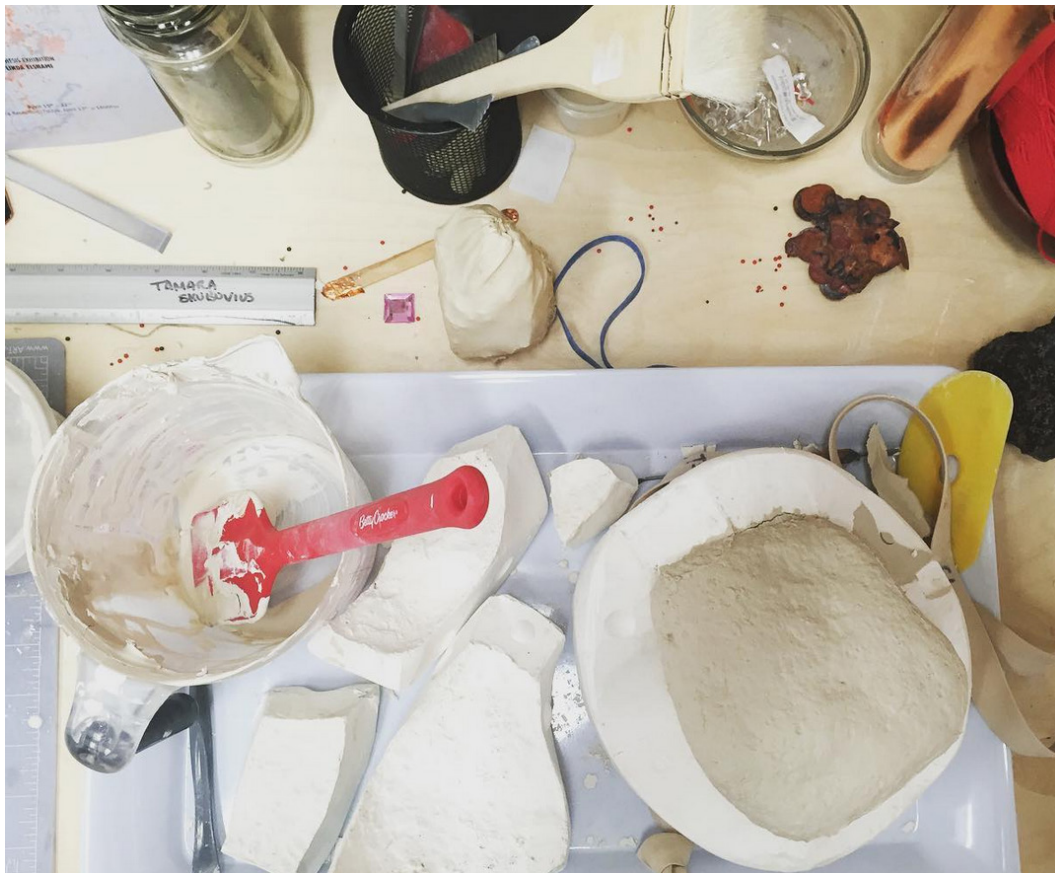


Figure 07 *Studio production, 2016*

all of its complexities²⁹.

Ceramic proved to be the ideal material for the cast because it supported the nature of being reproduced with imbued utilitarian qualities that are embedded within the histories of ceramics. Societies have been producing³⁰ and using ceramic vessels for centuries. Our relationship to clay is universal and has a natural performative quality through the act of making, and using to eat (together), have tea, store valuables or otherwise (Dahn 158). Craftivist, Jo Dahn has elaborated about the ways the performative nature of ceramics can be a foundation for contemporary artists to create meaning (Dahn 158).

I cast *Rock Proxy No. 1 (The Wild)* to make a clay *Riot Rock Rattle*. Made of clay, they are a cycle of production, mud to fire to rock— a life-cycle as an object— rock to rock and dust to dust. Hampton notes that rocks, “oscillate between states, in abstract relation to human existence” (Hampton 20). Navajo scholar Gary Witherspoon says, “[the] assumption that underlies the dualistic aspect of all being and existence is that the world is in motion, that things are constantly undergoing processes of transformation, deformation, and restoration, and that the essence of life and being is movement” (Little Bear quot. Witherspoon 8).

29 Copper, Rawhide and ceramic are appropriate materials to use to make *Riot Rock Rattles* (RRR). Each material points to labor intensive studio production and the time and energy needed to appreciating material properties (as opposed to industrial production). In an effort to reproduce rocks and transform them into RRR I had to source and work copper, (significant because most of the mine sites I worked on were mining copper) rawhide (natural resource) and ceramic. I used thin embossing sheet to press with custom made wood tools as shown to me by M. Belmore to copy each facet of the rock. I chose to use rawhide because it is a traditional material for making rattles and because it references animals as natural resource. I wrapped my *Rock Proxies* in wet hide, sewed it around the rocks, let dry for a couple days, undid the stitches, filed the RRR with beads and sewed it back together. The copper and rawhide RRR were extremely labor intensive to make and along with casting RPs in pottery plaster helped me know every finicky and beautiful detail of the rocks.

30 In my ceramic RRR I have chosen to leave the evidence of fabrication, to nod to and respect methods of production, the time it took me to make the plaster mold, the cycle of the object, and as evidence of the complexity of the rock. This can be seen in the seam-lines and slip drips when the liquid clay seeped through the cracks of the mold.

As an artist, I transform materials to objects that according to Witherspoon, Hampton and Indigenous methodologies, recognize material transformations to reveal natural cycles and relationships.

My ceramic rocks (rattles) become vessels to carry the beads that create sound, but also a metaphor for LAND— a vessel that contains us all. Tahltan ontology indicates vessels, bags and containers are important tools that symbolize our mobility. In my research on Tahltan material culture, I came across numerous examples of unique Firebags³¹ that were used to transport fire via live coals in damp moss from camp to camp. Later, Firebags were used to carry ammunition and sewing kits (Emmons 58, 59). They were used in ceremony, displaying highly skilled craftsmanship and cultural wealth, sewn onto the bags as abstract patterns and unique signification with treasured material. According to Tahltan epistemologies, Firebags not only keep the fires to aid in our survival on the land, but has woven our Tahltan bodies to our nomadic identity in ceremony accrediting “all our relations” to natural elements and place (Little Bear 12).

Movement found in “all our relations” (rocks, mountains, glaciers, plants, animals) are mimicked and revered in traditional curvilinear patterns. The concept of all life being related on the land is a deep-rooted Indigenous paradigm. Little Bear explains Indigenous/Aboriginal paradigms as, “ideas of constant flux, all existence consisting of energy waves/spirit, all things being animate, all existence being interrelated, creation/existence having to be

31 Firebags were not unique to Tahltan people, but according to ethnographer George T. Emmons, the designs, adornment and craftsmanship made Tahltan Firebags unique (Emmons 58, 59).

renewed, space/place as an important referent, and language, songs, stories, and ceremonies as repositories for the knowledge that arise out of these paradigms” (Little Bear 8). Little Bear continues,

In other words, if all are energy and spirit then one can relate to them, be they humans, animals, plants, rocks, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and so forth. Space/place is a very important referent in the Aboriginal mind. Certain events, patterns, cycles, and happenings occur at certain locations and are readily observable including animal migrations, cycles of plant life, seasons, and so on. (9).

Abstract designs and continuous patterns are traditionally appliquéd on Tahltan regalia, embodying Hodzih clānā, the most important medicinal plant and lichen that grows on Tahltan rocks and trees. Ideas of consistent patterns, waves and flux shape our traditional art to reflect our life and priorities as “holistic and cyclical, linked to place, repetitive, generalist, and process oriented” (10). Geometric patterns and dots on Tahltan Firebags, bone scrapers, goat-horn spoons and antler-awls map snowshoe tracks, animal paw prints and rock cairns that mark trails and tracks across the territory. As explained by my Tahltan Elders and fellow makers, traditional Tahltan art documents my ancestors traveling the land and respecting the gifts, guidance and resources it has to give and offers (9). Tahltan patterns are continuous, like the rhythms of the songs we sing that lasts as long as we have breath and the strength to beat our drums.

2.5 VALUE CREATION - FABRICATION/CONSTRUCTION/ PRODUCTION/REPRODUCTION

Measure-of-Wealth is my ongoing multi-media series inspired by my time as a scientific field assistant. I investigate notions of value and fabrications of wealth by questioning perspectives (lenses) that look at the LAND to quantify mineral and ecological potential.

Value is not limited to the monetary value of land and LAND resources as seen in LAND|MINE research and the teaching of Estsiye. Estsiye, speaks about his wealth as love, family and heritage. He tells us his true wealth is measured through his grandchildren, culture and the land where he was raised, where he raised his children and his children's children (Williams).

By recognizing LAND as a foundation for cultural production, and frontier for neo-colonization (mining of resources and bodies) I respect the teachings of Estsiye. In alliance to his teachings, LAND|MINE considers ethical, responsible, and sustainable motivations on the land and towards the LAND to question humanity's necessity for insatiable natural resources consumption. My personal and scientific field observations are based upon measuring the fruits of the land, and equally survival from the fruits of development³².

I have learned through a personal account and the teaching of my Estsiye, to consider inherent ethics when considering industry on our LAND, especially when selecting what is sacred, what gets protected, what gets mined, what permits are issued, how many, for how long, and at what cost³³ (Williams). The

32 What I seek to question is the implications of measuring the LAND — to what (if any) moral resolve for those impacted.

33 Indigenous perspectives and concerns to environmental issues and tradition practices are

art for LAND|MINE teases out modes of survival beyond basic human needs to consider socio-cultural needs such as community and justice— needs that are sometimes held above the needs of short-term, boom and bust employment in the mining industry. I continue to ask the destabilizing and possibly unanswerable question, *what is true wealth* and the ethical question— ... *for future generations— what is right?*



Figure 08 *...for future generations (No. 2)*, Sculpture, 2015

The question of value-creation is a lynch pin to my practice as I communicate the push-pull relationship of a continuous modernization of the Canadian north (especially above the 55th parallel). Through portraying landscapes that explore quantitative sample collection, taxonomy and lay labeling

discussed in, *A Basic Call to Consciousness: The Hau De No Sau Nee Address to the Western World*, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* ("United Nations" 9, 10).

systems³⁴, *Measure-of-Wealth* is imagined through my experience working in fisheries biology, archaeology and soil studies to collecting samples and count non-human and anthropological stocks for environmental and archaeological impact assessments. This gave me insight on the politics of LAND in my home territory through witnessing the ways man³⁵ measures the landscape as a form of irrational control. Within this context, my work speaks to the systems of value and how meaning is created, presumed, assumed and determined based on natural sciences.

Measure-of-Wealth has manifested throughout my *Interdisciplinary Masters of Art Media Design* projects where I have employed acrylic glass or mirrors to reflect the self in relation to land resource systems. In the work, *Entitled* (2015), I emulate a landscape built from a pile of iron oxide soil, originally collected from a trek across mount Edziza Provincial park. I crowned a mini iron oxide pyramid with a cube-shaped pyrite crystal (aka “fools gold”) on a tall clear precarious acrylic stand. Iron oxide has become a significant element in my art material library after visiting Kunugu³⁶ mountain in the Spectrum Range, mountains that are red from the iron oxide rich soil which also colours blood

34 This is a list of methods that are used to gauge value and categorize things that seem illogical to measure.

35 I am intentionally using sexist language as a metaphor drawing on the stereotypes of “man” as a symbol for science and reason who develops the earth- stereotyped as a mother, a woman, who stimulates growth, nurtures and produces life.

36 Kunugu is a mountain I have portrayed numerous times in my paintings and referenced as a symbol for untamed, untapped unworldly landscapes in Tahltan territory. At Emily Carr university, I made a sculpture named, *Untitled No. 4 (Concerning Land Politics, Cultural Paradigms and Scientific Negotiations)* inspired by the Tāltān word “Spatsizi”, (meaning “Land of the Red Goat”) and conflicting scientific/cultural interpretations on the land parcel known as Spatsizi. The name refers to the changing of the local goats’ fur from their natural white to red as they lay on the rich iron oxide soil. I cast a series of mountain goat skulls in different colours and encased them in a divided clear plastic lens’ to mimic the paradigm shift occurring in the landscape, where Tahltans and non-natives alike fight for the mineral rich land (mining and gas) while attempting to preserve the immeasurable cultural value of the landscape.

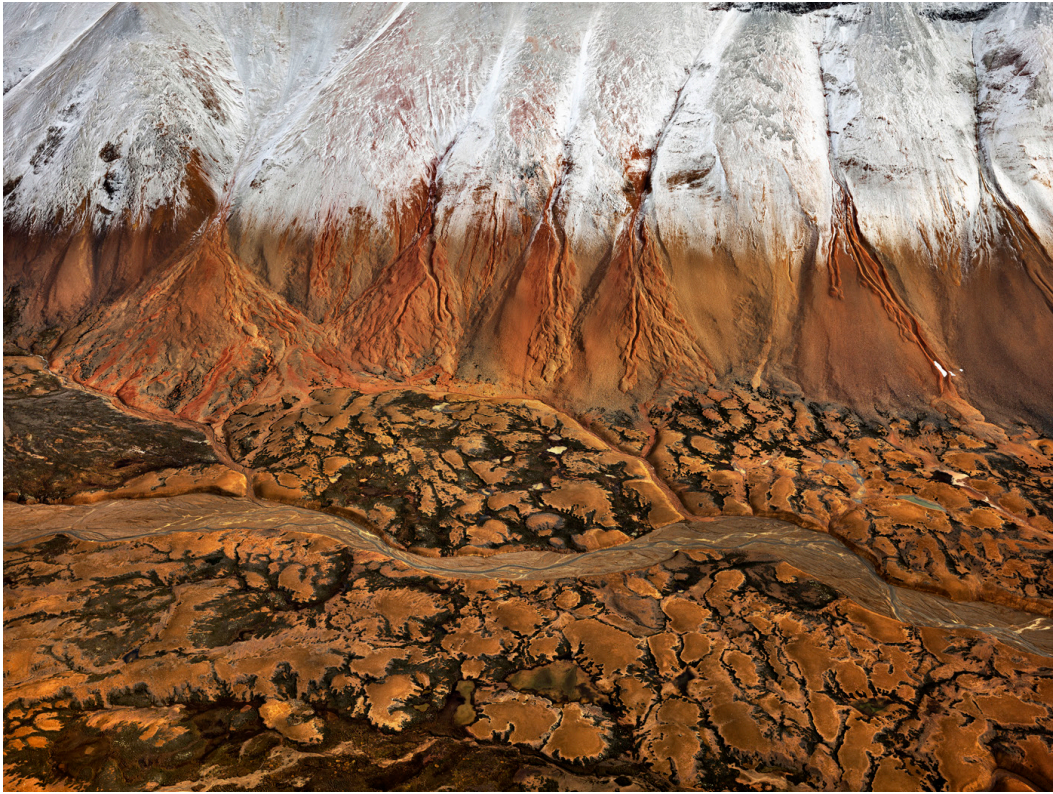


Figure 09 *Mount Edziza Provincial Park #2* by © Edward Burtynsky, 2012
Photo courtesy Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto.

This photograph portrays Little Ball Creek and the surrounding tundra in the shadow of Kunugu mountain.

red—I find this a beautiful metaphor for my connection to the LAND and to the Spectrum Mountain Range (Figure 09 & 18).

I recognize an ideology or land fantasy portrayed in traditional painting conventions within the history of Eurocentric landscape painting, especially colonial propaganda used to entice euro-settlers to populate the *New World* (the Americas). Alternatively, I have researched the work of artists who employed a kind of spiritual authority, and rather than motivated by cultural and territorial colonization, tried to represent land as wild and the antithesis to man's survival

and prosthetic for the sublime³⁷. The artists calling themselves *the Romantics*, a historical art philosophy, were motivated to paint an unbridled ideology of land to emulate the sublime meditation achieved when in the wild.

At my time at the graduate Florence residency (2015)³⁸, I wanted to respond to the ideologies of land and try to paint LAND for what land is, or at least what those places fostered in me. Artist and my mentor Merritt Johnson says, “there are a lot of paintings of what people imagine land to be, as a setting and a backdrop for human desire or fantasy ... painting can be a picture of what things are, not just what they look like. It’s a hard thing to do, maybe an impossible thing to do... but I like the idea of trying to do that” (“Broken Boxes” 15:33). Capturing the essence of land in a work of art is a near impossible feat, yet it is safe to say, artists have attempted this feat time and time again: on cave walls, woven into patterns, interpreted through songs and countless artistic endeavours. By this evidence, Indigenous people have a reverence for what the land is as they are dependent on it for cultural and economic subsistence. Through my experience working with scientists to collect living samples and respecting the teaching of my Estsiye, I have tried to know land for what LAND is and replicate those feelings through my art and research.

37 I would like to disclaim that by removing the human from the landscapes the work of the Romantics would incidentally and sometimes intentionally fuel colonial Indigenous dispossession of land.

38 In May 2015, I traveled to Florence Italy for the OCADu graduate residency where I continued my *Measure-of-Wealth* series and studied works by Renaissance masters and the Romantics (art movement) who attempted to paint the sublime, wild nature of nature. I made two large-scale paintings of images I sourced while surveying Schaft Creek Mine and Mount Edziza. Like other *Measure-of-Wealth* paintings, I painted symbols on the work as abstract keys or legends used in cartography and blueprints. I left a chevron stencil on my palette, and discovered the paper cut-out framed the leftover landscape colours making small abstracted mountains, trees and lakes contained in two parallel triangles. The chevron indicates flow flow/direction/movement, yet encapsulates/trapped the mountain(s). Depending on what angle I flipped the stencil, the work was moving forward, backward, going up or digging deep, or pointing at the ground (Figure 17).

3.0 Land

My intentions in LAND|MINE is to expose a colonial and Indigenous lens to look at land that is not limited by race or experience, instead recognizes each person's position in an ongoing resource consumption system on the LAND. The purpose of this section (Land) is to provide a literary foundation to unpack my politic of LAND concerning resource development. I will theorize the macro and micro lens' to look/examine/focus on at LAND discussed by First Nations political theorist Glen Sean Coulthard's *Red Skins White Masks* chapter, "Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Dispossession," in support of Native Space theory and Indigenous multiplicities as emphasized by Julie Nagam. My goal for this section is to defuse a dissonance between Native and industry, exposing the monolithic myth of Native as nature and the ways industry can shift perspectives from all-consumable to respecting culturally sustainable LAND practices.

3.1 NEW WORLD FANTASIES

In “Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Dispossession,” the introduction to *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2012), Coulthard theorizes colonial Canadian ideologies through a post Marxist framework with the decolonial alliance to Frantz Fanon’s prolific text, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Coulthard speaks about to the foundation of the nation-state that continues to feed Canadian Indigenous politics of recognition. Coulthard builds his theories on Fanon’s groundbreaking critique,³⁹ “of the affirmative relationship drawn between recognition and freedom in the master/slave dialectic”; this recognizes one’s position in colonization⁴⁰ as dominate or submissive bodies that rely on each other for their identities (Coulthard 16). The Politics of Recognition in colonized Canada, identifies First Nation stereotypes (defined by popular culture and refined by the state) as bodies blocking Canadian economical *progression* by their continued occupation of their traditional lands. Furthermore, efforts to halt or negotiate industrial projects (blockades, protests, sit-ins) divide Red and White, Settler and First Nations, ancient and civilized, and developed or developing (nations) (7).

39 Coulthard suggests that, “contexts where colonial rule is not reproduced through force alone, the maintenance of settler state hegemony requires the production of what [Fanon] liked to call “colonized subjects”: namely, the production of the specific modes of colonial thought, desire, and behavior that implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination (Coulthard qut. Fanon 16).

40 Colonization: It is important to distinguish land through processes of what Walter Mignolo calls “Coloniality” (Mignolo 8). “Coloniality” is defined as a “[shorthand for the colonial matrix of power; it and] the structure of management that, since the sixteenth century, was set up by specific actors, categories of thought, and institutions” (8). Post-Marxist philosophers, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s concept of “Empire” is related to Coloniality but as seen from the lens of specific Empires. “Empire” that is not limited to imperialist governments or dictatorships, rather it can be consumerism, “devastating ‘development’,” totalitarianism and oppressive motivations (Hardt and Negri 46, 113).

From the vantage point of LAND|MINE, settler colonialism is a dominant lens one looks at land as geography/resource/frontier.

The settler colonial relationship to land in Canada is a long-standing history of “manifest destiny” (Otter xvii). Manifest destiny is a condition constructing the Canadian pre and post colonial land as wilderness, explained in *Civilizing the Wilderness* by historian A. A den Otter. Otter writes that when Canada was colonized it was looked at as, “not civilized, cultured, or developed, [...] hostile, alien, and, above all, barren” (Otter xix, xvii). Otter explains that the land was assumed available “unbridled nature, untouched by human hands and tools, a place that had to be civilized, to be understood by science and tamed by technology, to be exploited for its resources and wealth” (Otter xvii). These Canadian archetypes justified settling (occupying) and colonizing land that was and still is unceded Indigenous territory.

As discussed in the ground-breaking text “The Construction of the Imaginary Indian” by prolific First Nations scholar Marcia Crosby, this “construction” of Canada and the “Imaginary Indian” was portrayed through art by the Group of Seven and Emily Carr⁴¹ who painted Canadian wilderness as empty, wild and unsettled (Crosby 220). These paintings were promoted by the Canadian government as empirical strategy fuelling the continued settlement of the British colony (220). Today, through mass globalization, Canada’s “common” wealth in natural raw resources, is not limited to England and its colonies, but

41 See Figure 10, an example from Kwakwaka'wakw artist Sonny Assu's series *Interventions on the Imaginary* inspired by the prolific text, “Constructions of the Imaginary Indian” by Marcia Crosby. Assu's interventions reject colonial depictions of Indigenous territories that Canadian hegemony used to colonize the Canadian Wilderness and Indigenous peoples (Crosby 19-20).



Figure 10 *Re-invaders* by © Sonny Assu, 2014.

Digital intervention on an Emily Carr Painting (*Indian Church*, 1929) 22.5 x 35.5 ©Sonny Assu, sonnyassu.com

exported worldwide ⁴².

Historically, the colonizers perceived Canadian Indigenous people as strongly associated to the Canadian wilderness, one with nature, wild and uncivilized (Otter xvii, xviii). The condition that places Native in nature or as nature persists, despite living as contemporary people who are included in a consumption/production cycle. Native stereotypes are questioned through ancient obsidian mining and sophisticated production methods. Persistent stereotypes are transcended by Indigenous bodies continuing to work in mines today.

Coulthard explains that a motivation to neo-colonize and push for the dispossession of traditional territories continues to be a colonial desire to access natural resources (Coulthard 7). He writes,

A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of domination; that is, it is a relationship where power—in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power—has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority. In this respect, Canada is no different from most other settler-colonial powers: in the Canadian context, colonial domination continues to be structurally committed to maintain—through force, fraud, and more recently, so-called “negotiations”—ongoing state access to the land and resources that contradictorily provide the material and spiritual sustenance of Indigenous societies on the one hand, and the foundation of colonial state-formation, settlement, and capitalist development on the other. (6,7)

LAND|MINE proposes the continued settler colonial relationship (land+ nation) and the Canadian colonial foundation as the enduring way to position

42 Coulthard recognizes this resource extraction cycle through Post-Marxist theory of production and consumption knowing that “... Marx was primarily interested in colonialism because it exposed some truth about the nature of capitalism”- the engine that continues to fuel the *Empire* (Coulthard citing Wakefield 10).

Canadian citizens into an active colonial resource extraction and consumption system. Coulthard suggests a contextual shift from, “an emphasis on the capital relation to the colonial relation” or to see how these systems inform each other/are one in the same (Coulthard 7, 10). Natural resource extraction and insatiable consumption is woven into the fabric of Canadian empirical identity and accredited to the historical condition of the colonized capitalist state.

Integral to the politics of LAND in LAND|MINE is Canada’s colonial identity⁴³ which is to produce, consume, to mine and to export natural resources in a place illustrated, advertised and stereotyped⁴⁴ to have a never ending supply of trees, rock, animals and water. The colonial state continues to view northern Canada as a wild frontier, abundant with natural resources available for harvest, to settle (neo-colonization), as I have witnessed through the changing landscape in the Tahltan wilderness (See also Section 3.2 The “Constructed Wild”).

Coulthard suggests that, “by shifting our analytical frame to the colonial relation we might occupy a better angle from which to both anticipate and interrogate practices of settler-state dispossession justified under otherwise egalitarian principles and espoused with so-called ‘progressive’ political agendas in mind” (Coulthard 12). By juxtaposing a collective Indigenous experience with my own, Coulthard speaks to industrial “revolutions” and cycles of being on the land. Moreover, the colonial attitude is the dominant worldview and

43 I encouraged to question Canadian foundational identity through the poetics of art by First Nations activist and poet Duke Redbird. At the OCAD “Future of Storytelling” workshop (2014), I witnessed Redbird, a workshop leader, rap his prolific poem, “The Beaver” which critiques the Canadian mascot, who insatiably consumes trees to exist. Redbird explains the beaver as a natural consumer, going insane by the sound of running water and so builds dams to stop it; the Beaver is also a natural resource that is highly valued for its pelts thus a symbol for the Canadian fur trade an established traditional and colonial industry (Future of Storytelling).

44 ...as theorized and seen in my research for LAND|MINE.

colonialism an active system that we are all part of through the consumption of natural resources (consumed under the state of Canada and the processes of modernity).

Coulthard asks his reader to consider a “blanket “return of the commons”” – not to return the resources, or even the land for that matter, but a return to the ideals of a “common” wealth; that we have, we have together and to consider the long term effect on the political and physical LANDscape of our shared existence. This shift is what Coulthard calls a,

...redistributive counterstrategy to the neoliberal state’s new round of enclosures, is that, in liberal settler states such as Canada, the ‘commons’ not only belong to somebody— the First Peoples of this land —they also deeply inform and sustain Indigenous modes of thought and behavior that harbour profound insights into the maintenance of relationships within and between human beings and the natural world built on principles of reciprocity, nonexploitation and respectful coexistence (12).

Affirming the foundation of the colonial settler identity is also to question the lens by which to look at land— whether we take, devour, use, abuse and feed the capitalist/colonial monster (recourse consumptions system), or to sustain, to cultivate, to coincide, to custodian and to protect. Coulthard says that, “[by] ignoring or downplaying the injustice of colonial dispossession,” we continue to fuel culturally and environmentally unsustainable resource consumption practices. He states,

...critical theory and left political strategy not only risks becoming complicit in the very structures and processes of domination that it ought to oppose, but it also risks overlooking what could prove to be invaluable glimpses into the ethical practices and preconditions required for the construction of a more just and sustainable world order (12).

In conclusion, land continues to inform the identity of settler descendants who may choose to be allies to protect sensitive and sacred sites. Furthermore, colonial settler bodies rely on LAND to survive— not only economically but as a human being on the land. I implore the theories of Coulthard to LAND|MINE recognizing land that Tahltans have called MINE and mined since time immemorial every body (human and animal) is connected to through a common spiritual and physical wealth on the LAND.

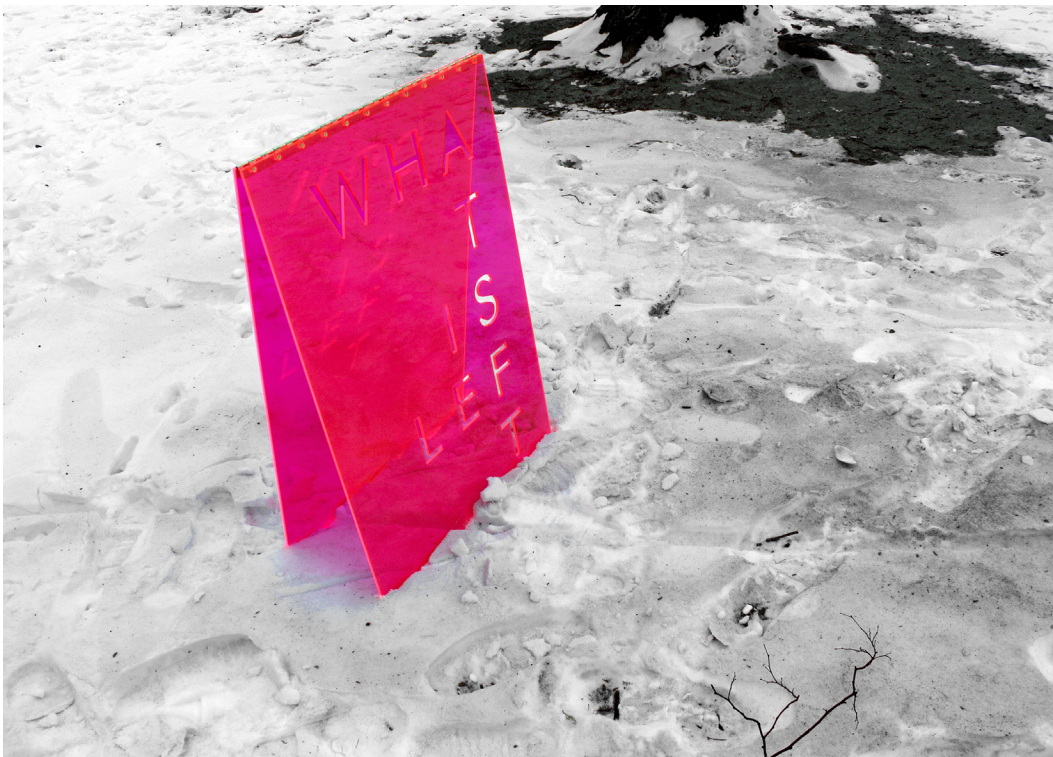


Figure 11 *...for future generations (No 1)*. sculpture, 2014

3.2 THE CONSTRUCTED WILD

Just as obsidian is proxy to ancient mining practices and a link to my Tahltan territory, other rocks can witness other places and times (historically or geologically). For LAND|MINE, I choose two other *Rock Proxies* to address other histories besides my own. *Proxy No. 1 (The Wild)*, represents the woodlands, named by the Anishinabe and non-Indigenous people alike for the area around the city of Toronto. *Proxy No. 2 (Garden Rock)* was collected as a proxy to the curated Toronto's urban space. Each of the three *Rock Proxies* I cast as *Riot Rock Rattles*.

The search for my first rock took place on a plot of land known as Terra Cotta Forest, sandwiched between a highway and a farmer's field outside the city of Toronto. The kept trees were easy to walk through compared to the thick Tahltan forests I navigated while surveying on for the Northwest Transmission Line⁴⁵. Tahltan Territory is considered one of the last great wildernesses of the world by well-traveled National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, anthropologist and professor Wade Davis (*The Sacred Headwaters*). It is also photographed and filmed for "Source" in renowned Canadian photographer, Edward Burtynsky's latest project *Water*⁴⁶, marking a crucial methodological shift from depicting "Manufactured Landscaped" to showing pristine landscapes as sources for clean water and natural life (Burtynsky 162 – 170 and *Watermark*).

Ironically, Burtynsky is from Ontario, close to Terra Cotta Forest and traveled

⁴⁵ The Northwest Transmission Line (NTL) is a power line running from Stewart to Iskut BC funded in part by the BC government and Mining companies operating in the north, that would rely on the electricity to operate. The NTL is said by mining investors to have "opened up the north" by carrying power lines and fiber optic high speed Internet to remote Tahltan communities. I walked the NTL as part of a fisheries crew environmental baseline assessment.

⁴⁶ See Figure 09.

to Tahltan territory to photograph the area surrounding Mount Edziza, and area both Burtynsky and Davis consider one of the worlds last great wildernesses.

To many urban dwellers, Terra Cotta Forest is their “constructed” wild, juxtaposing a busy, noisy space in exchange for fresh air and a quiet place to walk through the trees. The first rock I collected for LAND|MINE represents an ideology of *The Wild*. This rock is evidence to the birth of Turtle Island, from the great Canadian Shield and proxy to the oldest rock in the world (“Canadian Shield” 1). Since breaking free from the shield, *Rock Roxy No. 1 (the Wild)*, was the ideal specimen because it’s characteristics were weathered and rounded by years of glaciers activity making it the ideal size and surface for a Riot Rock Rattle.



Figure 12 *Terra Cotta Forest (Imprint of Rock Proxy No. 1)*, 2015

It was important for me to include a rock from a forested area perceived as wild because of the identity politics associated with place and claimed by Indigenous people as discussed in the previous chapter, "New World Fantasies".

Colonizers have employed "the politics of recognition" to colonize Indigenous bodies and the land. Canadian settlers considered (and I would argue, still consider the) land as wild, open, and available as reflected on colonial maps. Colonial mapping traditions rename sites in colonial languages and established colonial boundaries.

A challenge to colonial mapping practices comes from artists who are remapping traditional territories as a countermeasure to reassert, rename and reaffirm Indigenous sovereignty. This is crucial to land claims and shows current generations how space (vicinity/locale) and place (politicized space) functioned in the past and still functions according to Indigenous knowledge. Remapping, such as the work done by artists, Jeff Thomas, Christi Belcourt and Tahltan architect Kelly Edzerza-Bapty are "everyday acts of cultural resurgence" and "decolonial gestures," I adhere to throughout LAND|MINE (Figure 13, Corntassel 87 & Mignolo 8). Resistant mapping practices are a way to claim space, to decolonize and respect wild places.



Figure 13 *Tāltān Territory Without Reservations*, by Kelly Edzerza-Bapty, © Azziza Studio, 2012.

4.0 MINE

— to actively claim space and assert ownership of the LAND. MINE is a processes of (re)mapping, strategic (re)territorialization and (re)imagining stories. Through materiality, sound and performance, LAND|MINE artwork questions excessive consumption and violence to the LAND to aid in the process of decolonization of the LAND and bodies. I entered LAND|MINE through the doors of: *Measures-of-Wealth* and positionality. Through MINE, I respond to LAND and identity politics in Canada by emphasizing strategies of Indigenous and artistic resistance, especially through the work and philosophies of Estsiye, Indigenous pedagogical theorist, Dr. Leroy Little Bear, and the performance work, *Tierra (Land)* (2013) by Guatemalan-American artist, Regina José Galindo. Through Indigenous praxis, LAND|MINE allows me to assert agency as a woman, an artist, and most of all, as Tahltan.

In 1910, Tahltan Chief Nanock, with the help of ethnographer James Teit and community advisors, made an official written declaration to the government of BC claiming ownership of Tahltan LAND and stating how it should be managed to sustain future Tahltan generations.

4.1 CLAIMING SPACE, AFFIRMING PLACE

To assert something as MINE is to claim spaces and Indigenous identity which points to inherent legacies. Through an Indigenous lens, MINE also recognizes bodies in a shared essence on the land. The collective history of the peoples of Turtle Island is to call ourselves, “custodians” or “Dena nenn sogga neh’ine” (keepers of the land), not only to our traditional lands, but also to the environment as a whole (Rice). Mohawk curator Ryan Rice speaks of inherent legacies and the responsibilities of caring for the LAND as embedded in Indigenous culture that is passed on from our ancestors (Houle 31 & Rice). Inherent legacies apply to the continuum of next generations and “all my relations” who claim to own the land despite the colonial rupture of Indigenous LAND inheritance (Rice). Claiming space in LAND|MINE through sound, performance and occupation asserts an immediate inherent responsibility to care for the LAND. Native Space addresses an inherent legacy that Indigenous people need to activate. Therefore, the LAND must be claimed. Rice says, “in the (colonized/contemporary) society that we live in, if we don’t own it, it is not ours” (Rice).

To re-iterating the importance of Native Space as expandable and in the process of becoming, Native Space does not feed into the monolithic idea of the Native being one with nature, or Native as nature, instead claims a narrative that is passed from generation to generation of Indigenous responsibility to the land (“Carting Indigenous” 189). The land is interdependent upon our care of city spaces, or any space continually navigated and settled by Indigenous people (189).

While attending university, I have witnessed land acknowledgement protocols adopted in some capacity in mainstream Canadian institutions beginning to recognize Indigenous history embedded in traditional territories. The statement for OCAD reads:

OCAD University acknowledges the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishnabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we stand (OCAD University).

Institutional declarations of respect for Indigenous occupation (existence) and cultural investment into traditional territories, counters the common historical narrative by indicating settlers as visitors and reconciles, “Native Space relationships” (“A Home” 71). Nagam lists philosophical foundational theories such as, “Wampum Belts, Convent Chains, the Great Tree of Peace, the Great Law Confederacy, [...] the practice of intermarriage,” and I would add gift-giving in Potlatch, as tangible examples of “Native Space”relationships” (71). By recognizing Indigenous methodologies, all covenants are on par with colonial documents⁴⁷. The documentation process practiced through Tahltan oral tradition is realized and affirmed through Potlatch, when one clan honors another through ceremonial process and protocol. One clan hosts and the other witnesses— this exchange solidifies relationships, created mutual respect, and helps produce evidence of inter cultural business. As a symbolic gesture, Tahltans give gifts to those who came to witness and make real and tangible “Native Space relationships” (“A Home” 71). Little Bear says this realization of oral traditions

⁴⁷ This is also noted in Native American anthropologist Donald Duane Pepion’s research on Blackfoot Ceremony; “Reggie (one of Pepion’s interviewees) considers ceremony as the way of documenting oral tradition” (Little Bear quot Pepion 9 & 10).

“...leads one to articulate the Aboriginal paradigms as being holistic and cyclical, linked to place, repetitive, generalist, and process oriented.” (Little Bear 10).

The Tahltan produced a decolonial document in the form of our declaration of 1910 in the wake of corrupt treaty practices and a rapid settler encroachment on the Canadian west coast⁴⁸ (Appendix C, “The Tahltan Declaration”). The 1910 Tahltan Declaration asserts forms of sovereign principle⁴⁹ our occupation of unceded territory:

Firstly – We claim the sovereign right to all the country of our tribe – this country of ours which we have held intact from the encroachments of other tribes, from time immemorial, at the cost of our own blood. We have done this because our lives depended on our country. To lose it meant we would lose our means of living, and therefore our lives. We are still as heretofore, dependant for our living on our country, and we do not intend to give away the title to any part of same without adequate compensation. We deny the B.C. government has any title or right of ownership in our country. We have never treated with them nor given them any such title. (We have only lately learned the B.C. government make this claim, and that it has for long considered as it property all the territories of the Indian tribes of B.C.) — The first declaration of five in “The Tahltan Declaration”, signed in 1910 (“The Tahltan Declaration” – Appendix C)

Nagam’s Native Space concept supports the Tahltan Declaration of 1910, as a moment that, “continually [mark] Indigenous people into the landscape, and places Indigenous people at the forefront of the larger North American narrative” (“A Home” 71). As stated in, “The Tahltan Declaration”, Tahltan Chief Nanok foresaw future “Native Space relationships” in the form of resource sharing agreements and protected areas. The Tahltan Declaration asserts a collective,

48 Tahltan land was “settled” relatively late (1837) compared to Eastern Nations and surrounding LAND that was easier to access (“Territories”).

49 When talking about sovereign principle, I am influenced by Hardt and Negri’s work in chapters “Sovereignty of the Nation-State” and “The Dialectics of Colonial Sovereignty” in their prolific book *Empire*.

...desire that a part of our country, consisting of one or more large areas (to be selected by us), be retained by us for our own use, said lands, and all thereon to be acknowledged by the government as our absolute property. The rest of our tribal land we are willing to relinquish to the B.C. government for adequate compensation (second declaration in "The Tahltan Declaration", Appendix C).

Anthropologist, environmental activist and ally, Wade Davis asserts that the Tahltan are not wholly against mining (as mentioned in the second Tahltan Declaration), yet it is the questions of where, when and at what cost? (*The Sacred Headwaters*, Williams). Our Ancestors have witnessed the effects of time on the land and none have been as destructive/productive as this current age⁵⁰. Nagam writes that each, "Indigenous nation forges a particular relationship with the land"—and when unpacking "concepts of Native Space" especially in settler-colonial relationships, one must also understand "Indigenous people's connections to and networks with the natural environment" (71). Houle and Nagam state that LAND contains place-markers for histories having memory that has sustained bodies and culture since time immemorial (Houle 31 and "A Home" 73). Nagam says LAND "has borne witness spanning millennia to the individual events and occurrences that have shaped our surroundings" ("A Home" 73).

In Houle's essay for *Land, Spirit, Power*, "Legacy of the Ancient Ones," he mentions, "[there] is no word for "landscape" in any of the languages of the Ancestors still spoken. In Ojibwa, whenever the word, "uhke" is pronounced, it is more an exaltation of humanness than a declaration of property" (Houle 60/61). Houle indicates that according to Anishnaabe, the concept of LAND is so vast,

50 Our current Epoch the "Anthropocene", or as theorist Jussi Parikka calls it the "Anthrobscene", is the collective activities of human beings currently tapping (out) the earth's mineral supply to bring the earth to its demise (Parikka 1-9).

that it cannot be comprehended by just one word⁵¹. Indigenous perspectives on land and LAND politics is Nation-to-Nation, situation-to-situation. There are complex dimensions about ownership and property that Indigenous people have with our territories, especially those that are unceded territories.

The Tahltan Declaration is reasserted by Estsiye to indicate that my ancestors paid with their own blood to keep our land and resources (including animals, rock (obsidian), water and medicinal plants) for future generations (Figure 08 and Figure 11). When considering natural resources, everything that is LAND, including blueberries, salmon, hodzih clānā (medicine), moose to name a few is on the stock market⁵² or bought into by outside investors.

Indigenous concepts and legacies of place recognizes the agency of non-humans and objects in occupying their territories. Little Bear lists: “stones, rivers, hills, or thunders [that] have a language that can be understood by those connected to those places. These objects are the products of the Sun and the Moon which speak to the people of the land” (Little Bear 21). Little Bear sees Aboriginal⁵³ cosmology as a conversation between our universe and cultural identity production (21). In my praxis, cosmology of place is how I relate to and interpret animal totems, abstract patterns, Northwest Coast Formline Design and creation stories.

51 Artist can conceptualize LAND by activating the land and body – This is sing the land like Ursula Johnson, walk the land like Duane Linklater, perform the land like Rebecca Belmore and Michael Belmore- all of whom have influenced concepts in LAND|MINE by being a participant in their projects, studio visits and witnessing their performance work.

52 Bennett claims, “BC also remains a global center for exploration and mining companies listed on the Toronto Stock exchange headquarters in BC” (Bennett 25).

53 Here I am using Aboriginal because that is the terminology Little Bear uses. I prefer the term Indigenous to refer to the first peoples of Canada and First Nations for Indigenous people of the Canadian northwest coast.

Estsiye tells of territorial negotiations where Tlingit and Tahltan leaders met to decide national boundaries. One Nation had names for small creeks and berry patches and the other did not. According to Estsiye Indigenous mapping and site-specific stories, revealed each nation's investment into those places (Williams). This collective memory was our document, similar to Potlatch systems where Tahltans spoke many languages, created relationships and asserted their claim to Tahltan territories. Traditional systems of claiming space through collective knowledge has been severed through strategies of colonization including residential schools and the Canadian Potlatch ban of 1887⁵⁴.

Traditional knowledge persists through the resistant memories and traditional practices of Elders such as Estsiye whose philosophies now advance negotiating and changing perspectives in the continued industrialization of Tahltan traditional territory. Our knowledge the love of our Land and natural resources is represented in our art, embodied in obsidian and affirmed in resilient Potlatch systems.

54 In the following passage from the Introduction of *Tales of Ghosts* professor Ronald W. Hawlker eloquently explains the repercussions of the Canadian Potlatch Ban of 1887:

Plainly said, industrialization, Urbanization, and mass immigration engineered by government authorities in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples being in conflict over land and marine resources. To understand how this affected the production and meaning of Northwest Coast art, it is important to recognize that, in 1900, these carvings and painting played a different role in Northwest Coast societies. Furthermore, the battle over land and resources was fought symbolically rather than openly. Government strategy was to replace Aboriginal meaning systems with those familiar to the immigrants and to replace Aboriginal modes of authority with European Modes. They thus attacked the social structure: the potlatch (Hawlker 5).



Potlatch 1946 Last big potlatch in T.C.
 Alfred Ball, Johnny Williams, Mary, Benny Frank, Joe Cobin
 Elsie Inkster, Vera, Eva, Mary & Opal Williams, Bender Day

Figure 14 The last big Potlatch in TC, 1946, by Estsū Grace Williams, 2005

4.2 EXPANDING TERRITORIES

Expanding territories represents claiming space and expanding worldviews through active transformative art⁵⁵ practices capable of shifting ideological frameworks within the gallery and beyond (Mignolo 10 & McCall and L'Hirondelle Hill 6). The body of work made for LAND|MINE stems from theoretical and art influences, my body's response witnessing and sampling mine sites, "mining" from multiple places (settler/indigenous, traditional/contemporary, mining/mining-resistance, artist/scholar) to tell alternative stories of the LAND on the land.

My praxis is influenced by artists who create, imagine and build new territories, (re)map, (re)imagine stories and concepts of LAND to question excessive neo-colonial consumption of the LAND and Indigenous identities. In particular, artists M. Johnson, Galingo, Red Bird and theorists Contassel, Nagam, Coulthard and Mignolo, are relevant to LAND|MINE realizing identity and LAND as interconnected and effected by neo-colonization. Mignolo writes that, "[racism] and patriarchy are epistemic ontologies" contributing to capitalism/neo-colonialism (Mignolo 9). By resisting those systems through art and scholarship, one can "dismantle and disobey the categories that built and sustain the colonial matrix" (9). Decolonization and shifting perspectives offer hope for respectful living within the discourse of contemporary interdisciplinary art practices (9).

55 In the text, "Looking for the Meaning of 'Decolonial Gesture]", Mignolo examines the power of the artist who understands who they are in the world and where they are in the world (their positionality) then make moves/take action to de-link themselves from the colonial matrix and the colonial-settler lens looking at/consuming land (Mignolo 10).

Imagining new systems, world making⁵⁶ , and changing perspectives from macro to micro lenses is extensively spoken about in post colonial theorist Jean Franco's text, "Making Differences, Shifting Boundaries." Franco recognizes territory as physical, existential and digital and subsequently neo-colonization affects within the "in between spaces" (Franco 225, 228). She argues colonization can be countered through "strategic reterritorialization" (225, 228). I have witnessed "Strategic reterritorialization" as a technology of resistance employed by Indigenous grassroots movements such as Idle No More, Extrativism⁵⁷, blockades and the Zapatistas who activate performance and visual art to view new territories (228).

Idle No More (INM) was my political initiation to resistance. I contributed through the sound of my voice and drum in INM rallies and flash mob round dances enveloped by the energy of bodies coming together for a cause. Artist, M. Johnson says, "resistance is both creative and disruptive and avoidance [(or inactivity)] is neither" ("Black box" 1:13). Corntassel writes that making art by (re)telling stories, "through ceremony or through other ways that Indigenous peoples (re)connect to the natural world, processes of resurgence are often contentious and reflect the spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political scope of the struggle" (Corntassel 88). My research developing the work for LAND|MINE has shown me that reimaging new systems through art and

56 Mignolo urges colonial subjects, including himself, "to delink and decolonize ourselves (our subjectivities), and from there, to engage in world-making not regulated by the colonial matrix" (Mignolo 10 &).

57 Here I am adapting the word Extractivism coined by activists in Latin America protesting mineral extraction.

storytelling contributes to the dismantling of ideological societal veneer which continues to curate archetypal colonial histories. As a counter-narrative in this framework, art can speak to complicated issues (like the politics of LAND) that are difficult to communicate through Western imposition.

Art is a relevant job that I believe it is crucial work and my position in the world. Artist Adrian Stimson is quoted in *The Land We Are* as saying:

Artists are a conduit for the community in many different ways, of the experience that has happened in the community.... I think artists have that role, or are charged with that role, within the community to be seers, to mirror back what's going on so that the community can agree or be confused, or in some weird way have that information transferred to them for them to resolve. (McCall & L'Hirondelle Hill quot. Stimson (193))

Transferring power from the viewer and mirroring it back proves art can move in tandem with activism (193). An example is Guatemalan-American artist Regina José Galindo's *Tierra (Land)* (2013), a 33 min., 30 sec. digital art video filmed in a lush field near a forest in Guatemala. The camera pans to show Galindo naked in the field, standing tall, looking ahead. Eventually an excavator comes and starts digging into the ground near her. I interpreted the mechanical beast, as her Goliath-like opponent. Then, over the course of the film the earth is taken from beside her until she is left on an island, standing tall and looking fiercely ahead. The drama of the work is heightened by the production quality and the monotone sounds of the machine— only changing in volume as it is closer or farther from the camera and Galindo. I interpret this media work as simultaneously beautiful and horrible speaking to a mixed survival on the landscape (both physically and economically) by the inclusion of her Indignous body and the body of the machine. She stands vulnerable,

her naked breathing body is organic and living yet cold like the metal of the industrial yellow machine. The excavator can be perceived as saving her or protecting her by leaving ground to stand away from the toils of the wild (forest in the background). In another interpretation she is stranded and contained on an island of grass. I consider *Tierra* to be eloquent and powerful to expose multiple perspectives and interpretations of the artwork. I view Galindo on the land with no conclusive ethical resolve to why she is there, her feelings, our own, and if we are the naked body or running the machine. *Tierra's* affect can only be felt by experiencing the artwork. The artistic potential created in *Tierra* by being conceptualually driven artwork that is ambiguous yet inconclusive, opens space for the viewer to contemplate their position and interpretation of the work. Yet the work is directed by Galindo's use of her body and surroundings. Provocative work, like *Tierra*, can shift expectations of a stereotypical Indigenous body who is tokenized for eco-shaming, blockading a new mine, pipeline etcetera, romanticized as land itself, by questioning both Galindo's body in the landscape or our own position as viewer and participant watching *Tierra (land)*.

Adopting the process of (Re)telling, re(mapping) and (re)conceptualizing through art actively decolonizes, repositioning and reconsiders the concept of LAND (Mignolo 10). I have learned through LAND|MINE research, examples of transformative art practice and scholarship.

Art can speak when I do not have the words to do so.



Figure 15 *(Re)Naturalization No 1 (Brick)* ,2015

4.3 RIOT ROCK RATTLES

Shake shake shake shake. Bum boom bum boom! Upon activation, the rattle and the drum keep time, complimenting our songs in ceremony. The sound⁵⁸ affirms the space of a body playing an instrument and reverberates in their vicinity like the beat of the blue grouse's wings on his breast to claim his territory and attract a mate. The *shake, shake, shake* with the *drum, drum, drum* is present in real time, contributing to the soundscape of life cycles on the LAND. Tahltans have songs to sing for many reasons. We sing when hunting ptarmigan, for crossing the Stikine river to meet a glacier, and a sad song to watch the sun going down. When these songs are sung with percussion, they activate Indigenous systems of knowing that shape our identity on the land. Little Bear connects ways of Indigenous knowing to physical manifestations saying, "[knowing] is represented in the Aboriginal context as multiple and diverse processes and includes other ways of knowing, i.e. dreams, visions, insights and teachings that validate one's sensory intake. In the Indigenous world, knowledge is about relationships" (Little Bear 7).

Centered in the exhibition LAND|MINE are my *Riot Rock Rattles (RRR)* that create material and mechanical relationships to link bodies to the LAND. They are activated by shaking copper, rawhide and ceramic rattles filled with glass seed beads, ceramic beads, pennies and dentalium⁵⁹ that symbolize both

58 I was inspired by witnessing the durational performance, *Sing the land* by Ursula Johnson and Cheryl Larondelle for Monomyths symposium 2016 in Toronto Ontario, Canada. This is an ongoing performance by U. Johnson where she plots a portion of the landscape and asks collaborators to write a song responding to the physical ups and downs (layout) of the land. For Monomyths, the performance that I witnessed U. Johnson asked artist Cheryl L'rondelle to write a song which they sang and performed together for 4 hours. I consider this a poetic remapping and artistic research project showing the power of art to speak to our collective and individual position(s) on the land.

59 In a studio visits with artist's Michael Belmore (October 2015) and later Janet Rogers (February 2016) we brainstormed what can be placed inside. Depending on what is inside my *RRR*

cultural and industrial value. They are also materials that have been refined across ancient cultures who have mined, hunted and gathered copper, ceramic and animal products to make customary art and functional objects. *RRR* are linked by old and new forms of refinement, and also through a network of bodies that move in their periphery as an imagined collaborative performance collectively shaking. In a studio visit with Mohawk/Tuscarora poet, radio and performance artist Janet Rogers, we discussed rattles as unassuming and less intimidating to play than a drum because drums carry specific protocols and an amplified *boom*. In Roger's critique of *RRR*, she affirmed rattles as an appropriate vehicle for collaborative performance because they are non-intimidating. Furthermore, the sound made by several rattles together is a metaphor for a collective contribution to industrialized LAND politics. When playing *RRR*, the material potential is realized through performance and ceremony.

RRR are performative objects to *shake, shake, shake* in time— but they also perform themselves by the nature of the object located as an obstacle on the floor requiring careful navigation. I discovered the affective quality of the hand-held object led people to instinctively want to throw them. I have since experimented with other people who also felt an undeniable urge to use *RRR*— to shake them or throw them, some are compelled to break the artwork or something nearby with this size of rock. The desire associated with *RRR* continues to foster engagement with the rattles, material and LAND|MINE subject matter.

the material changes *RRR* sonic potential and meaning of the work. M. Belmore suggested I foster the "riot" of the "riot rocks" by putting broken glass, and shrapnel inside. Rogers spoke of different cultures using different material, sometimes treasured material like corn or legumes (Nation to Nation value and meaning). From these studio visits I experimented with the conceptual and sonic potential of the *RRR* and what inside the rattles to make sound. The objects inside can have the potential for riot or ceremony— seeds, shells, bullets, shrapnel.

My rock rattles “milieu⁶⁰” or mid-place in a social environment is a potential for riot or ceremony (Milieu” & Foucault 36). This becomes the tension in the objects and a metaphor for the ethics of industrial power by which those in the city (*Garden Rock*), from *The Wild* and from Native territories all connected through resource extraction systems, and by shaking the *RRR* (*Obsidian, Rock Proxies*).

“Riot Rocks” are a size of rock that is hand-held and can be perceived as threats. I became familiar with the concept of Riot Rocks through the explanation of city planners and landscape architects who associate the taboo sized rock with breaking windows and being weapons in riots⁶¹. In Michael Foucault’s lecture, *Security, Territory, Population*, (1977-78), he relates the potential of a particular object, such as a Riot Rock to the political environment of the city (“milieu” or potential to activate space). (Milieu” & Foucault 36). He says “[It] is needed to account for action at a distance” from one body on another and the politics of curated spaces in the city” (Foucault 36). He continues, “It is therefore the medium of an action and the element in which it circulates. It is therefore the problem of circulation and causality that is at stake in this notion of milieu” (36). The natural performative quality of my objects whether being shaken or static became a theme for occupying space as art objects. At the same time, the activation of a *RRR* unsettled the white cube through reverberating across bodies and beyond.

60 Milieu is French for “mid” (mil) “place” or a “social environment”.

61 Security measures like regulating weaponizable objects in landscaping (loosely enforced in Toronto), can prevent people from releasing their inner savage as philosophized in Michel Foucault’s lecture, *Security, Territory, Population*, (1977-78). Foucault discusses the responsibility of the state to discipline structures of space to distribute, “hierarchical and functional elements” to account for possibilities of riot and sedition (Foucault 35, 352).

4.4 UNSETTLING THE GALLERY

As fulfillment of the Interdisciplinary Masters of Art Media and Design program, LAND|MINE is a thesis exhibit coinciding with the research discussed in this paper (OCADu Student Gallery, 52 McCaul, April 3 -7, 2016). My thesis exhibit opened April 3 at 3 pm where I read an oral citation for my performance, *Khohk'ātskets'mā* in accordance to Potlatch methodology as it related to every aspect of my praxis. I defended LAND|MINE on April 4, 2016 in the LAND|MINE exhibit space.

I strategically installed the work in the gallery so that the viewer entered the space seeing my digital print series, *Land Masks (sample 1, 2 and 3)*, depicting a chevron stencil over abstract landscapes. The chevron indicates flow/direction/movement, yet seems to encapsulate the aura of a wild, unbridled mountains. When reading the work left to right, the three orientations worked to first point to the ground, the next directs the viewer to the sky, and the other points forward, to the next room, or as brought up in critique, makes the viewer consider the future (Figure 17). On the floor beneath the *Land Masks* prints, the *Riot Rock Rattles* were positioned for the viewer to touch, shake and re-configure the installation to their liking.

In a separate space of the gallery were *Rock Proxies (Garden Rock, The Wild and Obsidian)* on precarious, elegant /thin platforms made of acrylic mirror. Each *Rock Proxy* was distinguished by displaying the rocks inside the gallery as artworks on their own accord with their own agency as objects. In “Rocks, Stones, and Grandfathers”, Garneau juxtaposes rocks found in the wild to rocks brought into the gallery space- “[in] the field, the rocks are neutral, mute, ignorant of

their geopolitical status. Collected, removed, and arranged in the gallery, they become heterotrophic. No longer fully natural nor cultural, no longer there but not quite here; domesticated nature, they are not quite themselves” (Garneau 2). Rocks sourced, inspired and grounded as art can be portions of the outside brought inside and as exhibited in LAND|MINE are a piece of the landscape and proxy to the places they have traveled from. By displaying them on mirrored plinths, I hope the viewer sees their precariousness in the tall pedestal that may tip at anytime knocking over the towering rocks. The performative nature of the rocks and *RRR* makes the viewer a part of the project or, perhaps see themselves as a reflection of the LAND on the land.

Lastly, I included a light box image of *The Last Potlatch of TC, 1946* (Figure 14) as a conduit to the cultural foundation on the LAND through claiming space and traditional mining on the land. The image of my family in Potlatch and *Rock Proxy No. 3 (Obsidian)* are foundational elements and proxy for Tahltan worldviews linking bodies to the land through ceremony, mining and art practices.

As my opening and closing contribution to LAND|MINE, I performed *Khohk'ātskets'mā*. to honour my mother and my great grandmother's Tāltān name and enact the LAND|MINE metaphor describing the push-pull relationship that affects the shoreline and those living downstream. The *Khohk'ātskets'mā* sound and spoken word piece was created out of guttural anguish I felt in Toronto while the Klabona Keepers where protesting a new mine in Tahltan territory. I feel the affect of ongoing push-pull relationships with LAND and industrialization in my body because I recognize my cultural foundation is in

both LAND and industry witnessed and experienced through my LAND proxy, obsidian. The work became a response to witnessing material and accessing changing metaphysical landscapes and that are continually impacted, shaken and consumed through corporate resource extraction within the intersection of production and consumption (Appendix B). Therein lays an abstract politic that I can best address through the poetics of art and Indigenous ontologies. I performed *Khohk'ātskets'mā* as a participatory performance where those who agreed to engage, did so by listening, feeling and shaking *Riot Rock Rattles* with the sound of water, machines and my voice.



Figure 16 *Tsēma Button Blanket*, regalia documentation, 2016

4.5 CONCLUSION

LAND|MINE functions to connect my body and those who participate to the politics of LAND and mining on the land to the LAND. I chose relevant materials (material library) and invited the viewer to engage through touch, movement, sound, performance and Potlatch methodology. Through making, writing and performing, I created LAND|MINE to be a decolonial action made from my Indigenous praxis. The work created for LAND | MINE was inspired by the legacy of *Khohk'ātskets'mā*, as a means to introduce my politic of LAND. The process and knowledge exhibited was site-specific, yet interconnected to other places through experiences of ecological and resource-consumption systems.

Moving forward, my praxis will incorporate Potlatch Methodology to every aspect of my art making and lifestyle. Through the processes of LAND|MINE, I recognize Potlatch as an endless system for maintaining and restoring a balanced existence through meaningful relationships. Little Bear moralizes, “[the] meaning of life is rooted in the experiences grounded in the sacred relationships of alliances” (Little Bear 10). In Potlatch, it is important to see alliances to LAND, material and each other, in order to publicly and respectfully declare our acknowledgement to “all our relations” as an oral citation (10). Together, with tangible gifts of appreciation experienced through Potlatch, I relate my existence and future dependence on the foundation laid by my ancestors, the LAND and everything that helps make my art and experience real. (Little Bear 12). Potlatch methodology is an active decolonial gesture, that also exists in global traditions like weddings, open source software, and honor systems that require each participant to maintain good relationships of

engagement⁶².

Seeing Potlatch as a contemporary methodology and the resourcefulness of obsidian representing ancient and ongoing mining practices were epiphanies made through the producing art, writing and research discussed in my thesis project. Potlatch methodology and obsidian as proxy, helped me to engage with my research question: how one can read the LAND from Indigenous and colonial settler perspectives to consider the affects on cultural/industrial negotiations? When my ancestors mined for obsidian they engage with the land through Potlatch methodology and recognized the significance of the material and gift from the LAND. Indigenous people traditionally mined obsidian and other material as substance and knowledge. Today, cooperate mines colonize the land with the objective to take without proper honor and compensation to the LAND or Indigenous peoples. Tahltan people participate in both ancient and contemporary mining. The paradoxical relationship with LAND and Industry as discussed in LAND|MINE is an issue that can only be addressed through the poetics of art as a process of decolonial, sustainable mining practices. Through obsidian as proxy I am reminded of the microcosm of potlatch methodology as everyday decolonial actions.

When harvesting obsidian from Mount Edziza, I am taught by my Elders to leave a gift for the mountain as active engagement and recognition of a balanced relationship that my ancestors had with the land. Leaving a gift for the mountain establishes my place on the land as someone who takes respectfully, but also gives back. Teaching future generations to actively engage in the politics

62 For example, Uber and Air Bnb.

of LAND through Potlatch methodology is my gift to the world, initiated and carried forth through the wisdom of Estsiye and Estsū.

The affect orchestrated in LAND|MINE comes from actively decolonizing bodies and spaces through participatory performance, visual experiences and sound. I hope the art for LAND|MINE, enforces the participant's relation to our grandfathers the rocks, to the LAND, to each other and to my home territory—a place ripe with material gifts we can contact physically and spiritually for both cultural and industrial survival.



Figure 17 *Land Masks No. 1*, 2016

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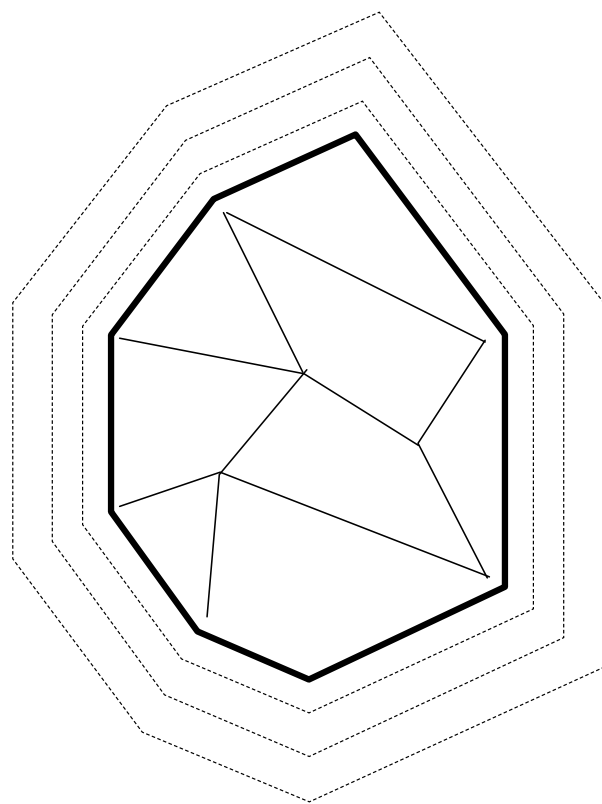
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APPENDIX A: IMAGES



Figure 18 *Entitled*, sculpture. 2015



Figure 19 *Riot Rock Rattles*, LAND|MINE installation, 2016
Shells: Copper, Rawhide, Ceramic.
Contains: Glass Beads, Dentalium Shells, Penny Shards,
Mount Edziza Soil Sample



Figure 20 *Proxy No. 1 (The Wild)* , LAND|MINE installation, 2016

Figure 21 *Proxy No. 3 (Obsidian)*, LAND|MINE installation, 2016



Figure 22 *Proxy No. 2 (Garden Rock)*, LAND|MINE installation, 2016

3 Found Objects & Acrylic Mirror Pedestals.

APPENDIX B: KHOHK'ĀTSKETS'MĀ

When the Stikine hits the rocks and makes bubbles.

A name and fierce inheritance.

And the production from chaos, living past the “colonial crash”¹.

Khohk'ātskets'mā

Water's knowledge etches my name on the rock,

Weaving paths of water and blood.

Riverbanks in the process of becoming

Water trickling, crashing. A moving flood.

Pumping and raking everything in its wake.

*We all live downstream*².

Etsū-tia- tia, Etsū tia, Etsu, eg la'

River systems cycle from the air to clouds to rain to river

From my cup to a pot to my mouth to my stomach and out

From the mist to the trickle to the river to the sea.

To the soil to a plant to my mouth to a stomach

Stomaching that

We all live downstream.

Making bubbles, making ripples, making changes

Patterns in the snow, drumming in the air, beats like my heart,

With a rhythm and no start

Water systems are machines, in a loop on repeat

Causing friction, exploding! Water pressure causing tension.

I'm making a fire, making power, making heat, boiling water

I'm making roads, making camps, making mines, making sludge

Your mining for gold, mining for copper, mining for coal, mining my body³

1 The colonial crash: "the train wreck of conquest and colonization" (Taylor 108).

2 This is a reference to "the Klabona Keepers" blockade in August 2015, shortly after Mount Polley tailings pond breach and mining environmental disaster. A group of concerned Tahltans and settler allies, "the Klabona keepers" set up a blockade at the new mine site, Red Chris owned by the same company as Mount Polley mine. The Klabona keepers held signs that read "We all live downstream..."

3 John Trudell is one of the founding members of the AIM (American Indian Movement). He

Mining for moose, mining for moss, mining obsidian, mining my mother
We all live downstream.

We all live downstream.

We all live downstream.

We all live downstream.

Khohk'ātskets'mā

(Re)matriation⁴: from my mother, my grandmother, her mother

Of course I'm an environmentalist. Environmentalism is in my blood.

I respect the mountain, because the mountain won't respect me.

I'm telling you its your mountain too, why can't you see?

That we all live downstream



Figure 23 *Khohk'ātskets'mā* , performance documentation, 2016

Special thanks to Garnet Willis, Tyler Sydiaha, Dante Berardi Jr., Robert Cram and Janet Rogers for their help with this work.

writes an inspiring poem about the land and knowledge in the land that inspired me to write this poem for the keyword project.

⁴ Rematriation is collective of “women in support of amazing Indigenous women and their work” (Rematriation Facebook statement). We are interested in self-representation and making others aware of misappropriation of Indigenous Iconography.

APPENDIX C: THE TAHLTAN DECLARATION OF 1910

We, the undersigned members of the Tahltan tribe, speaking for ourselves, and our entire tribe, hereby make known to all whom it may concern, that we have heard of the Indian Rights movement among the Indian tribes of the Coast, and of the southern interior of B.C. Also we have read the declaration made by the chiefs of the southern interior tribes at Spences Bridge of the 16th July last, and we hereby declare our complete agreement with the demands of the same, and wit the position taken by the said chiefs, and their people on all the questions stated in the said Declaration, and we furthermore make known that it is our desire and intention to join with them in the fight for our mutual rights, and that we will assist in the furtherance of this object in every way we can, until such time as all these matters of moment to us are finally unsettled. We further declare as follows:

Firstly – We claim the sovereign right to all the country of our tribe – this country of ours which we have held intact from the encroachments of other tribes, from time immemorial, at the cost of our own blood. We have done this because our lives depended on our country. To lose it meant we would lose our means of living, and therefore our lives. We are still as heretofore, dependant for our living on our country, and we do not intend to give away the title to any part of same without adequate compensation. We deny the B.C. government has any title or right of ownership in our country. We have never treated with them nor given them any such title. (We have only lately learned the B.C. government make this claim, and that it has for long considered as its property all the territories of the Indian tribes of B.C.)

Secondly – We desire that a part of our country, consisting of one or more large areas (to be selected by us), be retained by us for our own use, said lands, and all thereon to be acknowledged by the government as our absolute property.

The rest of our tribal land we are willing to relinquish to the B.C. government for adequate compensation.

Thirdly – We wish it known that a small portion of our lands at the mouth of the Tahltan River, was set apart a few years ago by Mr. Vowell as an Indian reservation. These few acres are the only reservation made for our tribe. We may state we never applied for the reservation of this piece of land, and we had no knowledge why the government set it apart for us, nor do we know exactly yet.

Fourthly – We desire that all questions regarding our lands, hunting, fishing etc., and every matter concerning our welfare, be settled by treaty between us and the Dominion and B.C. government.

Fifthly – We are of the opinion it will be better for ourselves, also better for the governments and all concerned, if these treaties are made with us at a very early date, so all friction, and misunderstanding between us and the whites may be avoided, for we hear lately much talk of white settlement in this region, and the building of railways, etc., in the near future.

Signed at Telegraph Creek, B.C., this eighteenth day of October, Nineteen hundred and ten, by

NANOK, Chief of the Tahltans,
NASTULTA, alias Little Jackson,
GEORGE ASSADZA, KENETI, alias Big Jackson
And eighty other members of the tribe.