

Dreaming of Bear and Crow

A Search for Métis Identity

By Patrick Francis DeCoste

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Degree of Master of Fine Arts in the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media & Design
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ABSTRACT

Dreaming of Bear and Crow is an art project that asks how my emerging Métis identity might be located and expressed through a historical Indigenous dream. Five hundred years ago, a young Mi'kmaw woman dreamed of the coming of the French to her shores in Nova Scotia. Her dream announced the genesis of my Métis ancestry and is the subject of my research and art practice. My research included an examination of a text written in 1869 by Silas Rand and engaged *site as simulation* during a summer art residency on Georgian Bay.

My research was expressed through an interdisciplinary art exhibition featuring acrylic paintings on a polar bear, a spirit bear, and other taxidermy animal skins. Yet a full understanding and embodiment of a Métis identity remains challenged by a communal disconnect, the geographic and cultural distance between Toronto – where I live – and Nova Scotia – where I was born.

Keywords: Art, Identity, Métis, Mi'kmaq, Acadian, History, Dream, Painting, Animal Skins.

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For
Mary Helen (Purcell) DeCoste
who tells me stories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page viii	List of Images
Chapter 1 – page 1	Introduction
Chapter 2 – page 5	Literature Review
Chapter 3 – page 15	Research Methods
Chapter 4 – page 23	Results: Creation of Art Work
Chapter 5 – page 31	Summary and Conclusion
Addendum – page 34	Claude Petitpas
Bibliography – page 35	Works Cited
Appendix A – page 39	<i>The Dream of the White Robe and the Floating Island</i>
Appendix B – page 41	Images

LIST OF IMAGES

Cover Image: Page iii

Dreaming of Bear and Crow (detail), 2013, acrylic on paper, 36 x 84 inches.

Appendix B

Image 1: *Site as Simulation, The Bear Den*. Page 41.

Image 2: *Site as Simulation, The Crow's Nest*. Page 42.

Image 3: *Site as Simulation, The Floating Island*. Page 43.

Image 4: *Dreaming of Bear and Crow* (Installation views). Page 44.

Image 5: *Dreaming of Bear and Crow* (Installation views). Page 45.

Image 6: *The People of the Dream*. Page 46.

Image 7: *Tracing Ontario*. Page 47.

Image 8: *Flying Spirit Bear*. Page 48

Image 9: *Self Portrait Atlas*. Page 49.

Image 10: *The Man Dressed in Furs*. Page 50.

Image 11: *The Dream*. Page 51.

Image 12: *The Floating Island*. Page 52.

All works of art by Patrick Francis DeCoste.

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INTRODUCTION

A Mi'kmaw Girl's Dream

This thesis engages my emerging Métis identity and is an expression of storytelling. A story from a long time ago, tells of a Mi'kmaw girl who dreamed of a bearded man standing on a floating island. The strange white bearded man was surrounded by bears and crows. Her dream foretold of a coming disruption: the appearance of Europeans in the *New World*. French colonists arrived soon after her dream and settled peacefully in Nova Scotia with the friendly Indigenous Mi'kmaw people. Their friendships gave birth to my Métis people.

The preliminary goals of my investigation are the identification of the origins, veracity, and meaning of the girl's dream. The second challenge is to contextualize the dream within the broader worldviews of Mi'kmaq and other indigenous peoples, including historical and contemporary worldviews. The third challenge is the act of immersing my identity into the dream and to express this immersion through research-based interdisciplinary studio practice.

The People of the Dream

The girl who dreamed is Mi'kmaw¹ (we are of one blood) who live in Míkma'ki (the land of friendships) which includes Nova Scotia and a few bordering areas, in the provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Gaspé. As Marie Battiste – a Mi'kmaw professor of Indigenous education – explains of Mi'kmaw history, they have lived as one blood in Míkma'ki “from the beginning of knowing” (1997:13). The French arrived in 1603 and settled peacefully, for the most part, with the Mi'kmaq for almost 150 years. In 1749, the British arrived, built Halifax, and Governor Cornwallis put a bounty on Mi'kmaw scalps and expelled the Acadians, the French settlers.

Although the bounties (1749-1752) on Mi'kmaw scalps had been lifted, the Mi'kmaq still suffered under colonialism, as they were also ravaged by European diseases, and their best lands were occupied by the British. Any Acadians – French settlers – who avoided death or expulsion, headed to the hills, or in the case of my relatives, to Cape Breton. The friendly and familial relationships that had developed between the Acadians, Mi'kmaw, and their mixed (Métis) offspring were struggling under the presence of the new colonizer.

A significant proportion of Mi'kmaq, Acadian, and Métis were fully or partially assimilated by the British, and later by the Canadian government. The Indian Act and the residential school system were two tactics employed in an attempt to assimilate

¹ Mi'kmaq is the plural spelling while Mi'kmaw is the singular and adjective form. (Mi'kmaw Resource Guide, 2007:1)

Indigenous people. The Indian Act of 1876 resulted in many “groups and individuals being excluded from legal recognition as Indians or band members on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, age, and blood quantum or descent” (Palmater 2011:28). Duncan Campbell Scott (qtd in Farber 2013:1) – who from 1913 to 1932 was Head of the Department of Indian Affairs – aimed to “kill the Indian in the child” by forcing them to attend the residential schools. Against these odds, the resilient Mi’kmaq, their culture, language, and customs have survived, as has Acadian culture. Métis culture also survives, but was metaphorically, and in some cases, literally, hiding in the hills. Not until the year 2000, did the Eastern Woodland Métis Nation of Nova Scotia incorporate.

My Emerging Métis Identity

I grew up in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, a small Catholic town on the eastern shores of Canada. We learned to speak English at home and later, French at school. I remember hearing my grandmother speaking French, but not my parents. My father died nine years ago and I learned from my mother that besides Acadian heritage, we also have ‘Indian’ heritage. She dragged out the old family tree and pointed to Marie-Thérèse, my great-great-Mi’kmaw-grandmother, and her husband, a French schooner captain and translator, named Claude Petitpas. These were my father’s relatives. I wish I could ask him how he felt about, or if he acknowledged or knew of his mixed heritage: his Mi’kmaw relatives, and to a lesser extent, his Acadian relatives. I would later realize that this disconnect from the diversity of our family heritage is a part of the process of colonization and assimilation.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Three years ago – from where I live in Toronto – I applied for Métis status with the Kespu'kwitk Métis Council of Nova Scotia, thanks to the genealogical research of my sister Celeste. As a result, I am now officially recognized as Aboriginal under the 1982 Constitutional Act of Canada. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2012:1) use the word Aboriginal as an umbrella term which includes Indigenous peoples (First Nations and Inuit) as well as Métis peoples. The definition of Métis, according to *The Eastern Woodland Métis Nation* website (2014:1) is “a person of mixed blood; specifically: a person of European and North American Indian Ancestry, regardless of how many generations back. A Métis is a person who self identifies and is accepted by the community.” I have mixed blood. I am accepted by the community. I carry a Métis identification card. Am I now Métis?

As I was growing up, no one identified any part of our culture as Métis. Although, I now realize that some of my childhood activities were connected to Métis culture - hunting, fishing, step-dancing, and fiddle music, to name a few. I have since gone back home to Nova Scotia from Toronto, with a new perspective, exploring culture through pow wows, concerts, museums, historical sites, family, and friends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researching the Legend of the Dream

I first encountered the young woman's dream in a historical novel called *Fathers and Crows* (1992) by William T. Vollman. With poetic aplomb, Vollman aligns her dream with the arrival of the explorer Champlain and his priests to Canada. Her dream inspired me to imagine the first encounter between my French and Mi'kmaw relatives. I wanted to know more about this dream and if it was real. Vollman's footnotes led me to Ella Elizabeth Clark's *Indian Legends of Canada* (1960), which was a reprinting of an older story. In 1869, Josiah Jeremy, a Mi'kmaw storyteller, told the legend to amateur ethnographer and Baptist minister Silas T. Rand who published it as "The Dream of The White Robe and the Floating Island" in his collection called *Legends of the Micmacs* (1894). I was searching for the source and true meaning of this dream. I thought I had found it, in the Rand text.

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow (1989:65) states that when searching for the true meaning of a story "We do not in fact explicate 'the meaning' of an event, therefore, but only try to render it meaningful by putting it in a clear interpretive framework." The concept of an interpretive framework guided me while I searched for meaning in the story. Anthropologist, Melville Herskovits (1950:18), who worked under Franz Boas, the father of modern anthropology, defines culture as "stable, yet culture is also dynamic, and manifests continuous and constant change." How could I analyse the scope of a cultural

legend that is constantly changing? I decided to narrow my search to one singular point in the changing story: the 1894 printed text by Rand, and the conditions surrounding its creation.

In response to Rand's collection of legends, ethnographer James Mooney (1894:118), in the *American Anthropologist* wrote "The book shows, however, an utter inability to discriminate between the true and false, and a complete ignorance of the aboriginal range of thought." When I first read Mooney's review, I thought he was being unkind toward Rand's work among the Mi'kmaq. I felt an allegiance to the accuracy of the text, as a historical beacon to a point in my heritage. But anthropologist Kristin Luker (2008:167) asserts that "Regardless of whether things happened the way people said they did, what interests us is that people chose to tell us that they happened that way." My questioning of whether the dream happened how Rand wrote it might be impossible to answer. We will never know exactly what storyteller Josiah Jeremy chose to tell Rand, back in 1869, so we are left with only the text by Rand. Through an analysis of Rand we might discover what affected his choices in telling the story the way he did. This will give me a deeper understanding of the dream, build connections to my Métis heritage, and inform my choices in my studio project *Dreaming of Bear and Crow*.

Rand's Writing Among the Mi'kmaq

The author who transcribed the dream, Silas Rand, was born in 1810 in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia. He worked in the family trade of chimney building but also pursued a study of languages, mostly through the hiring of tutors in off-hours. In 1834, he

was ordained a Baptist minister, and in affiliation with Acadia University he began missionary activity among the Mi'kmaq, even though they were already Catholic (Sanger 2007:31). The missionary did not succeed in converting the Mi'kmaq, but he did help with their social causes by writing and translating letters to the British crown. In an 1854 public speech concerning their treaty claims, Rand exclaims "Shame on us! We rob them of their land, impoverish, degrade, and despise them. We compare them to the beasts that perish" (Augustine 2008:47) – by which he means that they are treated as though they have no souls.

Rand collected stories from the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Roughly half of the eighty-seven stories in his collection, *Legends of the Micmac*, are unfortunately not credited with a narrator. Josiah Jeremy, the orator of the dream, is credited with only two of the legends, and Rand gives no biographical information about him. Rand describes some of the other contributors in greater detail including Susan Barrs, Stephen Hood, and Nancy Jeddore, who are also discussed in several contemporary texts. It is possible that Josiah Jeremy's biographical details are limited (or nonexistent) because his contribution of only two short legends paled in contrast to the other numerous lengthy contributions by others. Rand comments that there was a limited number of Mi'kmaq who could tell these old stories. Before the white man, it is estimated that there were 200,000 Mi'kmaq. By the time of Rand there were only 1,400 left in Nova Scotia, decimated by disease, starvation, and a British bounty on the scalps of Mi'kmaw men, women, and children (Paul 2006:124).

The Time of the Dream

The time of the girl's dream could be as early as 1521, according to Ruth Holmes Whitehead, a noted scholar of Mi'kmaw culture (qtd in Vollman 1992:944). Arthur Ray (2010:38) estimates the date to be between 1500 and 1534, before Jacques Cartier made contact with the Mi'kmaq in Gaspé. Before 1534, there would have been numerous contacts with cod fisherman, especially the Basque and Portuguese. In 1500, navigator Gaspar Corte-Real "sent two caravels back to Portugal with Native captives on board" (Ray 48). They were possibly Mi'kmaq or Beothuk from Newfoundland. In 1521, João Álvares Fagundes attempted a settlement in Cape Breton, but all the settlers are considered to have perished. Henderson (1997:120) refers to the woman who dreamed, as the grandmother of Chief Membertou², which could place the dream before 1492, making it pre-Columbian. Annette Kolodny (2012:293) reminds us that the story may not be of one particular event but a conflation into "a single unified narrative of a series of events that occurred in different places over many years and involved several different personages." Pinpointing the exact time of the dream is an interesting and challenging endeavor but not a priority within the timeframe of this thesis. For my current purposes, I conclude the time of the dream to be sometime before European settlement.

² Membertou was over 100 years old when Champlain arrived the early 1600s according to many sources, including Ruth Holmes Whitehead.

Telling Stories and Recording Stories

Shaman and showman Jerry Lonecloud's memoirs from the 1920s, names the two styles of Mi'kmaw storytelling as aknutmaq̓n and a'tukwaq̓n (Whitehead 2002:49). Aknutmaq̓n is telling the news while a'tukwaq̓n is a more mythic style passed from generation to generation. *The Dream of the White Robe* might be considered an example of the mythic a'tukwaq̓n style.

At the beginning of my research, I believed the Rand text to be a true representation of the mythic a'tukwaq̓n and I was suspicious of Mooney's 'ignorant' critique of Rand. My further research led to other voices. "Rand paraphrases and interpolates and tells the stories, as he says, in his own words" (Hartland 1894:70). For example, he inserted the 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' lullaby into one of the legends that describes a Mi'kmaw family looking at the night sky. Hartland groups Rand's stories into three categories: Aboriginal, European, and Aboriginal with European influence. This third category is "warped and changed by European contact, but nevertheless provide remarkable evidence of the migration of folktales" (Hartland 70).

Peter Sanger (2007:45), a Mi'kmaw scholar, reminds us that it was not until Franz Boas started recording stories on the West coast around the turn of the nineteenth century that it became "normal practice to transcribe indigenous material in indigenous languages, accompanied by interlinear, word-for-word translation into English." Sanger (45) coins the phrase "loose Randean" to describe transcriptions that are insensitive to the narrator's "choice of words, calculations of syntax, rhythms, parallels of sound,

Chapter 2 Literature Review

untranslatable puns, jokes and so on, which are works of art in which expression and content are co-inherent.” While Rand listened to the storytellers, he often took notes in English and in a sort of Mi’kmaw shorthand. Sometimes he read the story back to the teller. Often he would write the legends from memory and not give credit to the source, in contrast to the future Boas method. There are only two known surviving Rand manuscripts in the Mi’kmaw language, discovered by Sanger in 2003 at Acadia University. Considering that Rand’s original notes no longer exist – or never existed – for the *Dream of the White Robe*, the veracity of the translation from a’tukwaqn to English text becomes elusive.

This process of transcultural transposition “reinscribes asymmetric relations of power between the Euro-American operator of technology and the Native storyteller” (McCall 2008:101). Although McCall is describing the translation from voice to gramophone in the documentary film *Nanook of the North* (1922) in relation to a 1991 art piece by Rebecca Belmore (*Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother*) the “asymmetric relations of power” are also present in Rand’s operation of transcribing the voice of Josiah Jeremy. Because Rand is the ethnographer, he has the power to choose and write English words to transcribe, translate, and transpose Jeremy’s voice from Mi’kmaw worldview to Eurocentric text.

As Evans-Pritchard (qtd in ten Raa 1971:317) reminds us, with oral myths “there is no single ‘true’ version of which all the others are but copies or distortions.” ten Raa describes myth as representing symbolic truth rather than a factual truth of a time sequence. Anthropologist Mary Douglas (1975:155) reinforces the position that oral

myths have multiple meanings and that “no one of them can be labelled the deepest or the truest.” Because our story is the result of a transcultural transposition from Mi’kmaw oral to European textual, we are left with only a distorted copy. The distorted textual copy may contain some truth from the oral version but ultimately, *The Dream of a White Robe* cannot be considered a truthful example of oral history because of transcultural transposition, yet the text does retain a trace of the story as told by Josiah Jeremy.

The Dream

The story of the dream written by Rand is short, only two pages in a larger book of legends. The actual dream sequence in the story is only two sentences long, followed by her conversations with the Shaman, then the arrival of the Europeans with a priest wearing a white robe. Rand finishes the story with his own convoluted analysis of writing and language with a religious bias. The dream, written from the words of Josiah Jeremy in 1869, is presented below, while the rest of the story can be found in appendix one.

WHEN there were no people in this country but Indians, and before any others were known, a young woman had a singular dream. She dreamed that a small island came floating in towards the land, with tall trees on it, and living beings, — among whom was a man dressed in rabbit-skin garments.

(Rand 1894:225)

The details of the dream vary depending on which writer is referencing the dream. Some say the rabbit skin garments were white. Some say there were rabbits in the trees. Some say the island was filled with rabbit furs. Some say that rabbits are tricksters,

thieves and symbols of coming disorder. Some say the man was pale skinned, and some say he had a beard. Some say there were crows on the island. Some say the living beings were bears. Some say the bears were in the trees. Some say (Kolodny 2012:287) the Mi'kmaq word for bear – muin – carries a second meaning of “no one” or “not quite human.” The details of the dream change depending on who is telling the story.

There were other dreamers who dreamed of the coming white man. A century later, and half a continent way, an Ojibwa prophet had a vision of the white man coming in large canoes with great white wings. Three centuries after the girl's dream, on Vancouver Island, a Cowichan chief had a vision of a beautiful big canoe with large white wings (Ray 2010:40). The multiplication of dreams of the white man coming indicates that indeed the white man is coming, and the importance of dreams and dream interpretation to Indigenous worldview.

Trance is the central technique used by shaman to connect to other worlds according to Mercea Eliade (Hornborg 2008:33). But for Mi'kmaw shaman, dreams and dream interpretations are of greater importance than trances for gaining access to other worlds. Our dreamer, after waking, asks her shaman for an interpretation, but they have none to offer because the dream foretells something not familiar to them. Kolodny (2012:286) posits that because this unfamiliar dream had no precedent in the world of the Mi'kmaq, they were unable to give it meaning. Later, when a ship floats to their shores, filled with strange men, the interpretation is clear.

Leading Indigenous scholar James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson (1997:79) affirms that the dream is in fact from oral history and that it plays an important role in the

unfolding Mi'kmaw vision (Ankitékis) of three crosses. Long before the white man, Nákúset, the spirit of the sun, came into a Mi'kmaw elder's dream. He was presented with three crosses which would play a role in the survival of his people. One was for help during times of conflict, the second was for long journeys, and the third was for future generations. They became the "Nation of Cross-bearers, and were identified by wooden crosses on their canoes and wigwams, crosses of wampum of their breasts and clothes, and crosses on the wombs of their pregnant women" (Henderson 1997:16).

The meanings of the first two crosses were understood and came to pass. The meaning of the third cross – for future generations – was not understood until years later, when our young Mi'kmaw woman dreamed of the white man and their eventual arrival with priests carrying crosses. The Mi'kmaw came to see the cross of the Catholic Church as the third cross in their unfolding vision. It was incorporated into their worldview as a means of protecting future generations through a process of peaceful treaty negotiations and treaty agreements with the Holy See in Rome, rather than with the imperial monarchs of Europe³. Negotiations continue to this day.

Some details of the dream remain variable or elusive. The name of the girl who dreamed is not mentioned in any of my sources, except by Vollman, in his novel *Fathers and Crows*, who with artistic license names her Born Swimming. Even more confounding is the fact that no one mentions or questions her namelessness. Henderson gives a tease when he names Chief Membertou as her grandson, but he stops short of giving her name. Kolodny's offer that the dream is a conflation of numerous events and numerous

³ For more details on why the Mi'kmaq chose Rome over the imperial monarchs see: Henderson's *The Mikmaq Concordant (1997)*.

dreamers, might explain her namelessness. It is possible that her name has been forgotten. Also, the girl's location is never mentioned and is as elusive as her name. It is possible that her name and location are known, but concealed from the outside world, protected by the code of Mi'kmaw Traditional Knowledge.

Before I began my literature review, I considered Rand's text to represent a meaningful and truthful transcription of Mi'kmaw oral culture. Meaning can be explicated, explained, from a text, but the extent of the veracity of that meaning is questionable until the circumstances surrounding its creation are analyzed. After my research, Rand's motives and methods seemed lacking, especially in comparison to Franz Boas. Rand's loose methods of notation combined with his penchant for supplementing the stories with his own narrative flairs and his own observations render the meaning of his writing questionable in terms of authenticity or ethnographic accuracy. His British Baptist bias toward the work of the French Catholics also seems to cloud his perspective on the overall effect that all white men – regardless of Christian denomination – have on the Mi'kmaq. While the true voice of Josiah Jeremy is lost in translation, the veracity of the story written by Rand remains problematic and still open for further investigation and interpretation.

The spirit of my investigation into the dream began as a search for the single true version or meaning of the story, but my quest changed to the construction of an interpretive framework to render the story meaningful to me and meaningful in a contemporary context. This search for meaning leads to my research question. How might my emerging Métis identity be located and expressed through this historical Indigenous dream?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Examination of the Literature in the Field

2. Site as Simulation

3. Position: Reflexivity and Autoethnography

Regarding rigorous research methodologies, Biggs and Büchler (2007:64) state that “a method is a means to an end. It connects a research question to a research answer: not just by its chronological position in the process, but rationally through a process of argumentation.” My process of argumentation begins with a research question. How might my emerging Métis identity be located and expressed through a historical Indigenous dream? The dream connects to the genesis of my Métis heritage and offers rich historical and artistic inspiration during my search.

This chapter reveals the research methodologies I employed to analyse the dream and locate my emerging Metis identity. The main methods are an examination of the literature in the field, exploration of site as simulation, and positionality based on reflexivity and auto-ethnography. Examination of literature was covered in the previous chapter, so only a summary is given in this section. Site as simulation details my research and development during a stay at a cottage on Georgian Bay, in the summer of 2013. I use reflexivity and auto-ethnography to position myself in relation to the research process.

1. Examination of Literature in the Field

My first research methodology for the dream – as detailed in the previous chapter – examines the literature in the field beginning with the printed text written in 1869 by Silas Rand (as well as the variations by Vollman, Clark, and Mangalam⁴) and many other literatures referencing the author and his text. As cited in chapter two, I examined anthropological (Whitehead, Boas, Hornburg, Wuthnow, Mooney) and Indigenous (Henderson, Augustine, King, Paul, Sanger) perspectives surrounding oral history and the transcription of stories as part of my hermeneutic investigation of the dream. For the scope and timeframe of this thesis, I exhausted my study of the literature in the field for *The Dream of the White Robe and the Floating Island*.

My investigation of the dream also included email inquiries to Mi'kmaw scholars such as Henderson and Battiste at the University of Saskatchewan, and professors at Unama'ki College in Cape Breton. I wanted to interview the cultural experts and was searching for one-to-one conversations concerning the dream to complement and expand my literature research. I wanted to know if the dream survives orally, with or without the Rand text. I wanted to know if the story is still shared orally by contemporary people, not only textually in the works of Mi'kmaw and non-indigenous cultural writers. I wanted to know her name and location. My email inquiries did not receive any responses. I suspect the scholars receive many requests and possibly chose not to share tradition knowledge with a stranger over the internet. This lack of response has limited the scope of my

⁴ Ceileigh Mangalam wrote a mini-opera libretto for solo soprano entitled “The Dream of the White Robe and The Floating Island” with music composed by Liam Elliot, performed at St. Matthews United Church in Halifax on August 25, 2013. (www.vocalypse.ca) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iqv15vI7hw>)

research to an analysis of textual knowledge, which nonetheless has provided extensive and rich sources of research material.

2. Exploration of Site as Simulation

As part of my research into the dream, during the summer of 2013, I engaged in an interdisciplinary studio project exploring a site on Georgian Bay, Ontario, where I resided in a cottage. I imagined the Georgian Bay site as a simulation of the environment from the dream, the shores of Atlantic Canada. Three locations emerged as research nodes thematically connected to the dream: the *Bear Den*, the *Crow's Nest*, and the *Floating Island*. They functioned as zones where I observed, reflected, explored, wrote, sketched, painted, collected, canoed, danced, sang, played musical instruments, constructed, erected, experimented, researched, and imagined being in the dream.

The Bear Den is a concrete garage at the cottage which functions as a conventional art studio where I began working with animal furs and objects collected from the forest such as feathers and bones. The vintage taxidermy animal furs were gifted to me by a friend. The four animals are a muskox, polar bear, a spirit bear, and a wolverine. I have chosen – some might say the animals chose me – these furs as the central objects to express my research and exhibition, not only because they present a challenging surface to my painting practice, but they also connect to the wilderness of the dream, a forest on a floating island. The animals also relate the fur trade industry which has been a significant part of the economy of Indigenous people. I will discuss more of these animals later in this paper, in chapter 4.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

The *Crow's Nest* is a tree house that I constructed high in a tree near the water's edge on Georgian Bay. The site is a simulation of a crow's nest, found on the masts of ships that the dream foretold. The site is also an observation deck where I studied the crow community that populated the area. A few years ago, I chose the crow as a symbol of my Métis identity and as a conduit to the spiritual world. The crow became a secondary area of study during my thesis research. The *language* of crows became the focus of my interest and evolved into a narrative device in my telling of the dream. The crow travels from the dream world to the waking world. The crow is a bilingual communicator who speaks Mi'kmaw and French. The crow is also a trickster, an interlocutor, who steals my voice, while I am subsumed into the young girl's strange dream of a man dressed in furs, standing on a floating island, waiting to come ashore. The *Crow's Nest* is a lookout, a place for watching, and place for the language of dreams.

The *Floating Island* is a small rocky island in a cove on Georgian Bay. These shores on Georgian Bay were also settled by the French – after Nova Scotia and Quebec City – so in a sense, my location is an extension of the lands of the dream. My island became a simulation, a stand-in for the island from the dream, which in turn, turns into a ship. On the shore of my island on Georgian Bay, I found a thick piece of tree trunk driftwood measuring eight feet high and more than a foot thick. I floated the tree trunk to the island and erected it as a mast. The mast was fitted with a crossbeam, also called a spar, and rigged with a sail, also called a shower curtain. The sail was painted with an image of a fleur-de-lis to represent the French and painted with the text 'fleur-de-malade' to represent the diseases brought to the area by the French. At the end of my stay on

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Georgian Bay, I performed a ritual at night of setting fire to the sail, in memory and in recognition of the local Indigenous Wendat and French peoples who died from disease and warfare in this region in the 1600s.

During this summer of exploration of site as simulation, I conducted ethnographic field work, also called field studies or participant observation, where I participated with the surrounding communities in their cultural events. I attended National Aboriginal day at Saint-Marie among the Hurons (a museum and recreation of a Huron/Wendat village from the 1600's) and saw First Nation drummers, singers, and craft demonstrators from Christian Island. I participated in Festival de Loup which is a French arts festival in Lafontaine, showcasing local music and arts. I also attended the Métis festival in Penetanguishene. The festivals in this region of Ontario reflect the continued presence of Indigenous, French, and Métis cultures, reminiscent of the people involved in the dream and reminiscent of the people in my ancestral Canada.

My exploration of site as a research method was an immersive process. The Georgian Bay environment – the water, the forest, the island, the bear den, the crow's nest, the crows, and the cultural festivals of the region – offered metaphoric connections to the dream. This immersion into site as simulation enabled the embodiment of the dream within me and my studio practice.

3. Position: Reflexivity and Autoethnography

Reflexivity is a significant aspect of my research method where I trace my presence onto the research context, marking my interference, my participation, and my desire (Creswell qtd in de Freitas 2003:470). I am interfering and participating in the dream by positioning and imagining myself within the dream. Reflexivity comes from the Medieval Latin word *reflexivus*, which means reflected or turned back. My desire to be in the dream is a reflection of my artistic and personal search for my Métis heritage.

Like me, Rand interfered with the dream when he wrote his own version based on the Mi'kmaw words of Josiah Jeremy. His goal as a Baptist minister and missionary – though fruitless – was the conversion of the Mi'kmaq people to his faith, even though they had already adopted Catholicism into their world view, over two hundred years previously. His bias and presence is felt in his version of the dream. This is especially apparent when Rand (1971:30) criticizes the earlier work of the Catholic missionaries, accusing them of “perpetrating one of the grossest possible literary blunders” when they developed a writing system based on the inherent knowledge of the Mi'kmaw children.

Like Rand, I am interfering with the dream, participating because of my desire to situate my ancestral, personal, and artistic presence into the story. But unlike Rand, the dream speaks to my own past and my own ancestry. The Mi'kmaw people ultimately have the cultural entitlement and authority to tell this dream. And though I do not have ultimate cultural authority – and with respect to the Mi'kmaw people – I feel it is my artistic and social responsibility to share this dream.

Like reflexivity, the role of individual presence in research is also enacted through auto-ethnography. Auto-ethnography contains elements of autobiography and ethnography. Sociologist Caroline Ellis (2011:1) describes auto-ethnography as an approach to research and writing that “seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience.” This method contrasts the more conventional and canonical methods of researching and representing others, which is often an academic European perspective of the Indigenous “other.” Ellis (2011:1) treats research as a “political, socially-just and socially-conscious act.” My personal experience and history, which also embodies the experience of my ancestors, frames my research and representation the dream.

The positionality of mixed (Métis) heritage does not necessarily “predispose one to produce a politically correct ethnography of the Other” according to sociocultural anthropologist Aihwa Ong (qtd in Wolf 1996:18). Ong, a postcolonial feminist, suggests a politics of intercultural perception rather than a politics of positionality. The positionality of Métis perception is inherently divided by the insider/outsider binary, while concurrently and paradoxically conjoined by this divide. Intercultural perception avoids the creation of inequities of conventional ethnography and it can potentially offer a “shared positionality” (Wolf 1996:18) that fosters understanding and dialogue. My position is as person embodied with some Mi’kmaw blood, though without the cultural experiences of the Mi’kmaq. While my position is one of a cultural outsider, the politic of intercultural perception and a social consciousness guides me while I explore the dream.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Wab Kinew (2013), director of Indigenous Inclusion at the University of Winnipeg, contends that “reconciliation with Indigenous people remains one of the biggest social justice issues facing this country.” Kinew (2013) continues to say that “while we natives are a little utopian in our views of our own past cultures, Canadians still do not do a good job of acknowledging contributions that natives have made to this country.” Kinew’s are comments I heard in November on a CBC Radio program called *Canada Reads on Q*. He discusses *The Orenda* (2013) by Joseph Boyden, a beautiful and violent historical fiction novel involving an Iroquois girl, a Huron (Wendat) warrior, and a French Jesuit priest, set in the Huronia region just north of Toronto, in the early 1600s.

I happened to read the book last month and the so-called fictional characters are the same people I acknowledge in the burning of my *Fleur-de-Malade* sail on Georgian Bay, last summer. Through works like *The Orenda* by Boyden – who also has Métis and Mi’kmaw⁵ ancestry – we can acknowledge our histories and engage in dialogue, so that we non-Indigenous and Indigenous people alike, can learn to better understand and respect each other. My research and studio practice aims to acknowledge history and foster dialogue through a retelling of the dream.

I am emerging from the dream. The dream is emerging from me.

⁵ Nurse, Donna Bailey. 2005. “Author Profile, Joseph Boyden, Way of the Warrior” Quill & Quire Website. Accessed February 13, 2014. http://www.quillandquiere.com/authors/profile.cfm?article_id=6573

RESULTS

Creation of Art Works

The animal skins that make up the major component of the exhibition were gifts from a friend who acquired them from Waddington's auction house in Toronto. In the 1990s these taxidermy animals were undesirable and for the most part unsellable for reasons political and environmental. While there are certain ethical issues that arise with the use of animals in artwork, I nonetheless have accepted these animals, and am now responsible for their care. I was advised by Bonnie Devine, an Anishinaabe artist and professor at OCADU, to perform a smudging ceremony with the animals, asking forgiveness for their death, and asking permission for their participation in my studio practice. In the past, I had been involved in smudging ceremonies, but have never performed one myself, so did my best at re-performing. I wafted smoke onto the animals from a bowl of burning tobacco, remembering to cover all sides including the underneath, moving in a clockwise direction, and acknowledging the four directions in relation to the path of sun. While my smudging ceremony may not have been accurate in a traditional sense, it did accurately convey my intentions of respect for the animals.

Preparing the taxidermy skins for painting required the removal of the felt and horsehair backings from the suede side of the animal. The suede surface is the side that would lay on a floor or attach to a wall. After the felt, horsehair, and glue were removed, the suede required some needle and thread work to repair tears and bullet holes in the

Chapter 4 Results

vintage skins. A few other damages like torn ears, loose claws, and a dislocated tongue were dealt with in a variety of manners.

One challenge with the display of animal skins is to allow the gallery visitor to view both sides of the skins, fur side and suede side. Only one side would be visible if they were hanging on a wall or laying on a surface. I harvested small trees from the forest to fabricate lengths of poles so that the skins could be suspended in a manner similar to a coat hanging from a coat hanger. The hanger and skin might now be suspended from the gallery ceiling, to allow both sides to be visible, and to allow the skins to gently turn with the whims of air flowing through the gallery space.

The four animal skins are the polar bear, the spirit bear, the muskox, and the wolverine. They are suspended from the gallery ceiling and positioned around the central gallery column. The column is a stand-in for a tree or a mast from a ship. The polar bear and muskox are the largest skins and are displayed vertically like gallery canvases or the sails of ships. The wolverine is suspended close to the floor, to contrast the spirit bear which hangs higher in the gallery. Other elements of the installation include the garments worn by the man in the dream, a video, and studio ephemera.

The animals in my studio crept their way into the dream in a variety of ways. The Spirit Bear, also called a kermode or ghost bear, originates from British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, territory of the Kitsoo/Xai'xais Nation. Raven made one out of every ten black bears white (Crozier 2014:A7). This ghostly bear is young with blond fur and bared teeth, floating like an apparition above your head in the art gallery. His suede underside painted with the moon, stars, and constellations: Ursa Major (the big bear or

Chapter 4 Results

mother muin), the bear cave, the north star, with the little dipper shooting the milky way from the behind of the Spirit Bear. The constellations are inspired by a Mi'kmaw stargazing workshop I attended in Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia. The moon and stars, painted on the skin, are meant to evoke the night sky above the girl while she dreams.

The man dressed in rabbit skin garments appears from the dream, though disembodied, with only his garments remaining, hanging on the gallery wall. His brown rabbit fur vest is a sign of potential danger because the rabbit is a trickster in Mi'kmaq mythology. His necklace is a collection of bones and feathers that I collected in the forests around Georgian Bay, except for the rabbit skull that came from my kitchen. When I was a boy, in Nova Scotia, my brothers and I would snare rabbits in the forest and bring them home for our mother to skin and prepare for rabbit pie, a family tradition. This winter, in Toronto, I purchased a skinned rabbit from a local Portuguese food market and made my own rabbit pie. I saved the rabbit head to use its skull on a necklace for the man from the dream. The inclusion of bones and feathers in the outfit is an aspect of an autoethnographic method which reflects my personal relationship to animals and hunting.

The Wolverine was the first art piece I created for my graduate exhibition. The suede side of the wolverine shows a painted map of early Canada based on the cartography of Samuel de Champlain from the early 1600s. While the dream not does specifically indicate Champlain's presence, some of his maps are the earliest European images of the land of the dream. My piece is an autobiographical mapping of places I have lived before arriving at OCADU. A railway line stitched with red thread traces my

Chapter 4 Results

movements from Antigonish, Nova Scotia, west through Quebec City and Montreal, then onto Toronto, and finally to Georgian Bay. Narrative figures guide the eye through the activities of my life. Some are classic ships and animals lifted from Champlain, while others are current animals and buildings relevant to my life. My movements from eastern to central Canada mirror the movements of Champlain. While this similarity in travel was not planned, on my part, or on Champlain's part, it adds a layer of symbolic presence to my search for meaning into my Métis heritage. From the shores of Nova Scotia, five hundred years ago – where a young woman dreamed of a strange new people – to the present shores of Georgian Bay, where I reflect back upon her dream, tracing the incursion of French presence, my presence, and the emergence of Métis people.

The Polar Bear is suspended upright with its head dropped onto its chest, looking down at its own body, painted with a map of Ontario. From the deep blue northern waters of Georgian Bay, the bear's white head surfaces with mouth open, gasping for air, tongue broken, and unable to speak. Traces from the past, from the time of the dream, are still visible in this map: Indigenous villages, early French settlements, canoe routes, animals, and forests. This map is a palimpsest, with the past rubbed smooth to make space for the present. Highways and cities of Ontario evidence the dangers predicted from the dream, the presence of the new comers, including myself. The polar bear is witness to this presence while a murder of crows – my Metis symbol – encircle the sky.

The Muskox is the fourth painting on animal skins. This piece envisions what the young Mi'kmaw girl might have seen in her dream, combined with what her dream foretold. This composition was developed during my exploration of site as simulation on

Chapter 4 Results

Georgian Bay. The lower part of the muskox shows a canoe with a mast running to the top. The Mi'kmaq, early on, adapted European-style masts and sails onto their canoes to improve performance on the rough Atlantic Ocean. The mast is rigged with a spar and a large white sail, topped with a crow's nest. In the canoe are two beings from the dream, part man and part bear, looking up the mast. A priest is tied to the spar surrounded by the billowing white sail that was once his white robe. The man in furs from the dream is in the crow's nest painting the top flag. Crows populate the scene, on the canoe, on the spars, and flying off into the distance, where we see the young girl standing and watching her dream unfold.

I created an animated video of the dream, based on a series of white chalk drawings on blackboard. The content of the animation is from the texts by Rand (1869) and Vollman (1992). The backdrop is a seascape with a small island in the distance. The island floats toward the shore. There is a man on the island. The island fades and a ship emerges with bears on it. Men in canoes paddle ashore. A priest appears, looming large in the foreground wearing a long white robe. He raises his hands to the heavens and speaks in a strange language. This video is a thumbnail sketch of the action in the story of the dream. My drawing and actions were videotaped and edited down to three minutes of animation. I then recorded my speaking voice over the animation, narrating the story, accompanied by the beat of an animal skin drum.

Styles of Representation

My drawing and painting, as seen on the animal skins and in the video, are influenced by the European Renaissance which is the same time period of the dream. I have always painted in a representational style, inspired by Renaissance artists like DaVinci and Raphael, so my painting style for this project is organic, rather than a tailored choice. This tool of representation from the European art academy might appear to perpetuate and re-inscribe forms of colonial control and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples. Though my brush might have come from Europe, the paint on the brush is coloured by Métis blood which comes from Acadia and Mikmáki.

It might be questioned as to why I might not incorporate historical or contemporary Mi'kmaw art styles into my project, especially since I am exploring my Métis heritage which includes European and Mi'kmaw cultures. I have looked at many examples of Mi'kmaw visual culture as part of my research into the dream. The historical petroglyphs depicting people, animals, and ships that I witnessed on the Kejimkujik rocks in Nova Scotia are seductive and beautiful. As well, Mi'kmaq artists such as Alan Syliboy and Jordan Bennet, whose works are respectively tradition and contemporary, are excellent examples of current Mi'kmaw art practices. Even though this is a visual art project, my goal is not to emulate Mi'kmaw visual styles. This project is not an imitation of Mi'kmaw culture. This project is an exploration of a Mi'kmaw dream, told in my own voice and in my own style.

Chapter 4 Results

How might my emerging Métis identity be located and expressed through a historical Indigenous dream?

The preliminary goals of my investigation were the identification of the origins, veracity, and meaning of the girl's dream. My investigation of literature in the field spoke to these goals, and among other things, revealed that her dream was a premonition of the coming white man. The second challenge was to contextualize the dream within the broader worldviews of indigenous and Mi'kmaq people. Her dream was contextualized through the Mi'kmaw vision of *Three Crosses* in connection with the concordat – a wampum treaty – which is still an important constitutional issue today.

The third challenge was the act of immersing my identity into the dream and to express this immersion through my research-based interdisciplinary studio practice. My exploration of site as simulation on Georgian Bay helped to evolve the dream in me. The artworks created, reveal my position in the dream and locate the movement of my presence. The maps on the furs locate my ancestral Métis homeland in Nova Scotia and navigate my movements to Toronto, and up north to Georgian Bay. This northern location, near Lafontaine, is becoming my second Métis homeland, where I feel cultural connections, different from Toronto, and reminiscent of Nova Scotia. My presence is also evidenced through my absence from the rabbit-skin-costume art piece and my presence is demonstrated as the man in the crow's nest in the muskox painting of the dream.

This thesis paper and exhibition demonstrate that research and interdisciplinarity can play a vital role in an artist's practice. Interdisciplinarity refers to the various

Chapter 4 Results

disciplines of the writers cited for my research. Interdisciplinarity refers to the possible disciplines within or amended to art production. Interdisciplinarity refers to the willingness to be open to many sorts of research and production methods. My processes of reading, researching, drawing, videographing, storytelling, writing, reflecting, and immersing myself into site as simulation have contributed a depth of meaning to my overall practice, while sharpening my tools for future studio and academic undertakings. Finally, it was the interdisciplinarity demonstrated amongst my OCADU cohort – who come from an array of disciplines: drawing and painting, sculpture, video and filmmaking, engineering, design, and so on – where the true spirit of interdisciplinarity was revealed to me.

SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

When I first read about the dream, a few years ago, in William Vollman's historical fictional novel *Fathers and Crows* (1992), I was attracted to the possibility that this dream was not fictional. I also imagined the people, the location, and the time to be connected to the genesis of my Métis heritage. I wanted to know more. When I chose the dream, as a case study, near the beginning of my graduate studies at OCADU, I could not have predicted that a seemingly obscure Indigenous story would offer such challenges and discoveries on personal and artistic levels.

One challenge in researching the dream was the lack of access to oral history, access to the oral source. From Toronto, I sent email inquiries to various Indigenous scholars, including Henderson and Battiste, searching for this access. I was left with only the Rand text which is a loose interpretation of what was told to him by Josiah Jeremy in 1869. In researching the dream, I conducted exhaustive searches through Toronto public and university libraries, as well as online, looking for other texts, written by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. The most enlightening voice was James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson, a leading Mi'kmaw scholar, who wrote *The Mi'kmaw Concordat* (1997). The book illuminates the history, politics, and religion of the Mi'kmaw and it connects the dream to early and recent treaty negotiations.

My explorations of site as simulation on Georgian Bay provided me an opportunity for my research of literature to emanate from my mind and into the physical surroundings. The exploration of site propelled the dream into physical and metaphysical

manifestations around me. Through experiments in the Bear Den, the Treehouse, and the Island, the dream began to take shape in my studio practice.

During my research, I adopted a position of reflexivity and autoethnography. The dream connects to my Métis heritage, so this positioning was a natural method for research and exploration of the subject. Ultimately my research goal is to advance a shared positionality that might foster understanding and dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Dreams, myths and stories, whether from text or oral history, and whether based on actual or fictional events, “portray meanings people give to their experience” (Robbins et al 2014:82). When the dream was first told, before Europeans settled, it had meaning and cultural relevance to the Mi’kmaq; it was a premonition of things to come. After the Europeans arrived, the story was retold, with added content and meaning, based on Mi’kmaq experience with the newcomers, their language, and their Catholic religion. The Mi’kmaq incorporated the dream into their unfolding vision of *Three Crosses*. It gave meaning to their experience with the Europeans and guided them during their early treaty negotiations with the French.

These treaties, also called concordats, were recorded on wampum collars. Over time, the Mi’kmaq Concordat had become a hidden relic of the past, although the original wampum collar is believed to have been kept in the Collegio di Propaganda Fide in Rome (Bushnell 1920:81). Yet, this relic of the past and its terms were kept alive in the Mi’kmaq mind and faith through oral tradition. James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson (1997:87), the Concordat expert, writes that “since 1982 and the dawn of a new era of

Chapter 5 Summary and Conclusion

Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada, however, the Concordat has again become an important constitutional issue.”

My research reveals how dreams, storytelling, and traditional knowledge are vital to Indigenous worldview, especially when confronted with colonizers from a distant land. While tradition knowledge is illusive or prohibitory to non-Indigenous people like me, my research illuminates the dream and impacts public awareness and understanding surrounding culture and history in colonial Canada.

My recently discovered Métis identity was examined through my research-based interdisciplinary art practice and expressed through personal, artistic, historic, and ancestral perspectives. Yet my full understanding and embodiment of a Metis identity remains challenged by a communal disconnect, the geographic and cultural distance between Toronto – where I now live – and Nova Scotia – where I was born. I will continue to go home to Nova Scotia and I will continue to explore my Métis identity.

Claude Petitpas

After my mother showed me Claude Petitpas, the French sailor, and Marie Thérèse, his Mi'kmaw wife, on our family tree, I located their names in a Nova Scotia census from 1708. The census was reprinted in *The Old Man Told Us, Excerpts from Micmac History* (1991) written by Ruth Holmes Whitehead. I was pleasantly surprised that the names of my relatives had been preserved for longevity in book form. During my research of the dream, I would occasionally see the names of Claude and Marie in various historical books. In my somewhat nostalgic search of my ancestry, I began to imagine their lives and began to write an imaginary story of my great grandparents.

I imagined La Chasse, the census priest who visited my relatives in the village of Musquodoboit. I imagined Claude – the schooner captain and translator of French, English, and Mi'kmaq – fighting against the British, alongside his Mi'kmaw brothers. I imagined Marie and her life which began in Port Royal and then with her husband and ten children. My reverie was interrupted by *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography* where Claude is described as being known particularly for his collaboration with the English and a faithful subject of the crown of Great Britain (d'Entrement 2003:1). My imagination of their life was interrupted by an unexpected history.

My assumptions about my early Canadian relatives were shattered. Claude was a turncoat, a traitor. I am genetically and culturally complicit in the oppression of the Mi'kmaw people. My search for my emerging Métis identity began with a dream and was interrupted by reality. The dream is over and I awake to feelings of disgrace and guilt. I will pursue more research and reflection concerning the actions of my ancestors to guide me while I continue my journey.

I have emerged from the dream. The dream has emerged from me.

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Appendix A

THE DREAM OF THE WHITE ROBE AND THE FLOATING ISLAND. By Silas Rand

[This account of the coming of the white man, revealed to a young woman in a dream, was related to me by Josiah Jeremy, Sept. 26, 1869.]

WHEN there were no people in this country but Indians, and before any others were known, a young woman had a singular dream. She dreamed that a small island came floating in towards the land, with tall trees on it, and living beings, — among whom was a man dressed in rabbit-skin garments. The next day she related her dream, and sought for an interpretation. It was the custom in those days, when any one had a remarkable dream, to consult the wise men, and especially the magicians and soothsayers.¹ These pondered over the girl's dream, but could make nothing of it. The next day an event occurred that explained all. Getting up in the morning, what should they see but a singular little island, as they supposed, which had drifted near to the land and become stationary there! There were trees on it, and branches to the trees, on which a number of bears, as they supposed, were crawling about.² They all seized their bows, arrows, and spears, and rushed down to the shore, intending to shoot the bears; what was then- surprise to find that these supposed bears were men, and that some of them were lowering down into the water a very singularly constructed canoe, into which several of them jumped and paddled ashore. Among them was a man dressed in white, — a priest with his white stole on, — who came towards them making signs of friendship, raising his hand towards heaven, and addressing them in an earnest manner, but in a language which they could not understand.

The girl was now questioned respecting her dream. Was it such an island as this that she had seen? Was this the man? She affirmed that they were indeed the same. Some of them, especially the necromancers, were displeased; they did not like it that the coming of these foreigners should have been intimated to this young girl, and not to them. Had an enemy of the Indian tribes with whom they were at war been about to make a descent upon them, they could have foreseen and foretold it by the power of their magic; but of the coming of this teacher of a new religion they could know nothing.

¹ Like the Egyptians, Chaldees, and other nations.

² It is needless to say that it was a vessel with masts and yards, and sailors upon them moving about.

Appendix A

The new teacher was gradually received into favor, though the magicians opposed him. The people received his instructions, and submitted to the rites of baptism; the priest learned their tongue, and gave them the Prayer Book written in what they call *abootūlooëgāsik'* (ornamental mark-writing); a mark standing for a word, and rendering it so difficult to learn that it may be said to be impossible.

[This was manifestly done to keep the Indians in ignorance. Had their language been reduced to writing in the ordinary way, the Indians would have learned the use of writing and reading, and would have advanced in knowledge so as to be able to cope with their more enlightened invaders; and it would have been a more difficult matter for the latter to cheat them out of their lands and other rightful possessions. Such was Josiah's story. The priests who gave them this pictorial writing, whatever their motives may have been, certainly perpetrated one of the grossest possible literary blunders. It is bad enough for the Chinese, whose language is said to be monosyllabic and unchanged by grammatical inflection; but Micmac is polysyllabic, endless in its compounds and grammatical changes, and utterly incapable of being represented by signs.]

Appendix B



Image 1: *Site as Simulation, The Bear Den*, Georgian Bay, 2013, Patrick DeCoste.
Photos: Patrick DeCoste

Appendix B



Image 2: *Site as Simulation, The Crow's Nest*, Georgian Bay, 2013, Patrick DeCoste.
Photos: Patrick DeCoste

Appendix B



Image 3: *Site as Simulation, The Floating Island*, Georgian Bay, 2013, Patrick DeCoste.
Photos: Patrick DeCoste

Appendix B



Image 4: *Dreaming of Bear and Crow* (Installation Views), Patrick DeCoste, 2014, OCADU Graduate Gallery, Toronto. Photos: Michael Mitchell

Appendix B



Image 5: *Dreaming of Bear and Crow* (Installation Views), Patrick DeCoste, 2014, OCADU Graduate Gallery, Toronto. Photos: Michael Mitchell

Appendix B



Image 6: *The People of the Dream*, Patrick DeCoste, 2014, acrylic on muskox skin, 6 x 6 feet.
Photo: Michael Mitchell

Appendix B



Image 7: *Tracing Ontario*, Patrick DeCoste, 2014, acrylic on polar bear skin, 7 x 6 feet.
Photos: Michael Mitchell (top) & Patrick DeCoste (bottom)

Appendix B

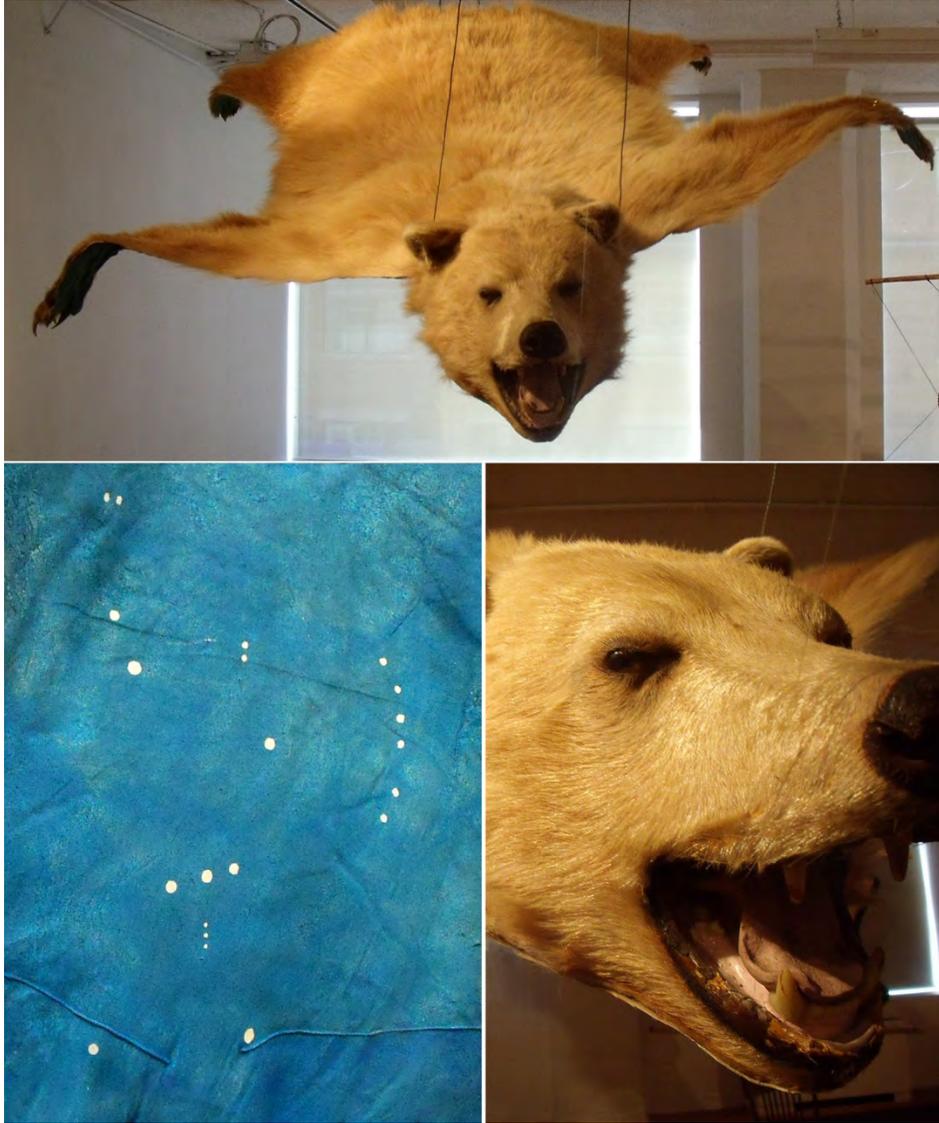


Image 8: *Flying Spirit Bear*, Patrick DeCoste, 2014, acrylic on spirit bear skin, 5 x 5 feet.
Photos: Patrick DeCoste

Appendix B



Image 10: *The Man Dressed in Furs*, Patrick DeCoste, 2014, various furs, rabbit bones, and wood, various dimensions. Photos: Patrick DeCoste

Appendix B



Image 11: *The Dream*, Patrick DeCoste, 2013, Book Work: pencil and acrylic on canvas, bound with mink fur. Reading & Writing Station: chair with faux fur, desk with felt, crow feather and skull.
Photos: Patrick DeCoste

Appendix B



Image 12: *The Floating Island*, Patrick DeCoste, 2013, video, 3 min. Photos: Patrick DeCoste