

# M A T R I A R T

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A Canadian Feminist Art Journal

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Women Artists of  
The First Nations

PUBLISHED BY

**WARC**

WOMEN'S ART RESOURCE CENTRE

# M A T R I A R T

## C o n t e n t s

### FOREWORD

**B**oo-zhoo! In this magazine issue, we have articles and stories written by Anishnawbequec (Native women). I am pleased to say, the featured artist is Shirley Bear, a fellow printmaker from Nova Scotia.

Featuring pieces by Joane Cardinal-Schubert and Jane Ash Poitras, the contents of this issue range from poetry and short stories to plays and political exposes by well-known and emerging native women artists.

The response to the call for articles and stories was excellent. It was very difficult for our Committee to narrow the selection to a handful of what we feel is a good cross-section of contemporary issues and recollections. I would also like to thank all those individuals who sent articles but were not selected. I am truly impressed by the wealth of creativity that abounds in the Native community.

I would also like to thank the members of the Guest Collectives who have given of their free time to assist with the production of this issue. They include Joy Asham Fedorick, Terry Monture, Colleen Wassegijig and special thanks to Mary Anne Barkhouse for her support and guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank Jennifer Wemigwams for her valuable contribution to this issue.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to WARC for giving us (the Native collective) this opportunity. It has been a pleasure to work with WARC on this very special issue.

**Meegwetch,  
Georgina Toulouse, Printmaker  
Guest Collective Coordinator**

### WARC UPDATE

**I** was not expecting to see and to subsequently meet Ellen Gabriel the Saturday that I dropped in to see A Space's current exhibition, Okanata in Toronto. She sat in a circularly arranged group as two men recounted their experiences of their defense of Mohawk Nations territory at Kahnésatake in the summer of 1990. Both men are among the over 90 Mohawks and Native allies (18 of whom are women) charged with criminal acts by the Quebec government.

Ellen Gabriel and her colleagues spoke about how the mainstream media has portrayed the Mohawk nation as terrorists in an effort to discredit them. This portrayal has made raising funds for defense lawyers difficult. Ellen Gabriel, whose art work is represented in the exhibition, was the main spokeswoman for The People of the Pines during the "crisis".

Ellen felt the Canadian people's response to the crisis— mass demonstrations and hundreds of letters to the government— served as a deterrent to the possible violent outcome.

How does the Mohawk situation affect the Women's Art Resource Centre? The less obvious forms of racism present in Canadian institutions and structures made it possible for such a crisis to happen in this country. Canadians are presently questioning themselves and a government that has historically oppressed and exploited the First Nations peoples. Similarly, WARC members are questioning the organization's role in systemic racism.

In the past white women have come together with shared assumptions about power and gender to form feminist organizations. More recently there has been a questioning of why these organizations do not represent the diversity of women in Canada and continue to consist of primarily white women.

Members of WARC are re-examining our structure and our history within the larger social context. Some of the questions we are addressing in anti-racism workshops are: the differences between cultural appropriation and solidarity; what our political responsibility is to challenge racism; and how can we apply anti-racist strategies to our hiring policies, programmes and decision-making.

The defense of forty Mohawks from Kahnésatake will cost at least two million dollars. You can help by sending a check to:

The Akweks Fund  
C/O The Canadian Rights and Liberties Federation  
323 Chapel Street,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 7Z2

**Carla Murray,  
WARC Administrative Coordinator**

Vol.2, No. 1, 1991

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WARC and the First Nations Collective would like to thank all the contributors who assisted with this issue: Jane Ash-Poitras, Marie Annharte Baker, Mary Anne Barkhouse, Rebecca Baird, Shirley Bear, Tracy Kim Boneau, Elizabeth "Toby" Burning, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Shirley Cheechoo, Gail Duiker, Marilyn Dumont, Joy Asham Fedorick, Susan Hare, Cheryl Henhawke, Jean Marie Iron, Mary Longman, Teresa A. Smith, Georgina Toulouse.

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MATRIART welcomes contributions to future issues. Our deadline date for the Women's Spirituality issue is January 15th, 1992. For information please contact WARC. We encourage response from our readers; your opinions, criticisms and concerns are welcome. Views expressed in MATRIART are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of WARC. We reserve the right to edit submissions for brevity and clarity.

Please contact WARC at (416) 324-8910 for further information and advertising rates.

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### FEATURES

The Essential Spirituality of North American Indigenous Cultures / Jane Ash-Poitras	2
Excerpts from Speeches / Joane Cardinal-Schubert	9
Excerpt from a Submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs / Susan Hare	10
Path With No Moccasins / Shirley Cheechoo	12
The Spider Story / Joy Asham Fedorick	19
Circling Back Grandma-To-Be Writing / Marie Annharte Baker	26
Autobiographical Statement / Jane Ash-Poitras	28
Memories / Jean Marie Iron	30
Sunday Chicken and Soft-spoken Tom / Gail Duiker	32

### ART/POETRY

still unsaved soul / Marilyn Dumont	8
For Ola / Tracy Kim Bonneau	16
Spider Poem / Toby Burning	17
Artist's Statement / Teresa A. Smith	20
Artist's Statement / Mary Longman	21
Untitled work / Cheryl Henhawke	22
Concerning Objects Moving in Zig Zags / Rebecca Baird	24

### FOCUS ON WARC

Introduction / Carla Murray	34
Shirley Bear / Mary Anne Barkhouse	35
Poetry and Artwork / Shirley Bear	35 - 38
Artist Statement / Shirley Bear	39

### Listings

Cover Artwork:  
Georgina Toulouse, **The Jingle Dress Dancers**,  
1991, silk screen

# The Essential Spirituality Of

**B**efore European contact, all North American indigenous cultures used altered states of consciousness for spiritual and healing practices. The First Peoples were a nomadic hunting and gathering people who practised their spiritual beliefs through shamanic societies. Within these indigenous societies, the shamans (male and female) fulfilled the roles of both priest and healer. The sacred and mundane were accounted for by the priests, medicine healers, ritualists, keepers of the cultural myths and masters of spirits.

As Native people in North America became colonized with the coming of Columbus and those who followed him, the situation changed dramatically. As tribal societies became fixed on reservations, became farmers rather than foragers, and became socially and politically materialistic rather than egalitarian, shamanism seemed to disappear.

The Europeans came to the New World, as they called it, with their culture, religions and attitude which were embedded in material possessions and political stratification. This foreign attitude supported laws that suppressed indigenous people and prevented them from practising their own shamanic, spiritual ways. During the last century it was even a criminal offense in some areas to own a drum.

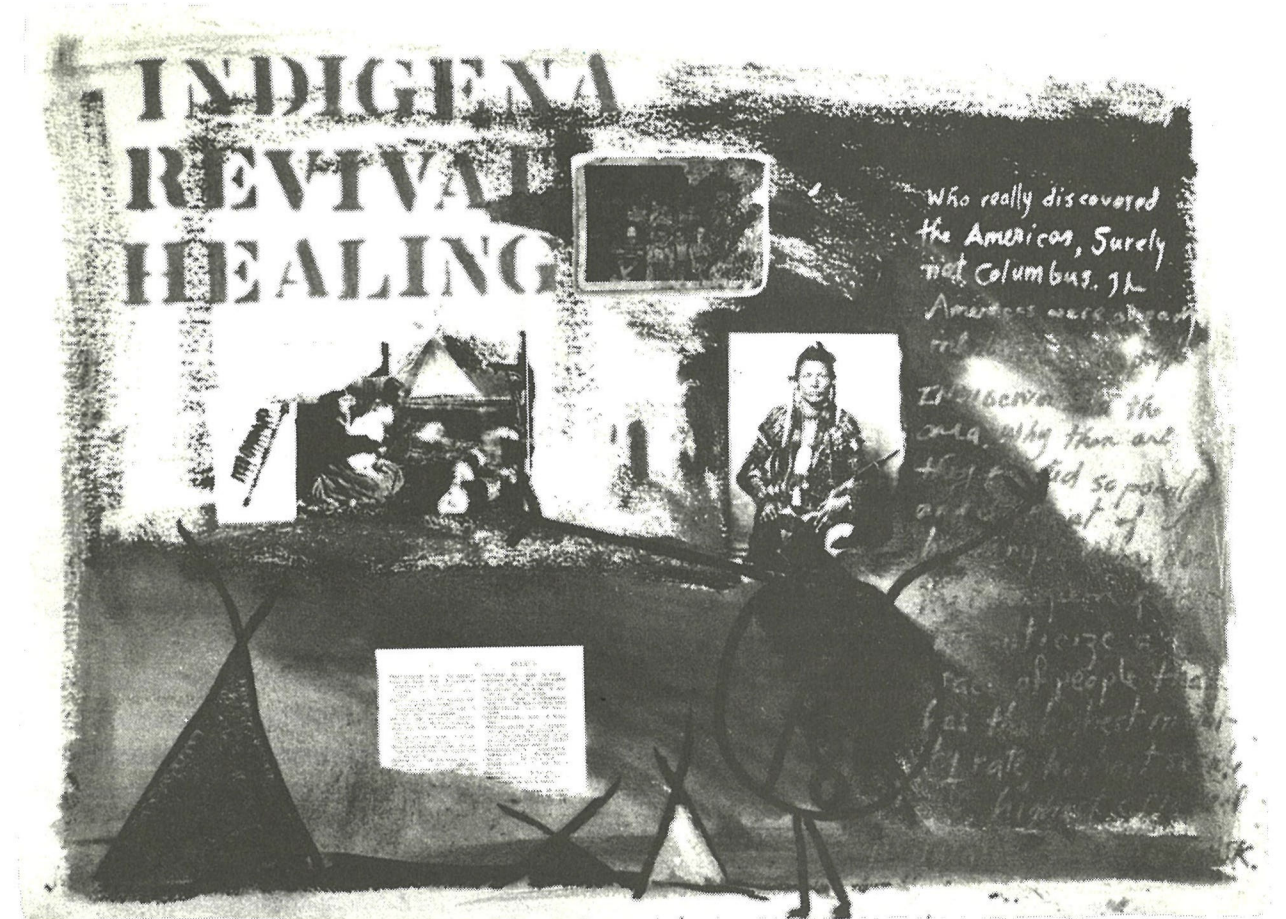
Maybe it was the power the participants received through these rituals that the Europeans did not understand, causing them to enforce these laws and label these rituals as pagan satanic practices. However, it was these practices which provided the structure which held indigenous cultures together and governed them as a group. These powerful tools strengthened, purified and disciplined the groups and the individuals in them; gave the warriors courage, endurance, and removed both physical and mental impurities and fostered clarity and concentration of mind.

Indigenous spirituality gave the First Nations power of body, mind and spirit, the power to control their own destiny and actions, power to heed evil and obstacles, power over spirits and power to do good deeds for others.

The essential element of North American Indian culture is its spirituality, both in the nature of their beliefs and in the way these

Jane Ash Poitras,  
**I Discovered Columbus,**  
1990-91, Mixed Media

# North American Indigenous Cultures



beliefs were expressed in every aspect of the lives of this continent's First Peoples.

Spirituality was the most vital and pervasive of the many ways in which the traditions, values and practices of North American Aboriginal cultures differed radically from those of the Europeans. It defines who they are, how they relate to the world and how they live their lives.

Understanding Aboriginal spirituality is fundamental to understanding Aboriginal people today as well as how they were in the past. It is futile to try learning about First Nations' cultures unless such study is approached from the Aboriginal perspective, with spiritual ideology as the primary context in which to consider all other aspects. This applies to contemporary as well

as historical studies, and to legal and socio-economic issues as well as art and culture.

The ongoing tragedy of Aboriginal people in conflict with the systems of modern society is directly rooted in the loss of their traditional spirituality. Not because this spirituality is un-adaptable to contemporary life, but because of a concerted effort to block its application by those who have no understanding nor willingness to learn it.

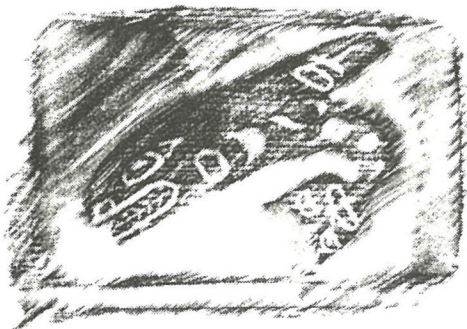
It is no surprise, therefore, that the most successful programs for Aboriginal people are those approached from their perspective, grounded in their traditional spirituality with input from the Aboriginal community, particularly the Elders and spiritual leaders. Among those successes are Aboriginal justice sys-

tems, university Native studies programs, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, Aboriginal self-government models, economic development initiatives, training and employment programs, cultural activities and holistic healing.

It is encouraging and ironic that these programs have been so successful that non-Aboriginal people are turning to them in search of answers, most often for healing and for addressing their environmental concerns.

But just what is it about Aboriginal spirituality that gives people so much trouble? What is so intimidating about it that its rituals have been forbidden? What compels people to dismiss it before they even have any understanding or experience of it?

Before the Europeans arrived, the North American Indians lived in societies based on rich, spiritually-based cultures with traditions that had evolved over many generations. It was their spiritual beliefs and the culture that expressed those beliefs that gave people their sense of identity, their distinctive individual and collective place in the world.



Rubbings by  
Mary Anne  
Barkhouse

and coercion to adopt the religion and lifestyle of the conquerors.

If the North American Aboriginal people would have responded in kind to Roman Catholics, for example, they would have appropriated all homes and other lands owned by them, seized and plundered all businesses, vandalized churches and cemeteries and stripped them of all ceremonial objects and decorations for display in Aboriginal-controlled Catholic museums, forbid all Catholic religious services, forced them to practise Indian ceremonies and accept Indian beliefs to the extent of taking Catholic children from their homes to live in Indian villages to learn from Indian Elders, and assigned them to prescribed areas where they would be expected to live the traditional Indian way.

I expect such a scenario would be difficult, if not impossible, for most non-Aboriginal Catholics to contemplate. This comparison would directly conflict with the assumed superiority with which most Europeans perceive their own culture. To most of them, the "pagan" beliefs and rites of Aboriginal "savages" are inferior to their beliefs, and do not deserve the respect and consideration they expect for their own beliefs and rituals.

European descendants would do well to study their own history and compare the "pagan" beliefs and rites of their own ancestors. They would find amazing similarities between North American Aboriginal beliefs and rites and those of the Celts, the Teutons, the Vikings and other European forebears. The Judeo-Christian beliefs and rituals they propound did not originate with them, as we well know but neglect to acknowledge, but came from the Semite races of the Eastern Mediterranean. Eloquent evidence of their self delusion is that most of the portraits of Jesus show a man with blue eyes, light-coloured hair and fair skin, rather than the brown-eyed, dark-haired and swarthy man he probably was.

With such a skewed perspective of Europeans of their own history, religions and sense of self, it is little wonder that they are unwilling and/or unable to consider and attempt to understand Aboriginal people from an Aboriginal perspective.

This lack of understanding, this cultural bias, is central to the continuing conflict between Aboriginal people and the dominant society, particularly its governments and institutions. Even more damaging to Aboriginal people, is that their own leaders have become entangled in the same trap in their efforts to deal with those institutions. They have sacrificed their strengths in their efforts to obtain benefits from their conquerors.

The continuing tragedies of reserve life should be ample evidence that land is not the answer. The financial assistance of the Department of Indian Affairs, and the wealth of reserves with resource revenue has not removed those tragedies, and in fact has clearly added to them.

Self-government has not made life easier for ordinary Indian people. With too few exceptions, Indian leaders are no more immune to the corruptions of power than non-Indians. Our people are just as suppressed, denied control over their lives, deprived of their rightful benefits and face just as much tragedy under their leadership.

Being Indian is not about power. It is not about money. It is not about land. All those things are necessary, but they possess no value if we do not have our spirituality, our culture, our identity.

We must look to our spiritual leaders for guidance. Only through spiritual renewal can we find out who we really are, be empowered to achieve our potential, acquire the wisdom to eliminate the influences that bring tragedy and destroy us.

Real power is not about getting the most votes, gaining control over the most money, manipulating the most decisions. Real power is about finding our spiritual guidance and helping others to find theirs; it is about admitting our own limitations and ignorance so that spiritual power and wisdom can work through



us; it is about empowerment and transformation, not about abuse of power and manipulation.

The addiction, violence and lost ambition that plague our people can readily be blamed on history, on our conquerors and their ongoing domination of our lives. We can easily

justify being victims in the material world.

But there is another world, a spiritual realm where we are victims only if we choose to be victims. And from that world we can, if we choose, gain the guidance and wisdom and power that will enable us to cease to be victims in this world.

We must continue to seek just settlement of our Aboriginal rights through the return of lands and other compensation, to provide better resources for our lives in the material world. But that, by itself, is not the answer.

Too often, the excuse some Indian people use is that the Indian way is incompatible with the contemporary world. There are those who say that Indian spirituality and culture and identity depends on traditional lifestyles, that these functions require ancestral lands and survival through hunting, trapping and fishing.

However, the facts are that the land has been invaded, and very little will be returned; the buffalo are gone and will never return in the numbers that once thundered across the plains; the opportunity for hunting, trapping and fishing is increasingly limited, and fewer and fewer Indians know how to survive in that lifestyle even if the opportunity did exist.

The loss of opportunities for traditional lifestyles does not mean that Indian identity and culture and spirituality is lost too. One of the greatest strengths of Indian people throughout their history has been their adaptability and their ability to appropriate anything new they encounter and make it their own. Horses, blankets, guns, beads all these were appropriated and became part of the lifestyle of various tribes.

Even when forced onto reserves with poor land, and despite little knowledge of agriculture, many Indians became successful farmers. It was only when Indian agents interfered in the opera-

tion of those farms, forced restrictions and imposed decisions that were ill-founded, that they failed.

Currently more Indians are becoming successful warriors and healers, storytellers and teachers in mainstream society. They are applying their historical values to contemporary situations, proud and certain of their identity, successfully maintaining their culture as adapted to their new situation, and relying on the same spiritual resources that guided their forefathers.

Unfortunately, too many others have not found their way back to the spiritual path.

One source of guidance for people searching for the path back to their spiritual roots is through art. There are a number of Aboriginal artists who create spiritually inspired work which often addresses the wide range of issues affecting Aboriginal people today.

But how does this spirituality through art feed the human consciousness, and work toward the transformation of mankind? And can the artist today act as a shaman and reveal shamanic powers through the art that is created?

If one views the work of renowned Cold Lake artist Alex Janvier in his "Apple" series, one is not only eloquently presented with the issues, but often given them in a humorous way that is both satirical and sardonic and a biting reminder of how racist and narrow mainstream thinking can be.

The following quote is by Jamake Highwater from his book *The Primal Mind*:

"Before the twentieth century the most prevalent line of thinking to explain racial differences was based on a conception of degeneration that was born out of the monogenesis of Christian orthodoxy. This viewpoint imagined the continuing degeneration of humankind after the expulsion from Eden to the present time.

It was conjectured that idolatry and heathenism as well as the wide differences in

languages and manners, represented the decay of people's grasp of the original knowledge of God at the time of Eden. The long separation of humanity from Eden had led to decay instead of progress, to corruption instead of achievement. Accordingly, Indians were seen as corrupt copies of the Jewish past or were related to degenerated shadows of other past civilizations."

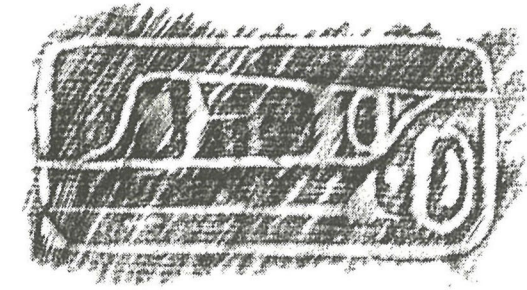
Sadly, this perception persists today. And this is the kind of thinking that Janvier pokes fun at.

Now that the "barbarian" Indians are Christianized, there are worse problems than ever. Canada, along with the United States, has nothing to be proud of in its shabby treatment of Indians. The national statistics are enough evidence - highest infant mortality rate, highest suicide rate, highest incarceration rate the list goes on and on.

Aboriginal artists are becoming increasingly forthright in exposing and emphasizing such issues, as Whitehorse artist Jim Logan has done with his very powerful piece, "Night Visit" which deals with priests molesting young Indian boys. Here we see a priest, very realistically portrayed, holding his hand over the mouth of a young boy while touching the boy's genitals. Not exactly living room art.

It took courage for Logan and other artists like him to paint such graphic and revealing imagery. Pretty pictures have their place, but before the healing can begin, artists like Janvier and Logan can help identify the issues in a way that is impossible to ignore.

The crises affecting Canadian Aboriginal people and conditions in the developing countries can be transformed by allowing people to be who they are, not by trying to make them fit some colonial, paternalistic mould. What the Canadian government has and continues to do is deny the Aboriginal people the freedom to practice their innate, spiritual, traditional ways.



There are laws imposed on telling them when and where they can hunt and fish. They have values and judicial systems imposed on them that are alien to their culture and lifestyle.

In the small northern community of LaLoche, Saskatchewan, 80 per cent of the children drop out of school because the teachers speak English, but no Chipewyan, the language of the people there. When a six-year-old child enters school, he or she has great difficulty relating to a non-Native teacher, foreign to the community and the language and the culture.

The same problems that existed in residential schools still exist today.

In Fort Chipewyan, a teacher training program for residents was started. The majority had no difficulty completing the first two years toward their Bachelor of Education degree at Keyano College in nearby and familiar Fort McMurray. The problem arose when they faced the mandatory final two years of study at the University of Calgary. Most were unable or unwilling to uproot their families (some had as many as six children) and move to an urban centre far from their homes and totally foreign to them.

The imposition of such expectations, and expecting success, is as unrealistic as expecting people of the Yamato Tribe to operate efficiently in New York City.

Such schemes fail to take into account the three most important things to Aboriginal people:

- **Above all, their families come first.** They drop everything to address their family's needs. The many births, marriages and funerals in the extended family are major events in Aboriginal family life. They are more important than going to school or going to work because school or work (if you're lucky) will always be there. But in the mainstream value system, which is steeped in materialism, school and work come first, with most of the day spent earning the money to become consumers of products they don't even have the time to use. Mainstream society has many victims of the massive advertising campaigns which convince them that they need all these things, but leaves them wondering why they are still unhappy. In traditional times, and not only in Indian societies, people were more concerned with feeding

their spiritual hunger than they were with satisfying their greed for material possessions.

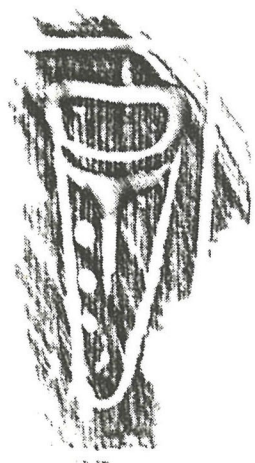
- **The second most important thing to Aboriginal people is their spiritual soul.** Every Aboriginal person, along with the rest of mankind, has a deep desire to seek knowledge beyond the material world (profane/supernatural). To do this they, like their forefathers, should be allowed to believe as their progenitors did. If reincarnation is real as I believe it is, if Elijah Harper is the reincarnation of Sitting Bull or Chief Joseph for example, then Aboriginal people today should be allowed to fully practice the deeply spiritual ancestral rituals that worked so long ago and can work today when they are so badly needed.

But how can they practice those rituals when so many of the sacred relics of all Aboriginal peoples are sitting in museum drawers collecting dust? As I was told by one museum director, he and others like him are "keepers of the culture," and if Aboriginal people had them returned, they would not know how to take care of them. He said we should be glad these "educated" anthropologists and ethnologists are here to take away our sacred objects because they know better how to preserve our spirits.

Well, the spirits told me that they want all those sacred bundles and drums and amulets returned to the medicine shaman of the tribes to which they belong. We can look after our own spirit rocks and feathers. We know what the spirits want, and those objects have no power in the wrong hands. Perhaps that is why those objects are in the museums, to promote a romantic view of Aboriginal people, and to keep the power of those objects away from them.

- **The third most important thing for Aboriginal people is themselves.** All Aboriginal people are concerned for their own destiny, and know how to take care of themselves. When their traditional food source, land, home and spirituality was stolen from them, the problems of Aboriginal people were created out of this ignorance and greed.

Jane Ash Poitras



If I hear one more word  
about your christian god  
I'm gonna crawl outta my "heathen"  
skin  
and "trick you"  
into Believing  
I am the virgin  
Mary and take you to bed.

# Still Unsaved Soul

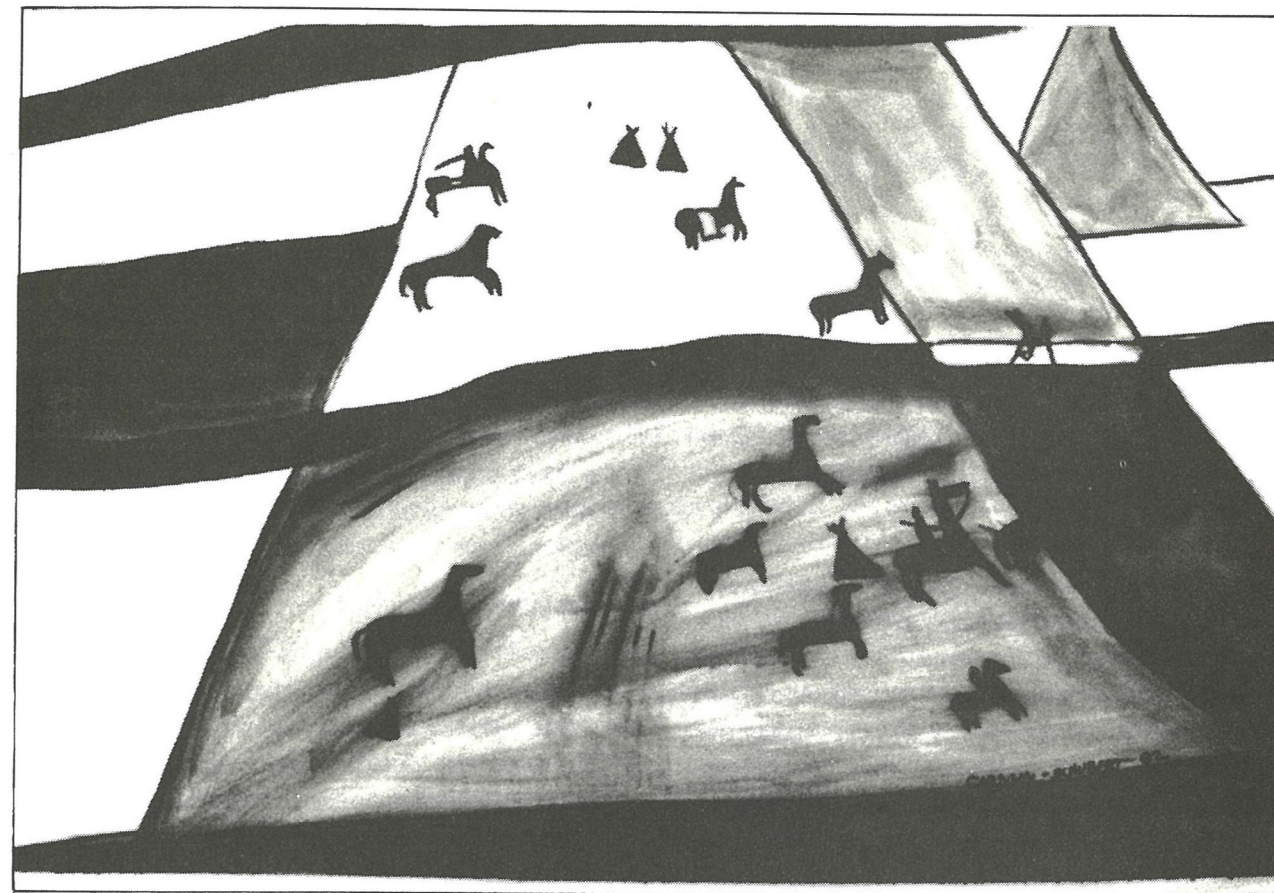
If I hear one more line  
about your white church  
I'm gonna start singing and dancing  
with all my "false gods"  
in a giveaway dance  
and honour you with all  
the "unclean" sheets from my bed.

If I hear one more blessed thought  
or witness one more holy act  
I'm gonna throw up  
35 years of communion hosts  
from this still unsaved soul.

## Marilyn Dumont

*I am Metis. Dislocated from the settlements and my ancestors, I grew up in a small southern Alberta farming community. And in that town we (I am the youngest of nine children born to Mary and Ambrose Dumont) were perceived similar to how gypsies may be perceived in Europe. We were many extended family members, all in one house, seasonally nomadic, lively and occasionally indiscreet.*

*We never could hide our halfbreed blood.*



Joane Cardinal-Schubert, *Tipi Painting*, 1982, Private collection

## Joane Cardinal-Schubert

*Excerpts from speeches given at Women and Aesthetics, Goethe Institute / University of Toronto, 1990, Intervening the Text, University of Calgary, Conference, organized by the English Department, Spring 1991, Visions of Power, Harbourfront, Toronto, Summer 1991.*

A pictograph or a petroglyph is a symbol that may have a book meaning behind it, it may be a page of text if one were to type out the meaning, it may be directional; whole oral histories may be triggered by a sign or symbol — this is the importance of so-called artifacts, removed, languishing in the plinths of the museums and galleries and collections, These are not just curiosities, they belong to someone. These are the image texts of Native Peoples and it is your society that has participated in the 500 year book burning of our histories and stories by removing these cultural sign posts.

Let me tell you it is a life long involvement. For those of us

who cannot take off our colour and it will never be achieved by bronze make-up and made up ceremonialism. I realized a long time ago that the strength and integrity of the involvements we choose are derived from self knowledge and that that knowledge springs from self worth. Why do so many of you feel so exempt from experience, so empty of a culture of your own. Get over your freak show mentality and the monetary gain that is attached. Tell your own stories as Lenore writes and says. You should be ashamed that Native People have to put you in your place — especially as a culture of oppressors and dominators who purport to do nothing wrong.

I am a humanist, I hate divisions, I hate umbrella groups of different colours, I hate sexists. I am a woman, I am an Artist, I am a Native, but I refuse to be your Other. I'll tell you who I am. You do not tell me.

*Joane Cardinal-Schubert is a mixed media artist living in Calgary.*

## Excerpt from a Submission to the

*The following is an excerpt from a written submission by Susan Hare of the Ojibway Nation to the Right Honourable Brian Dickson, Special Representative respecting the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs.*

My input shall be from the viewpoint of an Aboriginal woman who is resident in a First Nations community, with special concerns and remarks concerning Aboriginal youth.

My advice will concern the makeup of the proposed commissioner and the terms of reference of the Commission. The relationship between government and Aboriginal people must be the focus of this Commission. For, if the relationship is not scrutinized for positive change, then all of the money, political will and past studies will have been in vain. This Royal Commission must forage for and reveal a change which will finally be for the benefit of Aboriginal peoples and Canada.

Further, in scrutinizing that historic relationship, the impact on how that relationship has affected Aboriginal women in their communities, and the story of the lost voice of women must be told.

### Introduction

I am, at present, a law student at Osgoode Hall Law School. I am also a past President of the Ontario Native Women's Association and it is from this position that I will submit my recommendations.

### Relationship of Government and Aboriginal Peoples

Elder and Ojibwe historian, Ernest Debassige, states that: "Aboriginal people begun their relationship with Canada in a partnership. The mutual needs of the fur trade and the War of 1812 displayed that partnership."

### Overview

It was the governmental development of Canada, settlers' increased power due to population and colonial imposition, the cultural values of sharing that Aboriginal people upheld, which

begun the change in partnership to one of settler-dominance. One hundred and twenty four years of increased bureaucratization, the settlers' continued population growth and the effects of colonization of Aboriginal peoples cemented this unequal relationship.

### Government/Patriarchy/Religion

The settler-dominance over Aboriginal peoples included the transmittal through colonization of a patriarchal system which undermined the influence and participation of Aboriginal women in their communities. The further adoption of non-Native governmental styles through the Indian act elections, combined with the strength of the christian patriarchal systems, effectively destroyed Aboriginal women's influence in their communities. Law continued to undermine Aboriginal women by, in 1952, taking away their protection as "treaty" women, by the loss of their Indian status if they married non-Native men but upholding Aboriginal men's rights to marry whom they pleased. Combined with legal handicaps were the "practices" of Indian Affairs officials which, for instance, placed certificates of possession in the names of husbands only — resulting in denial of property rights to Aboriginal women in cases of marriage breakdown or family violence.

So, not only must this Commission address the larger relationship of Aboriginal peoples and Canada, it must also address the impact of that relationship on Aboriginal women.

### Impact of Historic Relationship

The impact of the historic relationship has been economic hardship for Aboriginal women and their children, family violence at a rate in Ontario of 8 out of 10 Aboriginal women who suffer or can expect to suffer from family violence, political oblivion, property rights deprivation, lack of protection from provincial family law legislation, and surviving in third world conditions. The Nishnawbe-Aski Nation has called for an inquiry into the increasing youth suicides in their territory. Heather Childforever says "child sexual abuse may be part of the reason for the

## Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs

increase of female suicides" (Globe and Mail, June 3, 1991 pp. 1,A2). This has been only the partial impact of this historic relationship on Aboriginal women.

- Recommendation #1: The Co-Chair of the Commission must be an Aboriginal woman. Aboriginal women must compose half of the commissioners.

### Aboriginal Women's Opportunity to Participate

There are approximately only 43 women chiefs in Canada (D.I.A., D. Buffalo) out of a possible 633 (Assembly of First Nations Library). Aboriginal women involved politically across Canada will attest to attempts to exclude their involvement. Aboriginal women, both in First Nations communities and in urban and rural communities, seek out a voice in Aboriginal women's organizations because they lack a voice at home and because they feel a strength of purpose as Aboriginal women. In Ontario, for example, the inclusion of Aboriginal women at Aboriginal political tables is only beginning, in some instances very reluctantly. In the First Ministers' Conferences of Aboriginal Peoples, the province of Ontario gave Ontario Aboriginal women a seat at the constitutional table because the Aboriginal male leadership refused. So, an especial effort must be made to invite and provide resources to Aboriginal women so that their voices can be heard.

- Recommendation #2: That Aboriginal women's groups and individuals be provided financial resources to make presentations to the Royal Commission so that their voices can finally be heard.

### The Commissioners

It is important that the Aboriginal Commissioners be connected to First Nations communities, whether they be rural, urban or Aboriginal territories. This connection must not only be physical but must include knowledge of the needs of Aboriginal women, youth and children. The increased challenge across Canada to Indian-Act leadership stems from a challenge to the Indian Act itself and to a feeling of lack of representation. The Commissioners should also have that capacity for larger vision that is the hallmark of many Aboriginal leaders, such as Chief Joe Norton and Sharon McIvor of the Native Women's Association of Canada. If there is inclusion of academics, academics who have accomplished substantial work in Aboriginal communities must be given priority, such as Dr. Ron Common, consultant to the Union of Ontario Indians.

Further, technical people must include Aboriginal people, because their understanding of and interpretation of submissions is vital. Finally, and most importantly, elders must be present as advisors and guides to the Commissioners' work.

- Recommendation #3: That elders, such as Elder/Historian Ernest Debassige, be present to advise and guide the commissioners in their work.

I thank you for this opportunity to bring forward advice to such an important undertaking for Canada.

Susan Hare

# Path With No Moccasins

The day never comes when you wait for it. The sun only shines when it wants to. When I waited for tomorrow to come, I didn't know where my blood ran through; I didn't know whether my toes even touched the ground and I felt my fingers were attached to the ceiling like I was tied up. Everytime I waited to be freed more strings would go up, to immobilize me. It was a feeling of struggle, trapped in waiting for the next days so I could be free from the day I was in. The more I waited the longer I waited; the more jailed I felt because I didn't want to be me.

My hair is all chopped off. Everyone is told to call me Woody Woodpecker. Just ten strands of hair are standing in the middle of my head. Oh the tennis racket was a good one. Crying, yelling to the other girls in the dorm; it didn't hurt denying my feelings. The pain on my butt didn't let me forget; it just reminded me that I didn't like ice cream. They made me eat everything, even dog biscuits. Yeah! I found bones in my cookies; that's what they called them.

Oh I wish summer was here. I drift into my memories to ease the pain. Travelling across Moose River on a boat, water splashes on my face. I turn and see my father driving the boat, smiling because he has his children for six weeks again. There is the smell of bannock cooking on the stove and the sound of my mother humming in the kitchen preparing rabbit stew and dumplings, my favourite meal. Everyone is silent for a few days, just smiles and kisses from our Mom and Dad. I am adjusting to my identity or maybe I am back to my identity. The sound of the fiddle into the night, looking at my feet going rapidly on the floor, looking slowly as I turn around and around my family all laughing and sharing our return home to be together once more. I know that the train will come roaring in to get me soon. It haunts me.

Pulling the fish out from the fish nets, one slips through my fingers. He is free I say to myself. I can slip away too. I'm as slippery as this fish, as the moon. Is the moon slippery? It slips in and out of the clouds; I guess it's slippery.

I shouldn't talk about the moon like that, because I'd lie in my bed at night and stare at it until it comes into my room surrounding me, me inside the ball of smoke as I see it. It is cold in there but my feather blanket my grandmother gave me keeps me warm. There are alot of children in there playing — "you can't





touch me". Awakened by the sound of my father's chainsaw I sit up and look for the moon. She is gone. I can hear my mother speaking Cree to my aunt in the kitchen. It sounds so good; it makes me feel secure and loved. But for how long? That train is coming.

I go to put my clothes on. I rip at them because I hate them, the ones I wear for ten months at the residential school. I want something else but I can't find anything to wear. They've even taken my clothes away from me. I slip back into my bed and I cry softly back to sleep. I had to wear those ripped clothes for months.

The days of summer must never end, but they always do. The lines of boats docking on Moosonee with children all sad and mothers crying, wailing over the sound of the whistle from the train. My father holds my hand and I pretend to be strong so he'll be proud of me. He gives me twenty dollars and puts me on the train; he smiles and kisses me but deep inside his eyes is sadness and I know that he really loves me and he'll miss me as much as I'll miss him. I run to get a window seat so I can wave good-bye as the train slowly pulls away, my gut aching, fighting away my tears. It's time to speak English again — more fear, knowing I have forgotten so much. Those yard sticks on my knuckles are making my hands look like my grandma's. I don't know if that is good. I guess my hands will get old first before the rest of me.

Jackie, Wendy, Kelly the beauty of the sister moon gather like flowers flying through the air, the colours of red, pink, purple and blue, my sisters from a different time protecting me so I can walk into the light and tell my story with no fear, with no sadness, no judgement, leaving behind my old self, self betrayer that has wrongly trapped me in silence, in a box of cockroaches crawling all over me sexually abusing me against my will telling me they loved me. I felt the fear making my crotch ache. I could not say "No! No! No!"

Yes I'm scared. I don't know how to say I want to go to the bathroom in English. Oh, oh, I feel warm water on my bum I hear it drip to the floor. All I see are eyes popping out, popping around the room from laughing

skulls so soulless, white, fleshless, dark, non feeling, non supporting. The teacher grabs me and starts whipping at my wet bum with a long leather strap. All the faces of the other kids turn away staring straight ahead; they've all been here before, their eyes blinking at the sound of the strap as it comes down again and again until I let out a scream that rings in my head as the room shakes from the rumbling of my cry. I've created and earthquake right smack in the middle of a small room. Who says I've got no power? I'm not useless and I'm not dirty. I am brown with a lot of soul. My sister moon backs me up.

I wonder what my mother is doing. Is she having another baby that's going to end up like me? I write her a letter and mail it to Mrs. Lillian Cheechoo, in the bush, Ontario. I cry writing that letter and my tears mark every page. She never receives it!

I knew I was ancient when I was young. I farted like an old hag and I smelled like my old grandmother when she'd fart when I slept with her. That was my anger. I thought I could get rid of all those people I hated like a skunk does with his smelly green air he uses to ward off his enemies. It didn't work. I only got worse and a giant crab inside my abdomen just kept on biting, sending pain up and down my spine. Even to this day this crab and pain are my legacy.

We're in Niagara Falls, my class. There's a big clock on the earth with different flowers growing in it. I don't know the flowers by name. I do know the wild roses back home whisper "Do not pick me I am here so you can smell the fresh scent in the air. Vibrate with my colour to bring loving memories to you when you are sad." These flowers here in Niagara Falls don't talk to me. They are strange to me; yet I know them. I wanted to be clothed in pink so I could connect with the wild roses of my home to comfort me. Flowers were meant to grow where they were. Are these flowers displaced like me? Are they sad like me, lost like me, taking their place in the clock because they have no choice — like me?

I'm getting out of here, with my friend. I want to get home. I fear something will happen to my Mom and Dad. Maybe they will die because of me. Lets be blood sisters to make ourselves stronger. Well I guess I can try it. You sure it won't hurt? There will only be a little blood. Right? How do I know you will do it after I do? No. Okay. You're right it doesn't hurt. Now it's your turn. There. We're blood sisters now. Oh no, the bleeding on her wrist won't stop it just keeps coming out. I wrap my apron around her arm but it just keeps coming, She's so weak. Where are we, are we on the right railway track? She's slowing down and she's cold. I've got to get her back to the school, why did we try and run away. They said our parents would die if we did but it's my friend that's dying. Maybe if I cut my tongue I can give her more blood. No. She needs me to get her back. It is an effort, a struggle but I see the pointed chapel. Thank you God for helping me get to the road. My friend survived and I believed in the Lord.

Jesus loves me this I know

For the bible tells me so

Jesus loves me

That's all I remember and I used to sing this all the time. But the Cree lullaby my mother used to sing to me I still sing. I sang it to my baby as I swung him to sleep every day and night.

Scrape the hide and pull as hard as you can. The smell of smoke tanning the moosehide, my mother's rough, chapped hands work day and night. Her face never changes, she is not an angry woman. I wonder if she knows what I'm going through. She is so silent, so am I. She's so full of joy, humming all the time. I'm sure she'll always be with me. I want so much to hold her but I might cry. I'm afraid to cry because my body hurts so much I might never stop. All the tears I have to share would flood this whole world.

Lets go to the dance. My sister and I try all our clothes, all four sets, trying to look pretty, sharing what little we have. Her long black hair shines like wet charcoal in the rain; she is beautiful. She combs her hair and puts it into a pony tail as she sings she loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah. And I know that she loves me. I keep my eyes on her as she swings around and around seeing her as fair skinned. I didn't want her to be Indian because I didn't want to be. Every boy wanted to be her friend. If I was a boy I would have asked her to dance because she is

the best dancer there. Then the fiddle players start. Partners all, places all and the men get up and form three circles, the women joining them. Oh I wish I wasn't so shy. I'd love to be Paul's partner. Hey no one is going there, he turns and comes over to me and pulls me up to the circle. I am so excited I don't want it to stop, dancing until my feet hurt. We swing the door open to go home and the sun burns into our eyes.

I remember when my cousin farted in class. The teacher, who was she to judge? She had bad breath that smelled worse than the dogs on the reserve. She had the worst halitosis. We knew well as she spit into our faces. She yelled at her to stand up. Of course she didn't understand. She walked over to her and pulled her by the hair and took her to the front of the class. "What do you say?" Silence. I said "what do you say?" My cousin was so brave; she stood straight up and said "Oops!" She was punished for her smell but the teacher never was.

C.F.R.B. radio interviewed me today. I walked slowly down the street with my publicist, a black forest cake in my hand. There were twelve cherries surrounding it. My teeth ached for a bite but I had to wait. Jack wouldn't want a half eaten birthday cake. She asked me questions, that were my deepest secrets. I thought to myself, who wants to hear this anyways? Yes I was abused as a child in the residential schools. I know my secrets give me pain in my lower back. I use to sit by the black rocks on Manitoulin and tell my secrets to the water spirits until one day they took my father away. So who can you trust?

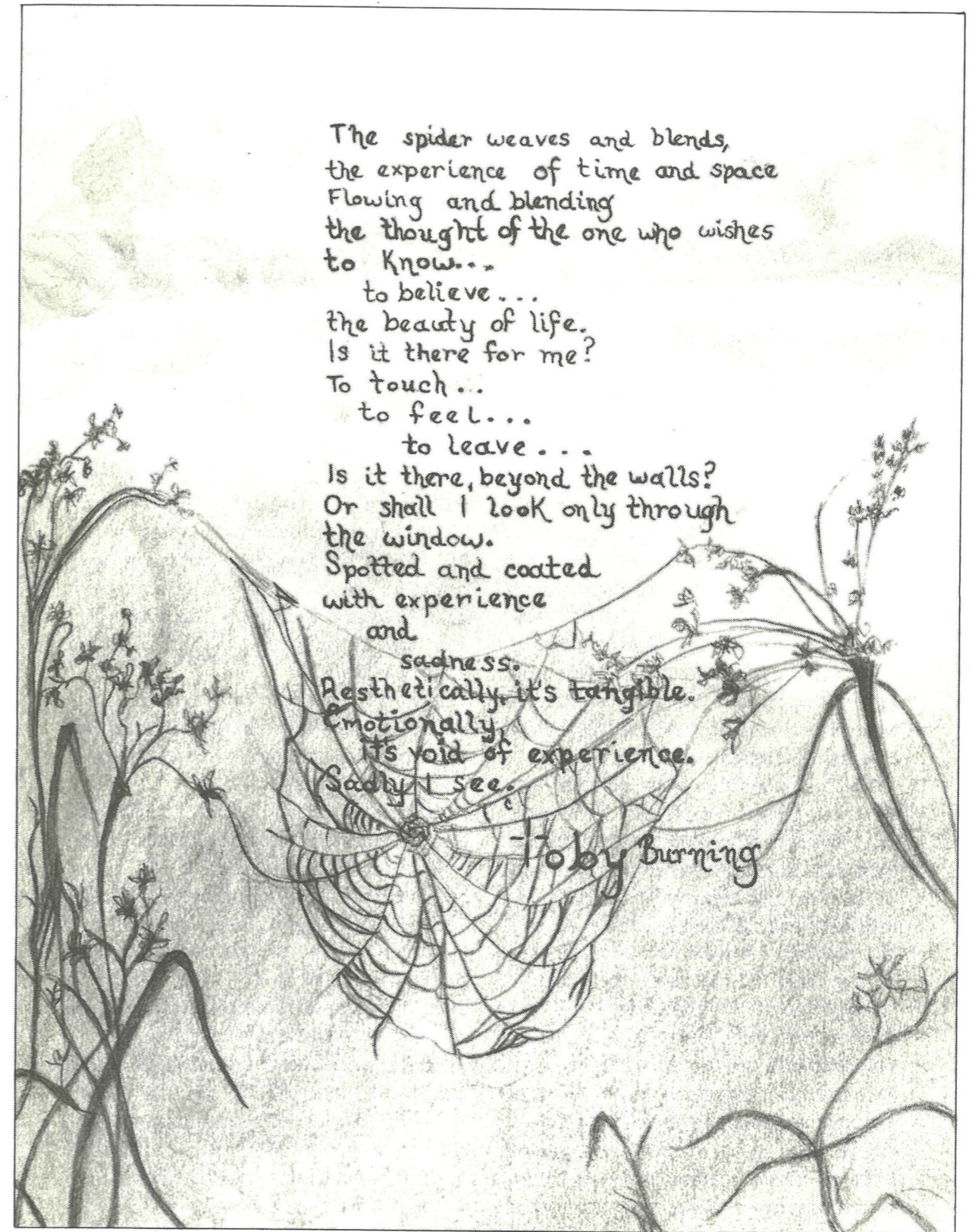
This road I'm on doesn't seem to have an end. I travel up and down hills wondering what's on the other side. I come over the hill and all I see is a field of water, rolling in trying to grab me. Do I have the guts to walk on top of it like Jesus. No! I can't breathe. The fish swim by me smiling, poking at my nose. Sitting at the bottom I stare at the bubbles rolling up as I run out of air. I see a bright blue light. I can't do this. I realise at last that life is paradise. It doesn't come after death. Life is it! I need some air. I swim back up as fast as I can. I'm scared. I don't want to die, will I make it? It's getting dark. I feel heavy. Are the fish holding my feet? I kick and kick until my face is out of the water. I float slowly with the sun warming my soul. I feel so peaceful.

Shirley Cheechoo

# For Ola

Spinning  
silken threads  
    she stretches  
    her arachnid legs  
    around the  
network of  
lobbyists  
    weaving cocoons  
                    to create eggs  
for conscience  
minds  
visualizing  
the web  
    as struggle.  
her spinning  
becomes difficult  
    she finds them  
hidden  
    covered with  
                    dust  
                    in empty jail cells  
or a bureaucrat's  
filing box  
    she spins  
                    interlacing  
    twisting  
winds  
    a particular pattern  
showing a  
complex plot  
that  
    spiderwoman  
is free  
from  
narrow minds  
    she weaves  
in favour of social  
political  
change  
    linking  
                    an intricate cobweb  
                    across  
                    this nation.

Tracy Kim Bonneau



The spider weaves and blends,  
the experience of time and space  
Flowing and blending  
the thought of the one who wishes  
to know...  
    to believe...  
the beauty of life.  
Is it there for me?  
To touch...  
    to feel...  
    to leave...  
Is it there, beyond the walls?  
Or shall I look only through  
the window.  
Spotted and coated  
with experience  
and  
sadness.  
Aesthetically, it's tangible.  
Emotionally,  
it's void of experience.  
Sadly, I see.  
-Toby Burningham

# The Spider Story

## An excerpt from a work in progress

I was in my third month of alcohol recovery when I had to face that squirmy truth: the question that had evaded me, not fully conscious, until then, but now blaring in neon across my forehead. It flashed in luminous colour, day in, night out, ever demanding an answer — requiring that answer to allow me to quit surviving and start to live. If unanswered, I might face a more horrible fate: ceasing even to survive.

I had spent a great deal of my life focused outwards. Although shy and lacking in confidence, circumstances had led me through many collisions with “causes”. This to me had been the ultimate trap: wanting to withdraw to a place of safety, but even shying away from that, because there lurked loneliness. And, oh — how I imagined that others needed me. I was the one to right the wrongs, I was the one to seek brave new worlds and new beginnings. I had, so I told myself, been forced into a place of pioneering. Sod-turning had become a way of life: first Native person to do such-and-such a job, first woman to undertake such a task, youngest — and alternatively, oldest — to do one thing or another.

It had been hard spade work, and I was surprised that on some occasions the row would stay hoed behind me and other Native people, women, young, old, would be furrowing along: still uphill, but with their way somewhat smoothed. I somehow was held captive by this: my strong belief that it had been these things, these doings that had made me fit to survive. I knew nothing of Grace. These things and doings had also provided that uncomfortable cushion, known as between a rock and a hard place, forcing this shy person outwards, and confronting at all times the overwhelming fear of being noticed, pointed at and shamed. And these things happened on many occasions, but, somehow, that occasional open row behind me eased the pain of constantly being at clash with my inner timid self.

But, at the end of my third month of alcohol recovery, all of my rear-view images of open rows had closed. I

could no longer keep up the false mask of courage, no longer having it artificially instilled with distilled products. And, the question surfaced, re-surfaced, and ground like a file on soapstone across my every conscious moment. No longer lurking, no longer in shadow, but out, out in the sunlight, under the microscope and burning feverishly. What is my purpose? Is my purpose only pain? If so, let me, oh please let me fade silently away.

But, as one must, one foot went before the other endless day after sleepless night. The only thing that kept me going was the overwhelming respect and love that had grown within me for the Spirit: that nebulous, tenuous hold that crazy-glues us to life, even when it makes no sense to get stuck in it. And, occasionally I would reflect back and ponder on a silver hoop that had visited me before...

My life was confusion on collision with chaos: oh I needed centering — the thin, thin thread that anchored me was getting stretched to collapse. It was a thin thread and the Maker thereof that saved me.

Cleaning my livingroom it happened. The most complex but basic reality. I moved the couch to vacuum behind it, first time for such a chore in many months. Horror confronted me: nemesis of youth, turgid terror of adulthood, the biggest, fattest, hairiest, most Hallowe'en-like spider I had ever seen plumped itself possessively in the middle of the strand upon strand of silver. The massive web extended almost a foot across, and the spider seemed to be lounging all over it.

My soul freaked. Not for the usual reason. I didn't scream. Didn't yell for one of my children to come and kill it. I didn't suck it up in the vacuum cleaner or beat it with a shoe. My soul freaked, simply because I was not afraid. Spiders had terrified me all my life, and, here I was, looking at one of the ugliest dudes of the eight-legged species I had ever seen: and I was not afraid.

I wondered why. I looked and looked and wondered why. When I had been unreasonably terrified of these

things all my life, why now did I feel no fear, no loathing, no disdain now?

I felt an answer.

Feeling an answer is hard to describe. It starts in your toes, but not quite, and it moves up in a glow all over your body, but not quite. It, as best as I can describe it, haloes your heart.

The answer felt like this: the spider is not harming anything, it is minding its own business, yet it has a definite purpose. It helps to keep in check the more worrisome pests, it gives us great fascination with its design, industry, and architectural abilities. It is alive, it breathes, it has children, it makes the best possible world out of the situations around it. It deserves to be there. The answer went on and on within me, sort of rolling around like a loose ball of yarn: the spider was made by the Creator, and it is a Gift. It is here to help with the harmony of living things and here to bring strength where needed.

This is a simple understanding of what began to happen when I saw Old Hairy-legs — but, how had my loathing been transformed to respect and love?

My toes started to talk once more, my heart to shine: a puzzle piece clicked into place, and I had the answer needed for me, by simply understanding, and not fearing the spider.

The answer for me was this: If the spider deserves its place, its air, its space and life, well so do I. I deserved to live. We all deserve to live by virtue of being here in the first place. How simple the answer was and still is. I call this answer one word: Grace, the gift of life from the Creator.

I would like to say that my life sorted itself out after that moment of realization, that all went smoothly from that moment forth. It hasn't, but, it has never been so bad, never seemed insurmountable since that time.

To reinforce this life lesson, I have since been honoured to be visited on many occasions by the spiders I have now grown not only to respect and love, but to look forward to and cherish. About a week after the vacuum day, I was going through a very rough period with family problems. I forgot for a few minutes that Gift I had received that day. I sat in a meeting room, arms crossed, hugging myself, painfully wishing the world would go

away. Instead of that happening, I opened my tightened eyes, and six inches before my nose hung a big, fat, hairy spider. It dangled on one thin strand of silver in front of me throughout the whole meeting. I grinned stupidly at it, once more attracting unwanted attention. This time, though, shyness did not defeat me: I explained, as best I could, why I had not swiped at it, why I loved it, why it just happened to be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. How it reminded me of Grace.

Situations in my life did not immediately change for the good: but, before the year was out, I had mended relationships with my family, had begun to write again, in fact, had started and finished my first book, and, throughout it all, I had stayed sober.

It has been four years and many spider visits since the vacuum day. I've even vacuumed once or twice since then. And, here I am in Pond Inlet, finally writing about this amazing yet simple thing: this glow-around-the-heart thing, and, like the spider, I just know I'm in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing.

*Note from the Author:* I wrote this story in Pond Inlet, NWT on January 30, 1990. I was there to provide creative writing workshops to both the school and the community. Near the end of my stay there we had a community reading of the works produced during my time there. The Grade 11's read the play we had worked on, individual students and community members read poetry and short stories they had undertaken. I read this work for the first time: it was the peace and strength of Pond Inlet and the people there that had finally allowed me the ability to put in words the feeling of that special move-the-couch-and-find-meaning day. Thanks, Pond Inlet.

**Joy Asham Fedorick**



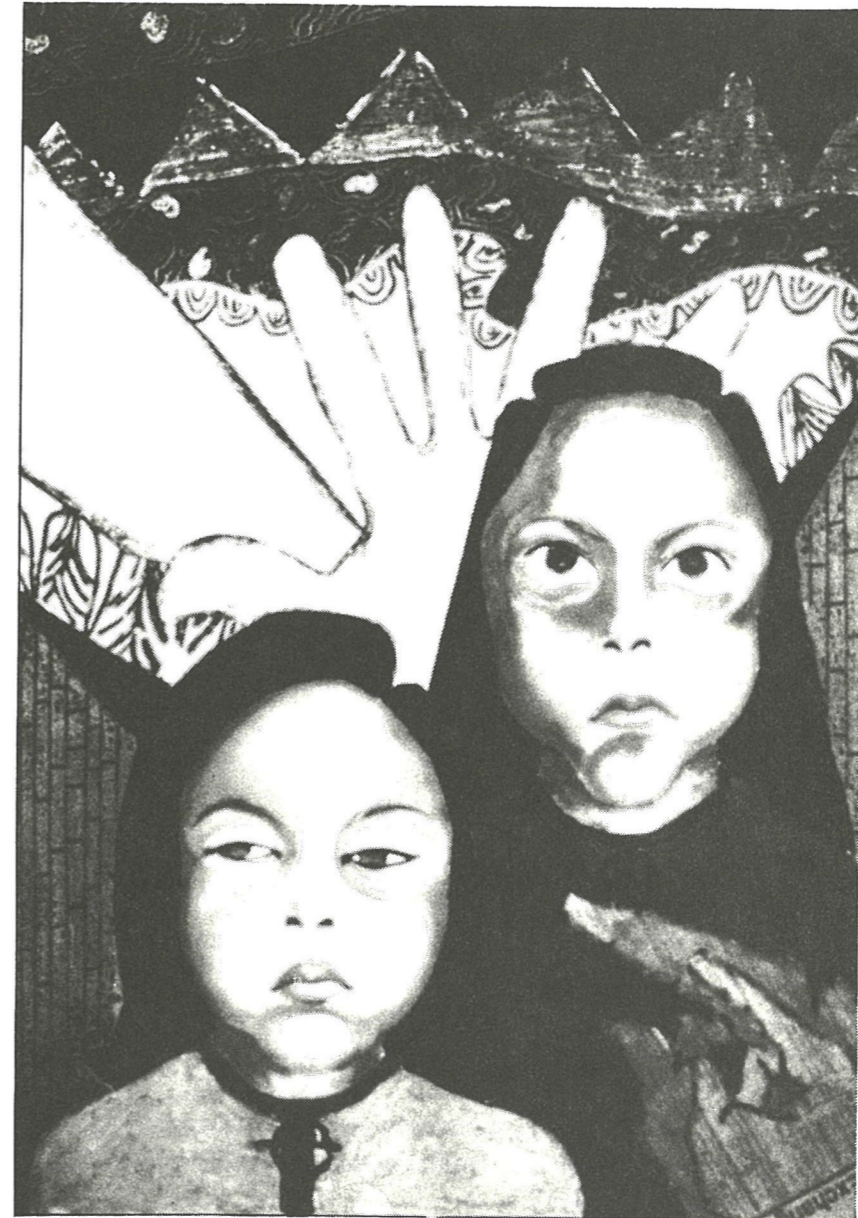
Teresa A. Smith, **Natural Blazon II**, 1989, mixed media

## Teresa A. Smith — Artist's Statement

I have drawn my aesthetics from the strangeness of everyday reality. I use assemblage art to materialize the strangeness that grows out of boredom and routine. This type of art constitutes the aesthetic heritage of my current work.

My work is very personal in the sense that it is biomythographical; I refer to myths and stories that I identify my life and persona with. These identifications of mine do not necessarily coincide with the way others perceive me, or with the events of my life.

I live and work within an emotional context stemming from a constant feeling of awkwardness. This consciousness is one of the main reasons why I am compelled to challenge limitations set by given definitions. I enjoy eroding given models of historical comprehension. I celebrate a matrifocal historical past and the subversion of gender hierarchies. Through my art, I hope to affect my audience's consciousness in some way.



Mary Longman, **Exchange**, 1988, mixed media

## Mary Longman — Artist Statement

I am of Plains Cree ancestry, born in Fort Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan. My artistic energy has been mainly devoted towards exploring the social and psychological facets of the Aboriginal peoples in regards to their relationship with European settlers within the now

dominant white society. My main goal is to aid people in developing an understanding and awareness of the commonly misunderstood life of an Aboriginal person, which means presenting the traditions and tragedies of the old and new culture.

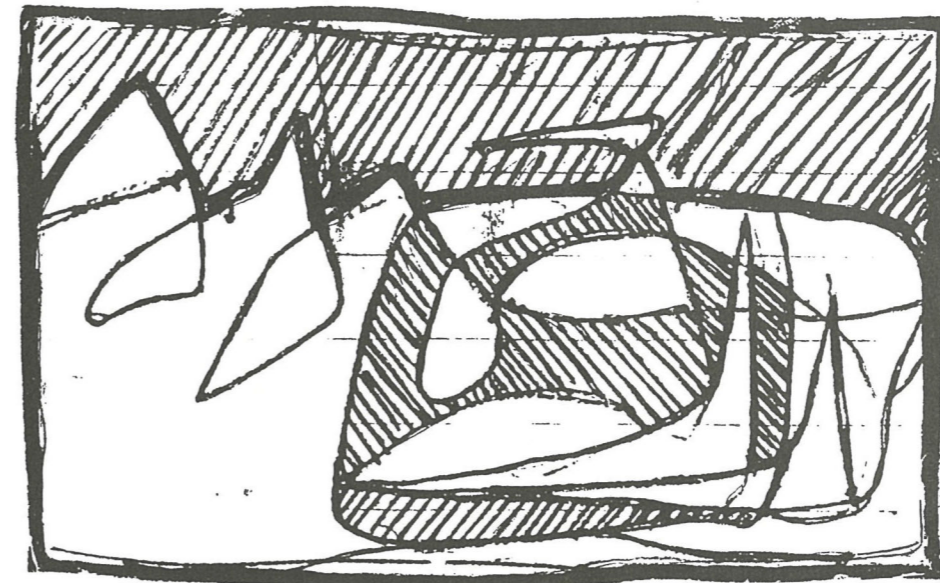
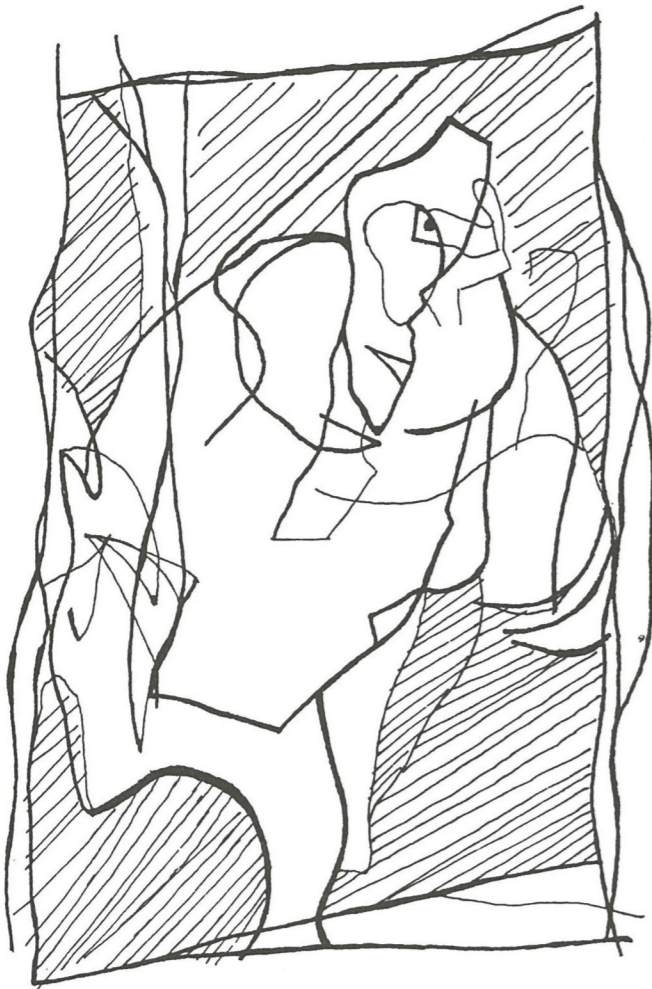
# Untitled work by

# Cheryl Henhawke

This woman, looks at the man  
looking at himself in the mirror  
His image caught in the corners of  
Physical barriers.

The frame limiting his vision to what  
Surrounds him in his journey to be a  
man.

In his journey in the woman's journey  
We circle surrounding our reflections



This page and opposite: Cheryl Henhawke, *Untitled*, 1991, Pen and Ink

In the city, the multicultural city, some people choose to stay blind. Others from their misunderstood cultures hide behind conformed neck ties and store-bought armour. I see a man with a pink turban, a custom, another plainly African. Perhaps the blind would not notice as he blends into the noon's businessman's suits.

Its blackness with flickers of light in the night escapes from fire flies of the city. First break this page remains invisible in the bloom of night.

I look outside my window only a time ago, the morning echoes calls to the geese flying in patterned corners fly in unison like an olympic team beckoning onward forward motion. I watched them and they watched me, laughing to time and generations ago. It was man, they watched me, laughing to time and generations ago. It was man, they said to one another. We are time and they are surviving, like time itself another element.

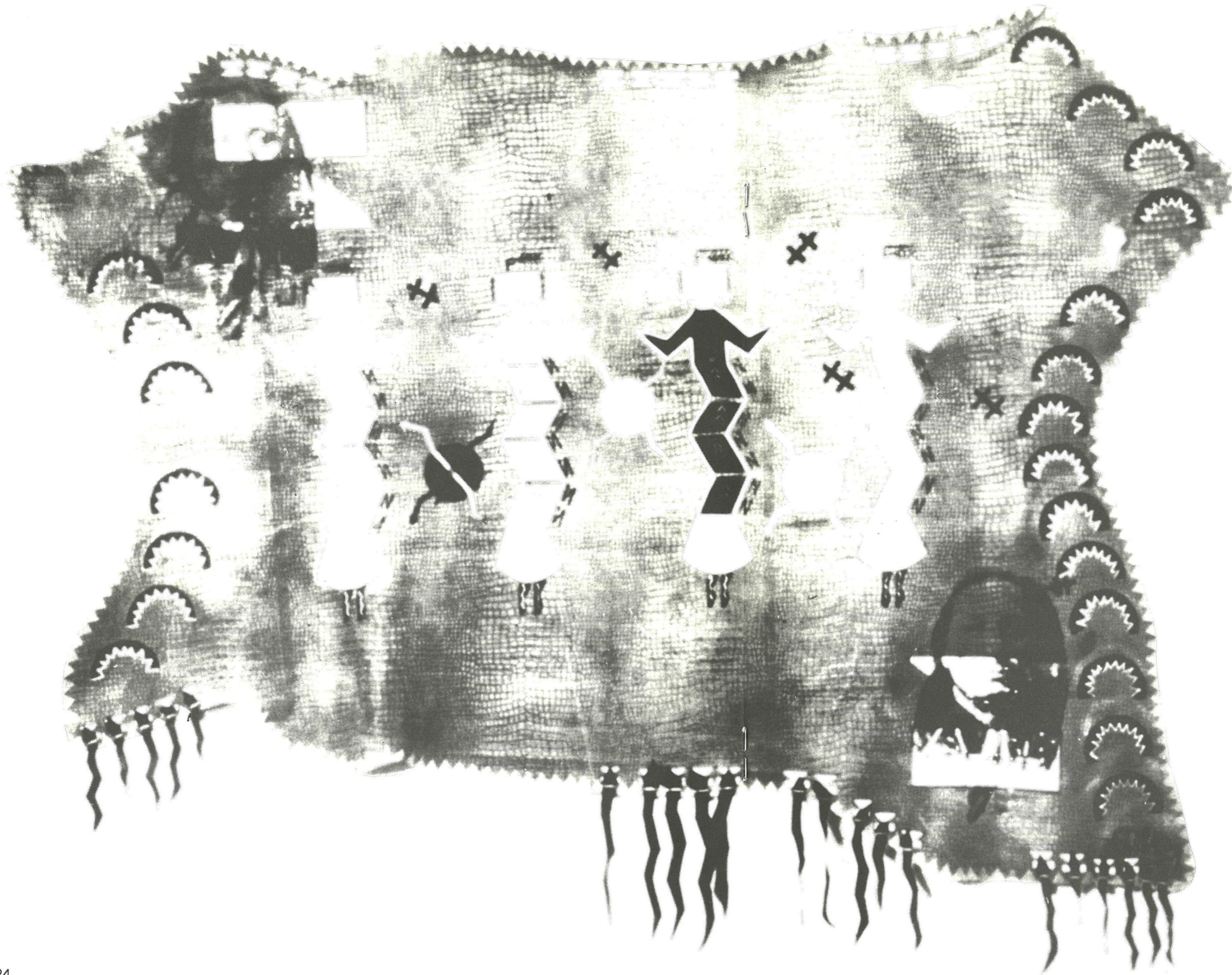
Today the rain came like tears I cried because of disbelief. Because I couldn't be together with God.

But who is God. Is it the snow that covers the earth and skies. My eyes watching God at their best in their sunrises, sunsets. In colours caught between lines of crystal. I don't know, I cried to God. But where was I? Moving along the paved asphalt in

lines. Lies that will get me from here to there. Connect, retreat, bless forward. To exist to be alive what do I know of this standing on machines of mastermind man. Where has the freedom of thought gone? I walk experiencing the self for a moment. I open my eyes experiencing free will for a moment, effecting changes of thought attitude of a dream ago. A dream where only history repeats its pattern the instinct of animals, birds and insects. What do I know of how to be, when all I am is just am. A que-sera story, a scribble on a page something that mattered only to get there. Scribbling till something makes sense. Scribbling to get from A to B. Y to Z.

There are many factories as I pass the quiet towns, places I've never been. But in a dream I've been here. Blackness outside my window. Smoke for, the stacks rising in disquieting purity. Caught inside squared premises, inside corners and lines that take me from earth to God. But where is God. Children walking barefoot upon the snow. Spiders frailty of survival and then to the mountains I am for the moment in awe of its beauty. In awe of life. In awe of love. Beauty in awe of life of love.

Cheryl Henhawke



Rebecca Baird,  
**Concerning Objects**  
**Moving in Zig Zags,**  
1988,  
Embossed Hide, Xerography, Enamel

# circling back grandma-to-be writing

Someday, I will be a grandmother. I carefully pick out my grey hairs and place them on my nearby cactus plant. She is just holding them until I am more ready to be a granny. All I do is dress rehearsal. I am just practising to teach another crop of Indigena. I want to share some of the struggle to be a writer because it is a mysterious process that unfolds before me.

To become a middleaged Anishinabe woman has meant that I have fought most of the way. I wanted to be sure that the next generation is not fed the lies or concocted history of our people. I am an Indigenous writer because I am conscious of fighting not only to express my own thoughts but to allow the voices of our ancestors to be heard.

We are at that critical time, we take back our power as Indigenous women. Cosmetic changes or inclusion of culture is not enough. We need a complete return to the healing role of the women's societies. The women's circle is a basic healing group if the women that take on responsibility recognize more than new age conventions. I pack a crystal like anyone might do these days. Our reliance on superstition is trendy. Even if I chose to learn about women healing, I'd find it difficult to find a teacher that has not been influenced by the mass-market spirituality industry. I too have magical beliefs. I actually believe in the occasion of our women being honest with each other and themselves. If women across generations share experience, a more true traditional teaching would occur. Most of what is counselling and therapy is an attempt on the part of an individual woman to rid herself of what society has injected into her mind about having an inferior status in life. The woman's power is best known in the circle.

The Wannabees have become "empowered" and possibly deluded by their addiction to Indigenous spirituality. Maybe a few thousand letters addressed to Lynn Andrews or Anne Cameron would help them understand the travesty they commit when they claim to be teachers of our ways. Lynn Andrews is the author of a series of books claiming to be the teachings of a Cree medicine woman. The other writer, Anne Cameron, has a similar stance because of her bestselling book "Daughters of Copperwoman" (14 reprints) with its may translations. Both claim to be instructed by a

secret society of women elders who chose them and not an Indigenous woman to write down the stories that needed telling. Many times, sisters have asked these white women to stop what they are doing but both Lynn Andrews and Anne Cameron insist "some" First Nations women endorse their writings or views of our culture.

It's not that we don't have similar interests. The eco-feminists and new age witches want the earth to heal and women to achieve their rightful power in society. Much exchange of ritual practice has made it confusing as to what is Indigenous and what is the current fad. Even circles that have diverse groups of women have their "workings". It might just be sharing of touch and space. The Indigenous healing circle might be as superficial as any ceremony may sometimes become, but the chance to be more honest with self and others is the absolute criteria for the authentic magic of ending separations and alienation from women of your own kind. Many First Nations women confuse their own issues with that of the feminists or other women who seek knowledge and want to coalesce with them.

Because I am getting older and bolder, I think my present pre-occupation (it's an occupation if you make a living at it) as a writer is better represented as cultural worker. I write because I work at my culture. I am regaining lost ground, lost stories and lost memories. The opportunity to share stories with other Indigenous women around the world would be an ultimate experience for me. I like the idea of crawling breathlessly to the peaks by Maachu Picchu, or to be within a whisper's distance of the snow leopard's den. More likely, I might get a chance to do some international travel at my own expense. If I scheme and dream I will be able to talk with my sisters around the world. I may have to explore this common world because writers like Lynn Andrews, Anne Cameron, and Darlene Quaipe (Bonebird) have made the unique cultures of the world generic exotica.

Right now, I am biting and clawing my way around this issue of appropriation. It's too bad we even have to hold our own sisters accountable for when they sacrifice their works to enhance the careers of "those who research/study/write about us". Interestingly, many feminists think it is in their domain to colonize a sister of color and word it as giving voice to another woman who does not have "white privilege". Almost as arrogant an assertion is the notion of "heterosexual privilege". Many of our Indigenous sisters need to be heard and will use any means to be published. We cannot fault anyone from seeking self-glory or the rewards of opportunism. If anything, ambition helps

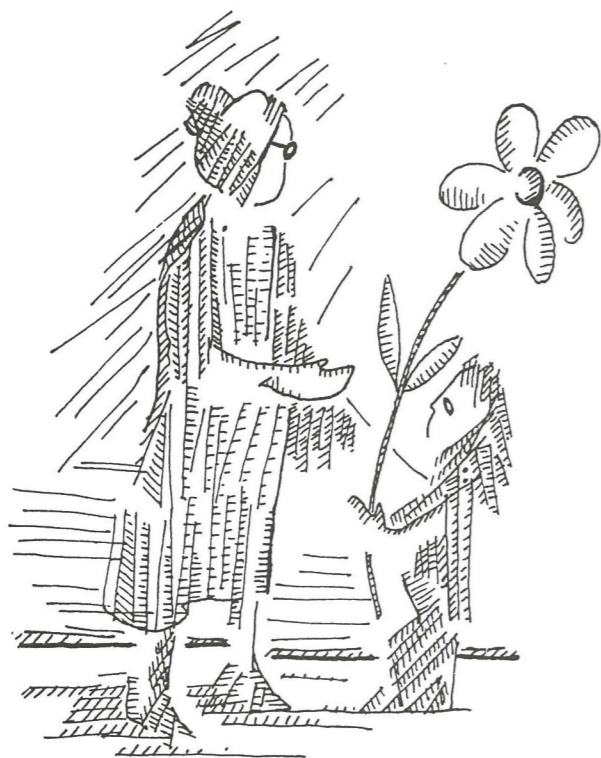
writing even if it presents conflicts in values and perceptions. I have decided to approach the complexity of what Indian women do write by holding non-Indigenous scholars and critics responsible. Even some of the patronizing, paternalizing and tokenizing manners have been encouraged by other First Nations writers. I think it won't do me any good in the long run to protest because whenever a book contract, idea for a film or video, or workshop/conference is mentioned, sometimes the most docile and submissive Indian people get to be "in charge". Damn, we do the fighting and they do the cashing in at the bank. The appropriation issue has brought out greediness in our own people.

I will hold all our own and others accountable for any lack of respect shown to the grandmother's voice. I call Indigenous literature just that. The first one that gives us the attention to help us learn and who tells us stories may be a granny if we are lucky. I know that settler lit (ter) as I tag Canadian literature will no doubt contain examples of writings from writers who do not envision changes but are simply happy to say how either wonderful or horrible it is to be a Native Canadian writer. We do more than perpetuate the racist stereotypes.

Anyone who finds links with other Indigenous societies will be regarded as another upstart in the years following the Quincentenary. Five hundred years makes it almost impossible for me to publish what I think of this country. Maybe I want free speech not the kind of censorship others think of as freedom of the imaginations of freedom of expression. I want freedom to raise my grandchildren to understand culture and to speak Ojibwa. Maybe I might be able to set up a granny SafeHouse for children and work toward making our cultural productions stronger and more authentic statements of our lives. It is that time for us to begin to look beyond our reserves, settlements, or wherever we live for the answers. We are now global peoples.

My next writing project requires me to research the language, culture and history of my own people. It is a way for me to circle back home from the city streets and the affluent life I could never afford anyway. I'm not a loser in the race to assimilation, acculturation or multiculturalism — I just want to find a way to lessen the distance between me and my relations. For me to retire in a community where some protection is given to the seniors and elders, I have to begin now to take the path of the Grandmother. I must prepare to be Grandmother and to be a writer at the same time.

Marie Annharte Baker



Cheryl Henhawke, *Untitled*, 1991, Pen and Ink

# JANE ASH POITRAS

## Autobiographical Statement

I was six years old and orphaned when mother died from tuberculosis in 1957. Edmonton, where TB patients were sent to die or convalesce was far away from my Fort Chipewyan home. I grew up in a foreign environment, my little brown face seemed too large in the white world of Edmonton.

A superstitious little elderly German lady took pity on me and claimed me for her own. Her world was filled with stories of the old country, and homesteader's hardships, much like those experienced by my own people. She was an instant hit with me. To my surprise she cooked and prayed very much like my own kokum (grandmother) had back home.

This new kokum liked me very much and wanted me to be just like her. If she wasn't a saint, she was close to being one, and so I tried my best to be like her by being as good as possible. I went to church and studied my school lessons.

Every now and then she would complain about my brown skin and tell me to wash my hands thoroughly, so that they would not betray my Indianness and I would be accepted.

In those days people did not take too kindly to Indians, and I was well rehearsed to not reveal my nationality. For a short time as a child I wished I had blue eyes and blonde hair. Today I think how silly I was.

Somehow, I saw perfection as the blue-eyed angels that were in my prayer book. All those religious illustrations gave God and the angels blue eyes. As I was growing up, I could not help asking myself why I was made an Indian.

Grandma was always proud of my achievements although she may not have voiced it. I knew because she would sing songs in her crackly little voice when I did something great, like getting an "A" on my report card.

Grandma would rise early every morning and put oatmeal and a glass of coffee on the table. We did not have bread for toast because at 13 cents a loaf it was too much money, and besides that, apparently oatmeal was better for you. Lunch would be her garden green

soup, which tasted good on Monday and better on Tuesday, but toward Friday my school buddies' peanut butter sandwiches looked inviting enough to steal.

However, I survived and so I grew up listening to her tales of dreams and mythology and family struggles. She was a great believer in dreams and spirits, and always had a few good ghost stories to make me wise, for that is surely what such stories do.

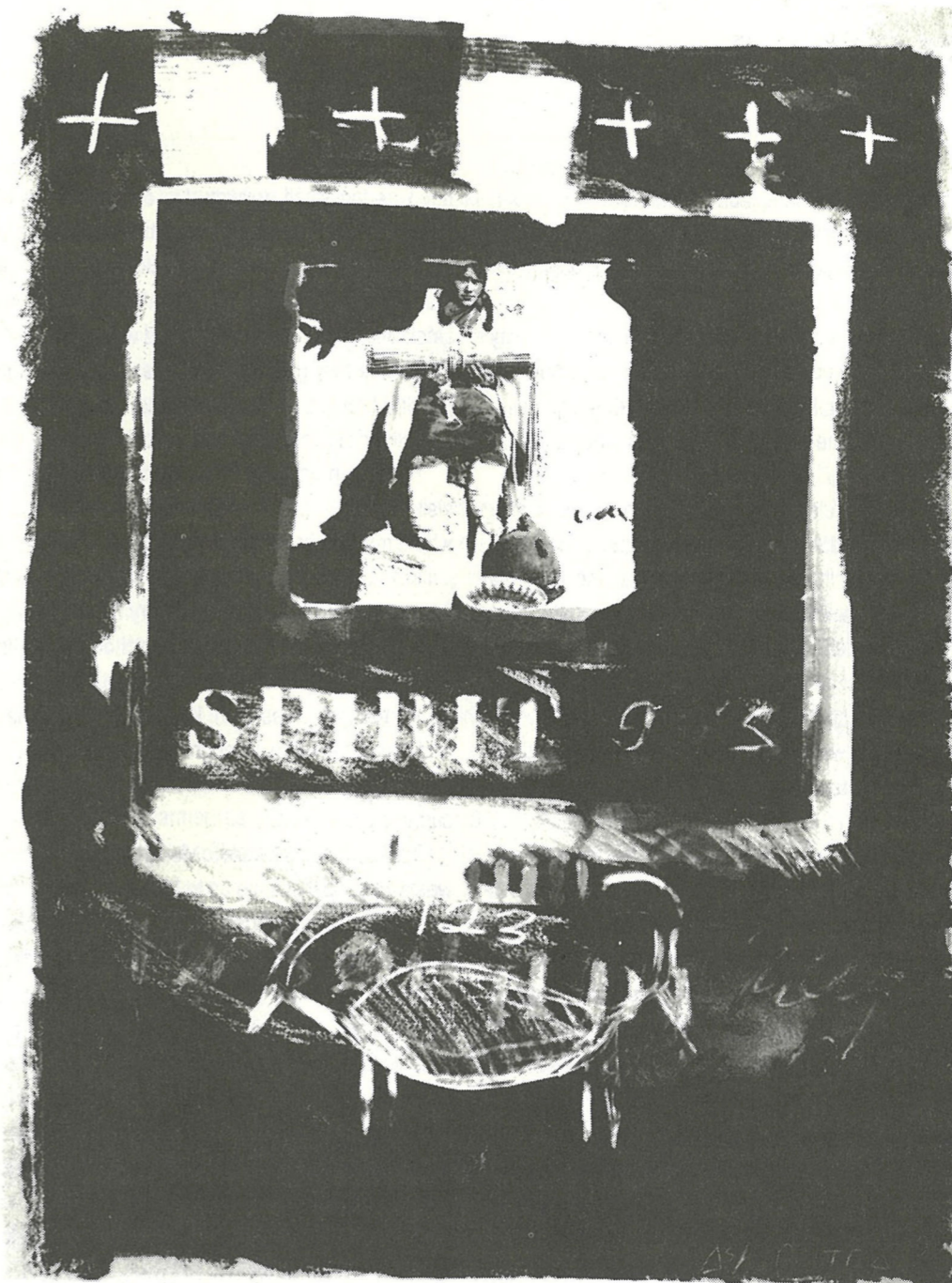
To my surprise, later in life I found out that stories do indeed have powers that go much deeper than moral teachings. Stories provide teachings about the supernatural, and a consciousness filled with knowledge one cannot get from books or daily life. Kokum used to call it knowledge beyond the profane. She brought me up in her sacred ways, taught me her old stories and remedies and prayers.

We did a lot of praying together. Back then some of those prayer ceremonies seemed too downright long. I would give anything to share one with her now. She passed away in 1988 at 92 years of age, and has been my spiritual guide ever since.

I know those spirits she believed in must have watched over me when I was little because I had a few close calls that brought me near death. My closest one was last year. I believe that with those same prayers she taught me, and the help of those spirits, I am alive today.

Today I pray in the sweatlodge and attend peyote meetings and burn the sweetgrass, which is quite different from the Catholic Church in which I was raised. I experience such euphoria and physical sensations in those ceremonies, just as I did when I was a little girl praying with my kokum.

Today I understand better what these sensations are and the power of the shamanic consciousness, and how that elderly German lady, Marguerite Runck, did what she was called to do because she was blessed by the spiritual realm. This realm is full of mysteries and is accepted on faith and belief which, when acknowledged, can give one ultimate inner peace and a power to heal and teach goodness.



Jane Ash Poitras, *Oka Oka Not OK Canada*, 1990-91, mixed media



# Memories

My name is Jean Marie Iron, I was born in October, 1920, and I am now 70 years old.

I have seen many good, and bad years during the past 70 years.

My dad was a trapper and fisherman, that's the way he used to make his living, but we used to be happy. We kids, we were just kids in those days (happy and free).

My dad's name was "Placid Iron", my mother "Elise Legeard".

As far as I could remember my mother used to sew moccasins, bead jackets, bead belts, gloves and anything she could think of to sell, that was the way she used to make a little money. In those days (late 20's) there was no welfare like today. People had to look for some way to make a living, but yet, things were so cheap, then. I could tell you a few prices, like twenty pounds of flour was only ninety-eight cents. One pound of tea, forty cents, one package of tobacco, fifteen cents and so on.

My dad used to travel to Meadow Lake for groceries with horses or by dog team. Four or five dogs could pull a one thousand pound load of groceries home. He would go into town to trade his furs, beaver, muskrat etc.

In the fall, when trapping started, we used to go and stay somewhere so my dad could trap all winter. My mother used to tell us that she had two brothers somewhere, their names were Peter and William, and that someday they would come to visit us.

One winter, we were staying at MacColm Lake, we had a big surprise. While we were playing on the lake shore, we saw someone coming, we ran up the hill to tell mama that someone was coming on the lake. My mother came down, we all stood on the shore watching them come closer with their dog teams. My mother said something that I did not understand, as this one stranger got out of the dog sled and came towards her. My mother was crying as she hugged this man, "My Brother" she said. Then I knew it was my Uncle Bill that came to visit us at the trapline. That was all I could remember about

it. I was too small anyway. My dad spent the winter trapping muskrats, then we went home to Canoe Lake.

My dad said, "He had to take my Uncle Bill to Meadow Lake with the dog team." They went with my Uncle Alex Iron, but Alex travelled with a horse. At the same time they got some groceries. I could remember my dad brought me some candies. Oh Boy! Was that something kids could remember for a long time.

From then on mom and dad talked about going to visit Grandma at Hafford, Saskatchewan. That was where my mothers family lived.

In 1972 they put me in the French school in Beauval for one year. That I did not like very much. They came to see me at Christmas time. The school was built with lumber and used ordinary wood stoves. There was no oil or propane stoves then. I stayed there for one year and that was enough. I thought I was in jail. Such a lonely place. In the springtime when the school was over they came to pick me up.

That summer we went to visit grandma in Hafford. It was a long trip by canoe up to Meadow Lake, but at the same time we were hunting. We killed two moose. My mother made some drymeat and tanned the hides.

My dad had two brothers, Alex and William. They were the ones that took us to Meadow Lake by canoe. From there someone brought us to Hafford with horses. We arrived at night. I could remember Grandma's place, the house had a flat roof made of lumber. There was no plywood in them days. We lived there for one year or more. My dad worked for Art Fondle.

I used to play with Emile and Jean, we had lots of fun. One day while we were playing Emile said, "Let's go down to the basement," so I followed him. (The building was made of bricks with a cement foundation.) Emile showed me four big barrels of something that smelled sour or sweet. He said, "Let's drink this stuff, my dad drinks this with the hired hands. I'll go get a cup." So he went up and brought us a cup. Mother was busy talking in the living room, so Emile filled the cup for me.

I tasted it, it burned the tongue a little bit, but it was good, kinda sweet. So we kept drinking, very soon, I started to get dizzy. When we finished drinking he said, "Let's go play." He got up but fell back on to the cement. I laughed and laughed. I felt so happy, so I got up too. We started to crawl up the stairs laughing. When we got to the kitchen, our mothers saw us, saying something in French they caught us because we could not stand up and they gave us a well deserved spanking. That was the first time I tasted homemade wine.

We moved to Aunt Catherine's (my mother's sister) and stayed there for a while. There were two kids there to play with, Morris and Blanche. Blanche and I used to look for little birds nests or hunt gophers. Crow legs cost five cents each, and gopher tails two cents each. My dad hunted with my Uncle Bill and Uncle Eugene. Uncle Eugene did not talk Cree, my dad couldn't talk French but they made signs so they could understand each other.

I can remember Uncle Bill using four horses to plough his fields, that was the way farmers used to work their fields in 1928. Some had tractors that had a little more power than one horse. (Not like today's big bulldozers.) Just to think in the past, when men and horses used to do the work. Nowadays, everything is done faster and quicker using machinery not like then when men and horses were the workers.

Around that time we received bad news. The school in Beauval was burned down, and some of my friends, (boys from Canoe Lake) were in there. I went to school with them in Canoe Lake. My mother said I would have burnt too if I had returned to school that fall. That was a very sad year for the people of Canoe Lake. They lost several of their children in that fire.

In 1928, my mother and dad started to talk about going back to Canoe Lake. It did not take too long for them to make up their minds, so we started off with a team of horses on wagon. It was a long trip, it took us about a month to get home.

My grandmother wanted to come too, but we were too full. Anyway, she said she would come soon and she did, with Uncle Bill. They finally visited us in our own country.

We were on the road sometime in August on our way to Canoe Lake. It must have taken long to get there. We crossed

two rivers. (Long Lake River and Keely River.) My mother went across first, then the kids, then our stuff, our wagon was last. We camped two nights along Keely River and then we were at Canoe Lake.

I could remember the people coming to visit us when we got home. It wasn't very long then my grandmother came with Uncle Pete. They stayed for a long time with us. But how long, I don't know.

My Uncle Pete went hunting with some men from Canoe Lake. Once he went with his sister to MacColm Lake to hunt with some other families. He alone shot two moose, they had lots of drymeat when they came back to Canoe Lake.

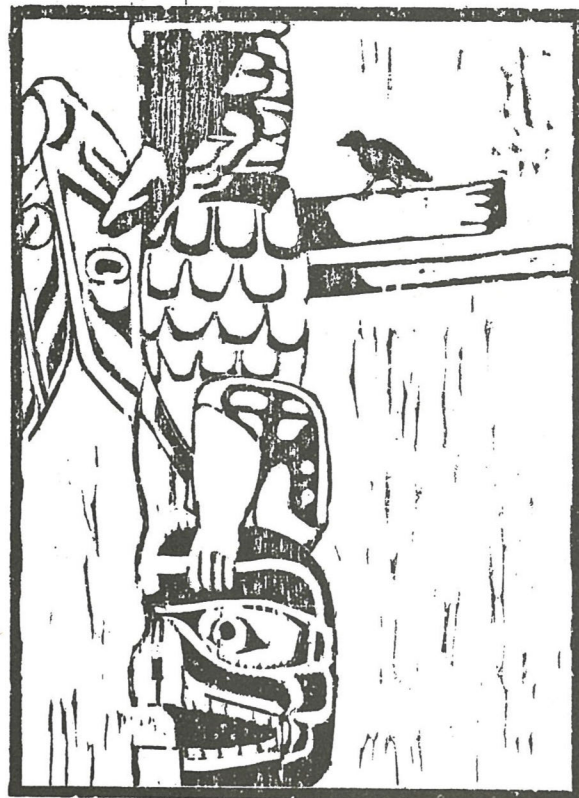
I used to follow my Uncle Bill wherever he went. One day as I was following him, as kids like to go after older people, (like grandfather or uncles, wherever they went I followed) my Uncle went down to the beach. I followed from a distance, he did not know I was there. I saw the two girls he met, he was hugging and kissing one of them. I was so surprised. I thought only babies needed kisses. Ha! Ha! Ha! I ran back to my mother, she almost slapped me, she said to forget about it. Now it comes back to mind as I write this story. I had that story and lots of other stories that could be told about Saskatchewan in the early twenties on my mind.

Uncle Bill's girlfriend died the summer of 1937. The time the sickness passed through the North. Many people died that summer, my little sister died too. In Canoe Lake two old people and some kids died. In Ile La Cross, I can't remember how many, nor could I count the ones that died. In Beauval, lots of school kids and old people. All over the province people died, the hospital was not used at the time. So it was really a hard year all over the province.

I could go on forever to relive the memories of my past and my people. They will always be remembered, for they are the true pioneers of the North and the South. Canoe Lake isn't that old. It just celebrated its 100th birthday. One day I would like to write about the fur traders of the North. One of them was my mother's grandfather, a true pioneer.

Jean Marie Iron

# Sunday Chicken And Soft-spoken Tom



Mary Anne Baker, *I Have No Face*, 1990, woodcut

Tom was a soft-spoken Cree from Cutknife. He was my father. But as far as mothers went, a trail of women moved through our lives. In the end, I was the only one who stayed.

Perhaps it was his gentle doe eyes that gave him trouble. They showed his heart and it wasn't far to his pocket book neither. However, for me, his eyes told me I could trust him completely.

With these expressive eyes, he'd look at me. "Hear how I found you? You were like a half-drowned kitten in front of the Biggar Hotel."

"Then...? What next?" I would ask just because he liked to tell the story.

"Then cook tried to get you into the hotel with a big hamburger yet. Stubborn bugger, you were. Wouldn't budge!"

His narrow shoulders would straighten proudly. He'd tittle the worn tweed hat back enjoying his role.

"There you were, a little Injun girl sitting there like the world had passed you by. So I gave you a quarter and said "Go buy yourself a Hires root beer."

Tom always shook his head at this part. "You threw the quarter back and said, "Go drink your beer yourself."

His eyes would sadden, "you was put here for God's punishment, to straighten me out," Woefully he'd say, "And no more beer."

He just did this for emphasis. I was just a kid, not no law enforcer RCMP. Anyway, the way I remember it, Tom went in for his beer. When he came out a large lady was draped on his arm.

I noticed them coming down the sidewalk, her stocking-legs heavy and his feet tiny. He was strutting like a rooster, silver spurs on those size 6A cowboy boots.

His boots stopped beside me. "Still here, little critter?" Head cocked, he says to the woman, "Doreen, what say you and I get a bit of fresh air?"

Sitting down beside me, he asked me in Cree, "where's your mother?"

I pretended they weren't there, especially the nosy man.

"What's your name?" he asked again in Cree.

I heard him all right. I didn't answer.

"Darned women," he said scratching his head. "Geez, God made them funny. Talk when they want and when they don't, can't get them started!"

Sighing, he informed Doreen, "I'm going in to page the responsible party."

He was gone for a long time. Doreen offered me a stick of Juicy Fruit. I took the gum, seeing there were no strings attached.

Finally, Tom came out. "Lookit, Doreen no one knows who she belongs to. You're a woman, what do you say?"

"Take her down to the RCMP station Tom. Let them take care of her!"

At this the little man paled. "Throw her in the coop? Naw, I ain't no stoolie!"

Looking thoughtful, he threw a sideways glance at me.

Then he looks at Doreen, "I told you I got a spread. We'll leave word here for them to put up a notice at the post office. Anyway, word will spread through the moccasin telegraph."

"You'll get us thrown in the caboose," Doreen warned with a head shake.

This was where the conversation ended for me. My eyes had fought sleep for three days, now they closed.

I awoke in a dim-lit cabin and there was an awful smell. Turning my head, I could see Doreen across the room. She was cracking eggs into a smoking frying pan.

Between the egg cracking and grease splattering sounds, Doreen and Tom argued.

"What'm I to do with a child?" she asked. Anyway who says I'm stayin'?

The burnt eggs smell was now overpowering. I began to cough.

"You tryin' to kill us?" questioned Tom as he swung open the cabin door.

Walking to the stove, he dismissed Doreen with a wave. He tucked a bleached flour sack into his striped coveralls. Clouds of flour arose. Soon there was bannock on the table. Finally he made bacon and good smelling eggs.

"OK kid, you can come out now!"

I pretended to sleep.

"Last call," he said, "you come and eat or I'll leave the cookin' to Doreen here next time."

I came and sat down.

As the days stretched into weeks, the arguments went on. Doreen would protest that Tom wasn't trying hard to find my family.

"The RCMP ...," she'd say, then Tom would walk away.

"It's not the Indian way!" he'd say.

I was beginning to forget my mother's face, the edges of my child memory blurring. What I did remember was her eyes were not much different from Tom's.

"The old women are talkin'! I may not be from this reserve, but I can hear them. I can make it out. They think this one is mine!" she motioned her mouth toward me. Clanking around the kitchen, she cleaned up.

"How many times I got to tell you, her name is Janet Marie?" scolded Tom. He was changing the subject.

True, it was my name. I had held out telling for what seemed a long time. But when Tom told me his spotted pony wanted to know, I told.

Weeks became months. Old Doreen and I, it looked like we was becoming family to Tom. No more was said about notices or telling the RCMP about me.

Then we came upon hard times. I guess I must have been about five. Anyway, it was before I started school.

It began by Tom bringing home very little game. We had already eaten all the chickens we could without killing the best egg layers. Tom had already sold off a horse or two.

One night, they sent me to bed early. Lying there, my ears perked up.

"I guess I'd better leave the reserve for awhile. I heard there's work puttin' up fences south," Tom stated.

High-pitched, Doreen's voice accused, "you're not going to leave me here are you? Those women, they don't like me. I saw them countin' the months I been here, just in church, too!" Her fingers drummed the table nervously.

"Oh all right," soothed Tom, "I'll figure somethin' out. The mare's foalin'. Probably, I'll get a good price later. Maybe later, I can get a down payment from a guy down south I know."

Next day, Tom returned from hunting with a few squirrels.

"I'm not eatin' them gophers!" Doreen says when she sees them.

"What kind of Injun are you anyway?" Tom looked at her in surprise, "these ain't no gophers!"

Doreen sniffed haughtily and stomped away. And she stuck to her guns too. Not one tooth touched that squirrel meat.

Not even Tom's concerned looks swayed her. He eyed her ample curves worriedly. "Say Doreen, you're not gettin' skinny are you?"

Now, hunger in the eyes of your loved ones makes you do contrary things. One night both Tom and Doreen were acting contrary to the usual.

"You can stay up late," Doreen says to me. "Then we're goin' for a nice truck ride. We'll see the stars and them nice northern lights!"

Gail Duker



Photo credit:  
Peter J. Clair

Opposite:  
Shirley Bear,  
**Caribou Honour**,  
1988, silk screen

## Shirley Bear

This issue's *Focus on WARC* section features First Nations artist Shirley Bear. Shirley Bear was a visiting guest artist at the Women's Art Resource Centre from September 24-29th, 1991.

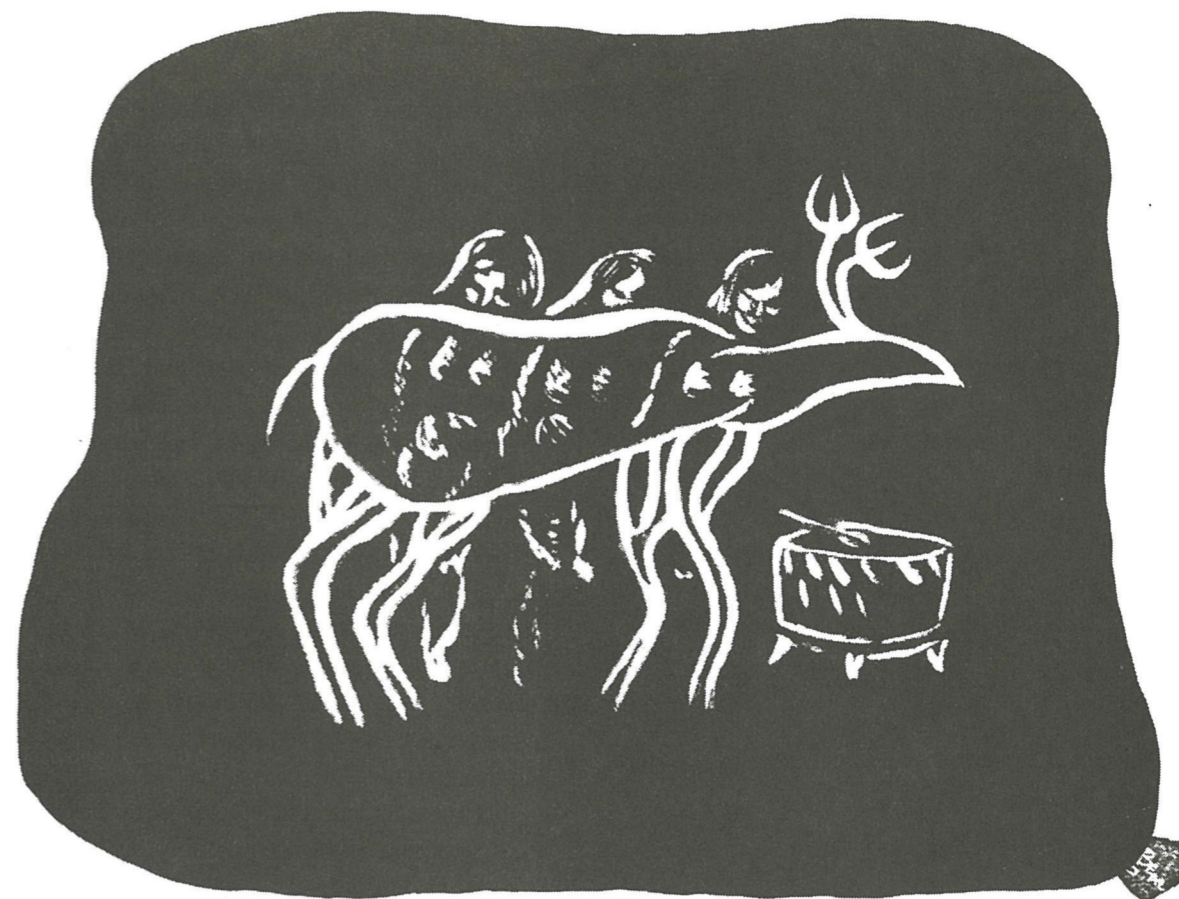
The artist participated in a number of WARC events in conjunction with Toronto's Arts Week 1991. Shirley Bear, a well known artist and activist for First Nations women's rights, is from the Tobique Reserve in New Brunswick.

The visiting printmaker is the curator for the group show featuring First Nations women artists called *Changers: A Spiritual Renaissance* which is presently on tour across Canada. Shirley led a t-shirt printing workshop

at the Able/Disabled Creative Arts Centre and she was the guest speaker at the launch of this special Women Artists of the First Nations' *Matriart* issue during her visit to Toronto. In addition to these special events, Shirley spent a week at WARC where she worked on adding files on First Nations artists to the slide registry and met with various members.

In 1992 Shirley's personal and political statement will be a year of silence. The following pages feature art work, statements and poetry by Shirley Bear and an article by Mary Anne Barkhouse about Shirley's life and work.

Carla Murray



## Artist Profile

Shirley Bear is a Maliseet Indian from the Tobique Reserve in New Brunswick. She is a printmaker who has been very active in the artistic and political arenas, effectively practising what she preaches. Bear's perspective is a uniquely feminist one within a strong Native context. The artist's perspective is a view that looks to the future and yet is strongly rooted in the past.

Art has always been of interest to Shirley, however it did not become a full time profession until after her marriage. At this time she began to study at places such as the Whistler House Gallery and the Boston Museum. In 1969 she won a generous Ford Foundation Scholarship which allowed her to travel and study Aboriginal art forms in the States. During an artist in residence period in Newfoundland, she was introduced to techniques such as lithography. Today her use of media is richly varied, ranging from drawing and painting to various forms of printmaking such as serigraphy and lithography.

Shirley Bear's political lobbying activities are interspersed with her artistic endeavors. She has, in the past, put aside her art for a time to devote herself fully to important issues of the day, such as seeking to change past versions of the Indian Act, which was unfair in its treatment of Native women and was, in fact, amended in 1985.

A trip to Nova Scotia brought her into contact with a subject which continues to affect her work today — petroglyphs. She uses these very traditional primitive images as an anchor in her current work over which she layers more contemporary symbols and stylistic drawings.

Her message is one of universality — *respect* for each other and our earth, of circumstance, spirituality and healing from the present day patriarchal colonial society. A message which will be as important tomorrow as it is today.

Mary Anne Barkhouse



Shirley Bear, *Butterfly*, 1988, silk screen

**VIRGIN, YOU SAY**

A VIRGIN IS A WHORE WHO HAS SLEPT WITH A THOUSAND MEN AND WOMEN  
 A VIRGIN IS AN OLD PERSON WHOSE ONLY EXCITING ADVENTURE IS A TRIP TO  
 THE MAILBOX, WITH FANTASIES OF FEASTS ON FUR-LINED THIGHS,  
 AND COMES LIKE BUCKSHOT IN NOCTURNAL FLIGHTS,  
 AND COMES LIKE A GEYSER IN NOCTURNAL FLIGHTS  
 A VIRGIN IS A FANTASY FOR A POWER WARPED MIND WHOSE PATERNALISTIC  
 INSTINCT HAS MISGUIDED HIS MIND TO THE POINTLESS FABLE OF THE  
 IMPOSSIBLE BIRTH.

Shirley Bear

**GIFT**

June 12, 1985 12.30am

The cat brings a dead mouse and  
 Puts it by the door  
 They say: "He brings a gift  
 wanting approval"

You come with your new love  
 But I know too much.  
 And as though as I should...  
 I show no approval.

You say, "there was a woman  
 a little backward."  
 -he would see her only  
 when he was drinking — there is a daughter  
 there is a son

ONLY WHEN HE IS DRINKING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DON'T KNOW????????????????????

WHAT is a man, who is drunk  
 takes advantage of a woman  
 who needs love  
 who knows no better  
 Who, my darling, is BACKWARD?

Shirley Bear



Shirley Bear, *Procreation I*, 1991, hand-coloured linoleum print

## **Shirley Bear** **Artist Statement**

Printmaking is my favourite medium; it is at once technically exact and has its own life. The medium often gives me surprising results no matter how fastidious I am. My work usually has social or political content and I believe art should be enjoyable but provocative.

### **1992**

1992 has generated many different activities both in the Americas as well as in Europe. Most Indigenous People of colonized countries are participating in either de-celebrations to the 500 years of colonialism or celebrating their survival. For me, it will be a year of silence, I will not be exhibiting, lecturing or publishing during "1992".

**Shirley Bear**

## Listings

The listings section is a free advertising service. Send us information on exhibitions, calls for submissions, job listings, courses, conferences, new publications and other relevant material. For deadlines and more information call 416-324-8910.

### Call for Submissions

■ At the Crossroads is a brand new, visual, performing and literary arts journal for women artists of African descent. Arising from the virtual absence of documentation of Black Canadian women's art, and the apparent need for a cultural and political magazine encompassing a wide range of issues, ATC aims to become a creative outlet for artists here and abroad. Submissions of written and visual art are wanted. Please include bio, brief statement about the work and any other relevant information. At the Crossroads is especially interested in receiving submissions from women in the Maritimes region and writers who have not yet been published. Send to: At the Crossroads: A Journal for Women Artists of African Descent. P.O. Box 317, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S8 Canada.

■ Sensoria from Censorium, an international anthology of independent culture featuring diverse articles, art, interviews and contacts. If you are involved with Agit-prop actions, experimental music, cassette culture, comix, mail art, performance art, experimental writing, small-press publishing, or other independent alternative activity contact: Sensoria from Censorium Box 147, Stn. J, Toronto, Ont, M4J 4X8. Canada

■ Definitely Superior - Remote Control a quarterly arts publication is looking for work by regional artists and writers. Short articles, reviews, critical writing on the arts, social and political commentary, short fiction, essays, poetry, cartoons, drawings, and photographs that will reproduce well in black and white. Send to Remote Control c/o Definitely Superior, 12A South Court St. Box 3701 Thunder Bay, Ontario. P7B 6E3. Ph:807-344-3814.

■ Native Artists & Writers: Journal of North American First Peoples invites submissions of artworks (B&W graphics only) and writing by First North American writers. En'owkin Centre, 257 Brunswick St. Penticton, B.C. V3R 2R2

■ Resources for Feminist Research: accepting submissions of feminist art & illustrations. Contact: Info Resources for Feminist Research, OISE, 252 Bloor St. W. Toronto, Ontario.

■ Film/video Canadiana: The Moving Image & Sound Archives, the National Library of Congress, the NFB, and Cinematheque quebecois invite video makers to participate in their national film/videography. Contact Moving Image & Sound Archives of Canada, 395 Wel-

lington St. Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0N3 Ph: Anne Marie Walling (613)996-3414.

■ Artists' Catalogues: PADAC has been awarded a grant to fund the publishing of approx. 60 catalogues on Canadian artists. Catalogues may be on artists with dealers and those without. Proposals to receive support should include 6 slides indicating work to be represented in catalogue, bio and budget. For details contact: PADAC, 296 Richmond St. W. # 502, Toronto, Ontario. M5V 1X2. Ph: (416)979-1276.

■ Playful Imagination: In the Making presents 3rd annual show of artist-made toys and playful objects. Creations in all media welcome. Juried show runs from Nov. 7 - Jan. 26. Entry deadline: Oct. 21. For details on submission, contact: The Playful Imagination, 189 Madison Ave. Toronto, Ontario. M5R 2S6. Ph: (416)963-9123 or (416)653-0731.

■ Art in the Heart: Juried Art Show in Guelph. The theme is "Beyond the Mask", drawings, watercolours, oils, acrylics, pastels and original prints are accepted. A fee of \$20 for up to two slides applies, maximum size of the work is 38"x38". Entry deadline: Feb. 17/92. For information on submissions contact: Jofriet Studio and Art School, 105 Wyndham St. Guelph, Ontario. N1H 4E9. Ph: (519)767-2411

■ Paper Show: Please send 10-15 slides of your work, resume and artist statement to Theresa Morin, 117 Spruce St. Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. P6B 2G8. Deadline: March/92

### Workshops And Conferences

■ Women at the Edge: Ontario College of Art, 100 McCaul St. Toronto, lecture series featuring contemporary women visual artists. Alanis Obomsawin, Oct. 15. For more information, ph: (416)977-5311 ext.332

■ Tour of art and craft studios in Guelph, Ontario, Oct. 19-20, 10-5pm. For information, ph: (519)824-3431

■ Show and sale of hand-painted folk and decorative articles by Trillium Tolers Assoc., Nov 8-9, Erindale United Church, 1444 Dundas Cres., Mississauga. Ph: (416)820-6669

■ Second annual Short Film and Video Festival at Niagara Artists' Centre, 235 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Nov. 16. Ph: (416)641-0331

■ Ontario College of Art Supply Store's 11th annual product information seminar, Atrium of OCA, Nov. 21, 10-5pm.,

featuring Apple Computers and Sculpture Supply Canada. Ph: (416)977-5311

### Exhibitions

■ Women and Community, currently on view at Gallery TPW until October 12. Women and Community consists of twenty-two large format black and white panoramic portraits of Saskatoon women's groups. The portraits are assembled in sections, allowing the individuals within each frame to be seen alone yet in relation to the larger group. Together, the portraits offer a more complete pattern, a larger social history of the ways women organize and speak outside of established public platforms.

■ Changers: A Spiritual Renaissance, a touring exhibition of contemporary art by women of Native ancestry. Artists include: Rebecca Baird, Rebecca Belmore, Ruth Cuthland, Freda Diesing, Faye Heavyshield, Glenna Matoush, Shelley Niro, Alanis Obomsawin, Jane Ash Poitras, Joane Cardinal-Schubert. Dates include: Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound, Ontario, May 27-June 23, Eastern Edge, St. John's, Newfoundland, August 1-August 23, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 19-October 27. Curated by Shirley Bear, ph: (416)232-2436. Sponsored and coordinated by National Indian Arts and Crafts Corporation.

■ Reminders of Their Presence currently on view at The Craft Gallery. Curated by Debra Bodner, gallery hours Tues.-Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 1-5pm. For more information contact: The Craft Gallery, Ontario Crafts Council Chambers Building, 35 McCaul St., Toronto, Ontario. M5T 1V7. Ph: (416)977-3551

■ (K)ein Vergleich/(Dis)similarities is an exhibition of drawings by Swiss artist Silvia Bachli and Toronto artists Therese Bolliger and Cathy Daley. The exhibition will tour the following places: The Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, Oct. 11-Nov. 17, The Edmonton Art Gallery, Feb. 15-April 15, Robert McLaugh, May 7-June 21, Sir Wilfred Grenville College Art Gallery, Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, Sept. 6-Oct. 11, Mount St. Vincent Art Gallery, Halifax, Oct. 30-Nov. 22. New work by Cathy Daley at Cold City Gallery in Toronto, January 1992. Organized by the Southern Alberta Art Gallery.

■ Native Indian/Inuit Photographers Association (NIIPA) present the following shows: Native Sculpture show and sale Sept. 7-27, opening Sat. Sept. 7h 11am-3pm, Native photography show Sept. 13-Oct. 26, 7th annual photography

conference Sept. 27-29, reception Sept. 27, 6-9pm, Native jewelry show and sale, Oct. 5-26, opening Oct. 5, 11am-3pm, third annual Native art show and sale Nov. 2-Dec. 19. All events take place at NIIPA, 134 James St. South, Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 1Z4. Ph: (416)529-7477

■ Sisters in the Struggle is a film about contemporary Black women activists, of varying ages and backgrounds, involved in the movements against racism and sexism in Canada. Screenings to be held on, Sat. Oct. 5h 7&9pm and Sun. Oct. 6h 3&5 pm at The Euclid Theatre, 394 Euclid Ave., Toronto. Free admission. Limited seating. Held seating released 15 minutes before showtime. Tickets available at the National Film Board, The Euclid Theatre and Wires. Plus a repeat screening Thurs. Oct. 17 at The John Spotton Cinema, 150 John Street. Showtime is 8pm and Admission is \$4. For more information call (416)973-9606.

### Other

■ Koh-I-Noor: Manufacturers of the world-famous Radiograph technical drawing pen, has part-time positions available for pen-&ink artists to conduct workshops in pen-&ink drawing theory. Successful candidates will be accomplished pen-&ink artists with outstanding teaching skills. Send resume & copies of your work to: Koh-I-Noor Inc, 1815 Meyerside Dr, Mississauga, Ontario, L5T 1G3. Attn: Scott Walker

■ The Womyn's Coffee House meet every 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 8-10pm. All womyn welcome, donations at door, B.Y.O. mug if possible. Volunteers and performers call: (416)651-8800 or (416)462-9304. 519 Church St.

■ The Granddaughters of Ixmucané: *Guatemalan Women Speak*, by Emilie Smith-Ayala. The granddaughters of Ixmucané are Guatemalan women who have survived violence and terror, women dedicated to Guatemala's struggle for liberation. This work documents their compelling voices. Release date: November 1991. Women's Press, Suite 233-517 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 4A2. Ph: 921-4428

■ Seeking artist to commission "realistic" skyline painting of Toronto. If interested please send slides and Cv to: 3637 Queenston Dr, Mississauga, Ontario, L5C 2G9 or call (416)566-4456 for appointment.

■ KAI SLIDE BANK is a social change media collective whose focus is em-

powerment of grassroots organizations in making slide shows for social change. Kai Slide Bank is a large collection focusing on social change issues around the world, ranging from air pollution to violence against women. Slides are strong, sharp and flexible; their low cost gives grassroots groups a tool of empowerment. Kai Slide Bank, Box 5490, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1N7 (416) 535-4336

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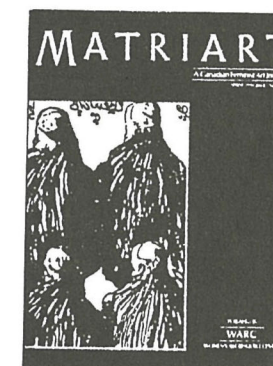
■ Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto Inc., The following is the price list for the centre's newest publication and newest video. All of these items can be purchased at the Native Womens Resource Centre: Sewn-bound Almanac \$11 ea./ Spiral-bound Almanac \$12 ea./ Wall Calendar \$11 ea. "Towards 1992" video \$25 for Native groups/ \$35 for non-native groups. The Almanacs and Wall Calendars can be purchased at the Toronto Women's Bookstore and at other similar bookstores. The videos are only available here at the Native Women's Resource Center. 245 Gerrard St. East, Lower Level, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2G1. Phone (416) 963-9963 fax (416) 963-9573.

■ Ontario Native Literacy Coalition. This organization is committed to the long term vision of establishing a culturally appropriate learning facility as a computerized base of operations. Using a whole person approach as the basis of our programs of learning, Native Literacy is a tool which empowers the spirit of Native people with a sense of purpose and achievement which is an integral part of self-determination. For more information contact: Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, 748 Second Avenue, East, Owen Sound, Ontario, N4K 2H1.

■ Pop-Up Book Works, Oct. 12-Nov. 2, Curated by Lori Gilbert, An exhibition of artists' bookworks at Definitely Superior, 12A South Court St., Box 3701, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7B 6E3.

■ Creativity: We would like an artist to speak about this life skill at the YWCA's "Focus on Change" program (Bickford Centre at Christie and Bloor) for an hour or so in October. "Focus" is a "bridging" program for single moms. For info please call Holly at 961-8100.

## Next Issue



### Women Against Violence Winter 1992

Women, Spirituality  
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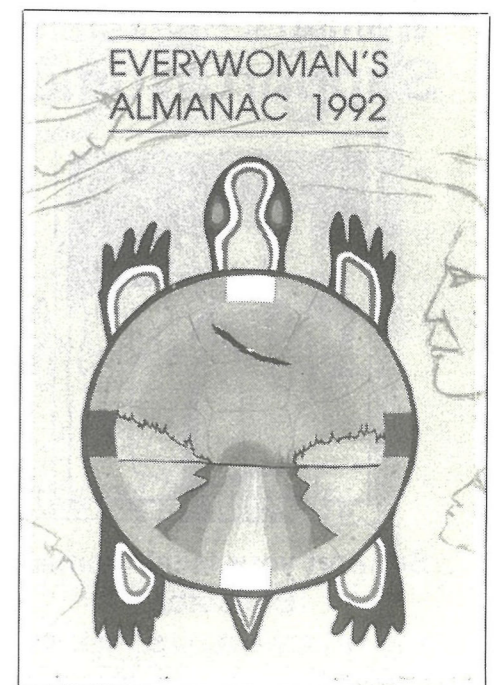
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