

Jolene Rickard Lecture 2017

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[pause]

[foreign language]

0:00:09.5 Skawennati: Good evening everyone. Skawennati. My name is Skawennati and I am here to welcome all of you, but especially Jolene Rickard to [0:00:24.5] [REDACTED], so Jolene is a fellow Hodinöhsö: Ni confederacy member. And so it would be weird to welcome her to Hodinöhsö: Ni territory because she is just coming from the other side, so it's very wonderful to have you here Jolene and we're all looking forward to hearing the good words you have to share with us.

[foreign language]

0:00:51.7 Martha: Thank you everyone.

[foreign language]

0:01:04.2 Martha: Welcome all of you, on behalf of the Department of Art History, which is the sponsor of speaking of photography. And I'm of course, only half of the organizers tonight I feel like considerably less than half of the organizers when I see such an amazing team here for the future imaginary, so it's a very, very great pleasure to have been working with Jason, Skawennati and now to be able to welcome Jolene.

0:01:37.6 Martha: When this was first proposed to me, I began to think about how long it had been since I had heard Jolene speak and Jolene and I decided not to speak of that this evening [chuckle] because it's been a very, very long time since photographic studies and indigenous photography began to bubble up and work together sometime in the '80s, certainly not as satisfactorily as it does today, so thanks to these kinds of collaborations.

0:02:06.9 Martha: I also want to thank our anonymous sponsor Robert Graham, [laughter] for his continuous and generous support for this series. Château Versailles [0:02:19.5] [REDACTED] who are affiliates and helpful hosts. And with all of that, I'm turning over to Jason because I get to be a guest tonight and I'm just delighted. So, Jason.

0:02:33.7 S?: No I'm not. I'm not doing the right thing, [chuckle] ever see me with one of these, these folks are really organized. Okay, no I am supposed to turn over to my colleague, Heather who will speak about us this.

[applause]

0:02:45.6 Heather: Thank you. Thank you very much. I just wanna talk very quickly that we are also sort of crashing this event tonight and having a mini launch for the special issue of public public 54 indigenous art and new media and the digital, so you can purchase these here for \$20 after the talk for about 25-30 minutes, the fabulous grad student Lindsay is going to be here selling copies. This issue features both [laughter] the writings of Jason Lewis and Jolene Rickard, along with numerous artists features of artists from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the US, writing

and artist features.

0:03:33.1 Heather: There's all kinds of good stuff in there, just take my word for it. [chuckle] Please come down and have a look afterwards, you can purchase them if you would like to, if you don't have 20 bucks on you and you would still like to take a copy away you can sign up to send me an email money transfer. We will do that on the honor system, just know that if you do not send me that money, that's coming out of my pocket, so I don't wanna buy everybody a book. [laughter] So please do that afterwards, thank you, and now do I introduce you?

0:04:00.8 Jason: Yes.

0:04:02.3 Heather: Dr. Jason Lewis.

[laughter]

0:04:09.4 Jason: Okay, thank you Heather, and thank you Martha and where did you go Martha? Oh there you are. Thank you Skawennati for welcoming us here, to begin with. It's really great to see everybody here on a Friday night, and we're very happy as well to be working with Martha and her crew, and this being a photography series to jointly sponsor Jolene this evening. We started the Future Imaginary series as a way to bring indigenous thinkers and makers to Concordia and to Montreal to help us, and when I say us it means Skawennati and I, and our crew and and Aboriginal territories in cyber space.

0:04:52.2 Jason: I sort of think through what it might need to be indigenous, 50, 157 generations from now. So we're very excited that Jolene is gonna be here tonight to help us think through those things, and we think it'll be a great addition to the conversations that were started by Kim TallBear and Allen Turner in the previous instalments of the series. So just a quick thank you to Concordia's Aid to Research-Related Events who helped sponsor this evening and also the Milieux Institute For Art Culture and Technology, which provides a home in which we can do all the stuff that we do.

0:05:25.6 Jason: So I'll do a formal introduction and then add a few remarks. So Jolene Rickard is a visual historian, artist and curator, interested in the issues of indigenating within a global context. Her seminal essay from 1995, sovereignty, a line in the sand, made a powerful argument for the necessity of grounding legal motions, all motions really of indigenous sovereignty in specific histories and cultures. Some of her other notable contributions have been her essay Art of Dispossession in, from Tierra Del Fuego, to the arctic landscape painting in the Americas.

0:05:58.4 Jason: Her work advising to Sakahan first International Quinquennial is that how you say that, quinquennial... Of new indigenous art at The National Gallery, and her work that she's been developing for a while now with the help of a Ford Foundation Research Grant on getting an indigenous arts journal started. She is from the Tuscarora nation, and is director of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program, and associate professor in the history of art in the art department at Cornell University in Ithaca. And she has a forthcoming book on sovereignty. So I don't think this really does justice to the fullness of Jolene's work, she works locally with our her own community, Tuscarora, nationally, with the intervention of the Museum of the American

Indian in Washington, DC. Continentally with the Hodinöhsö: Ni confederacy in the work that she's doing there. And internationally, working with Māori artists in New Zealand, for instance.

0:06:56.9 Jason: She has been insisting on the vibrancy, validity and equality of indigenous epistemologies including the central role that creative practice plays, in not only illustrating but in developing indigenous theoretical frameworks. She's also been supporting and encouraging several generations of artists, curators and critics to make, show and engage with indigenous art as a primary means of making sense of life on this territory. And she's also been mentoring students to create and breath fiery life into new imaginaries and to use their time studying to think big, bold ideas.

0:07:28.8 Jason: So I've had the pleasure of spending the last couple of days with Jolene. We video tapped an interview with her, that will go into the archives, we had a graduate seminar, and she's been hanging out in our studio, and Skawennati [0:07:44.5] to Skawennati's exhibit, and it's been really, really quite wonderful to spend that amount of time with such a good mind, and I'm very happy that she has come here to share that with us tonight.

0:07:58.4 Jason: I'll finish with something that she said in the seminar this morning, and it's been sort of ricocheting around my brain all day, she described himself as always looking for the window that has been left unlatched. I love it. I think that might be my new motto. And I think it perfectly captures both her fiercely curious intellect, but also describes that which she inspires in others, the courage to constantly probe with fierce, passion at the systems and structures in which we find ourselves and to break out of them, where we can and where we must. Welcome Jolene.

[applause]

[foreign language]

0:08:46.9 Jolene: And I'd like to give thanks and recognition to the Mohawk people, keepers of the Eastern door, it's an honor and a privilege to be here, in your homeland. It's been an amazing experience to be able to share your potent and inspiring community. I feel very privileged and honored to be asked to be here, and it's also been a wonderful moment to actually experience Skawennati's exhibit, Tomorrow People, which is at Oboro Gallery here in Montreal. And so, I guess we're all just really connecting, and I think that this is how we build community, both in our intellectual work, but then we actually like to hang out together.

0:09:48.4 Jolene: So I'm really happy that you're here tonight. It's... Coming from a cold climate myself, I know, what it's like to come out on a Friday night. And so I really appreciate that you've taken the time to be here. Although I think in Western New York, Tuscarora is North of Buffalo. And so I moved back and forth across the territory on a bi-weekly basis, and so this time of year, it's all about the weather, and I'm really conscious of the snow and I feel really lucky to be here because I flew in on Wednesday and then the whole East Coast closed down for days. So there's something right about the way things were done here, so thanks so much again.

0:10:39.2 Jolene: This lecture tonight is actually a thought piece and it's a culmination of a number of ideas that I'm bringing together. I'm not going to pretend that it's smooth, and I hope that you'll

have some good feedback and questions for me. I think it's a really difficult concept to negotiate the notion of time, while at the same moment, dealing with all of the changes that are going on in lens-based practices and so I'm going to... My impulse is to share a little bit of history, to talk about both visual history and then political history and bring it together through the work, and so...

0:11:25.5 Jolene: Okay, Ambiguous Today, the photograph is established as a marker of both time and place, but there remains considerable work to be done to impact colonial frameworks deeply embedded in historic and contemporary issues. Some would argue that relevant visual themes coupled with continuously shifting ideas about indigenous past, present and futures can become a material witness to decolonization.

0:11:53.7 Jolene: But is it Resurgence? Resurgence is the focus of Taiaiake Alfred's 2005 *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, and Leanne Simpson's *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*. Resurgence and a new emergence. Alfred doesn't name resurgence until *Wasase*, but the concept is included in peace, power and righteousness and indigenous manifesto in 1999, and I think he made the transformation from re-empowerment to resurgent, but it's not a linear correlation, but they're related.


0:12:27.9 Jolene: Feminist art historian, Liz Grosz writes about art is being anticipatory. But as indigenous peoples we really do not need to rely on Grosz' observation to recognize that the role of dreams, prophecy and vision are still present in our communities and practice. Artwork from within indigenous philosophical influence may be informed by this experience, but it's not absolute, but the relationship between memory and photography are established dance partners.

0:13:00.9 Jolene: My memories of Montreal and photography are tangled up with the McCord Museum, and an exhibition I was collaborating on with Professor Ruth Phillips, Royal Ontario Museum Curator, Trudy Nick's and Moira McCaffrey. Moira was a curator at the McCord Museum, and we were about to mount the exhibit *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life*. The exhibition was a collaboration between the McCord and the Castellani Art Museum, which is located in Western New York, less than a mile from my own community, the Tuscarora Nation. Tuscarora is the sixth nation of the Hodinöhsö: Ni, often referred to as the League of the Iroquois Confederacy, or Six Nations. Although the official collaboration partners were museums, the actual collaboration was between the Mohawk Cultural Center at Kahnawake and my name, my own family history in the Tuscarora nation.

0:13:58.4 Jolene: A romantic patina has now settled on the exhibition and the collaboration, but at the time it was a volatile and emotional experience. The exhibition opened at the McCord Museum and moved its way through Confederacy territories, back and forth across the ditch or the border between two settler states, dogged by border trauma, because the exhibition had Wampum and protected species or eagle feathers in it. But this wasn't the only issue. The exhibition was mounted in 1999.

0:14:30.1 Jolene: A blink of an eye after the resistance at Oka or Kanasatake and two blinks after the civil war over gas, gaming and tobacco that ripped through our territories, like the Black Snake tunnelling through the Lakota homelands now. The photograph in the cross-borders was not the lead character, it was material culture or bead-work. But the photograph provided evidence of the

validity of the practice of bead-work as having economic, cultural and political significance for the Hodinöhsö: Ni'. The underpinnings of the exhibit set up the critique that all peoples economically entrapped in colonialism, innovate to survive.

0:15:13.4 Jolene: In the case of indigenous peoples, we beaded, stripped black ash, made baskets, chewed leather and sometimes danced for our survival. Most of us were shut out of the first phase of industrialization or extract economies, so we grabbed what fell off the table with a creative response. The photograph of my great-grandmother, Flossy Jones, was composed of three negatives, using a stencil technique in my [0:15:40.8]  at Tuscarora in 1985. Before the days of Photoshop, the assemblage was a strategy to break the nostalgic gaze, while signaling the relationship between commoditization of our bead-work, and the role this form has in the translation of our cosmology.

0:16:00.8 Jolene: And so this is an example of the photographs that staged and were in dialogue with the bead-work. In this installation, it was a conceptualization of the Hodinöhsö: Ni' creation story. And so, one of the things that I'm attentive to is watching when things appear in our expression. And so, when this exhibit was curated, the focus on the creation story was not present in our territories at that period of time.

0:16:38.7 Jolene: And I would argue that the visualization and connection of the bead-work to the creation story helped to inform people, in our communities, of the importance of bead-work, while at the same time, helped them to understand that embedded within the stories, the cosmology had been illustrated in multiple ways. But that connection, as I'll point out, was most often made in the work of male artists and in stone carving. And so, here I use photography as a way to have portraits and to also create that connection between intergenerational knowledge, because that's of course how bead-work functions in our communities, it's networks of families that make this work. But the point here that I'm trying to make is the intricate dialogue between our objects, our people and photographs and so... Another example of this is the iconic photograph of Caroline Parker that has shaped the way Iroquois women fashion contemporary traditional clothing. The potent symbol of the celestial tree in the corner of the hem of the skirt provided the opportunity to confirm a key image in the Hodinöhsö: Ni' creation story.

0:18:06.1 Jolene: The circulation of the photograph of Parker in 1849 and her elaborately beaded outfit, highlighting this celestial tree with its orbs of light, as round beaded circles was both an expression of sovereignty, and I would argue, is a demonstration of resurgence. My take on traditional arts in the 1800s to the mid-1900s is that it was commoditized to put food on the table. This was a repeated sentiment when I spoke with bead workers from across the community. The predominant period of production of bead work in the 1800s was from about 1830 to 1860 with the practice continuing today. But today, I would argue, it's the focus is less on outward sale and more about creating pieces that are family heirlooms. And one of the heartbreaks we have at Tuscarora is that, when I went through archives in North America and in Europe, we calculated over 50,000 pieces of bead-work that could be directly linked to our communities. And of that, a substantial amount of bead-work from Tuscarora and there's the stylistic analysis, and I'm not gonna do the deep art historical treatment of this work.

0:19:31.4 Jolene: But the sad part is that we do not have a collection of our own bead-work at

Tuscarora. And so the photograph has become a key element in what it is we can collect. And I think people today go online and buy individual pieces, but as a community, we don't have that assemblage. And so to continue to fully embrace the aesthetic practice of any peoples, we have to consider their historic and political situation. In the mid-1980s, sovereignty as a concept was understood by many people, including many native Americans, as a form of self-determination, articulated primarily through western notions of law. The notion of sovereignty as a matter confined to the legal sphere is not the kind of sovereignty that I grew up with amongst the Hodinöhsö: Ni' specifically my people, the Tuscarora.

0:20:40.2 Jolene: Rather, my understanding of sovereignty as a form of direct action was shaped by my family history, my grandfather, Chief Clinton Rickard, was a collaborator of the celebrated Cayuga chief deskahé or Levi General, who held the title of Deskahé who was sent by the Hodinöhsö: Ni' to the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, to assert our sovereignty by calling for the recognition of the Hodinöhsö: Ni' as a sovereign nation, separate from the settler states of Canada and the United States. General's action led to further efforts to physically enact the Jay-Treaty of 1794, which acknowledged the right for native North Americans to move freely in our homelands. These homelands are conceptualized as a metaphoric longhouse with the eastern door encompassing the Hudson bay, the Northern Territory in Quebec and Ontario, the Eastern door... The western door bordering the Ohio River Valley and the southern border in the Carolinas.

0:21:49.0 Jolene: Today, the Hodinöhsö: Ni', are primarily located in Ontario, Quebec and New York State, making the international border in the settler states of Canada and the US complex space for Hodinöhsö: Ni' citizens to move fluidly within our homeland. The effort of the Hodinöhsö: Ni' and deskahé to gain international recognition came at a time when it was clear that indigenous sovereignty was not gonna be won in the US or Canadian settler state legal system. It was this understanding of sovereignty as action that I inherited from my family and that I took into my practice as an Indigenous artist in the 1980s. And so this piece, the corn blue room was conceptualized as the metaphoric longhouse, and it had...

0:22:36.9 Jolene: Now, which is this charming little media piece point and click, it actually opened at in reservation X and had a touch screen and each one of the symbols on the screen, you could click, and then there was a series of altogether approximately 60 images that visualized the dispossession of the Tuscarora in the largest hydro-electric project from the 1950s, of course, which was then followed by the hydroelectro dispossession for The James Bay Cree. And so our people were in dialogue for the past 50 years with all of the different communities that have been continuously dispossessed because of damming and hydro-electro projects.

0:23:28.2 Jolene: And so another detail about this piece, and it was interesting when I did this piece that it was widely criticized in my own communities because there wasn't really a space to combine the materiality of our white corn, which is a potent symbol of both resurgence, sovereignty and survivance in the Tuscarora Community and traditional knowledge as well as a political marker. And so, but it was actually the corn that instigated, that activated the politicization of my own family, because my father's eldest brother, uncle William, was stopped at the border trying to take seed corn to the people at Six Nations. And so it was this corn that he was prohibited from crossing what we would call the ditch or the Medicine Line, people out West call it the Medicine Line. And it was from that point on that my family, the Tuscarora nation is about 10 minutes from

the border between Canada and the United States, but that is part of our homeland. And so this piece was a dialogue of all of those ideas, and it's actually, I think what young artists do is they pile everything into one space, and so it's a very complex piece and it's actually been collected by the Denver Art Museum.

0:25:15.4 Jolene: So this is an example of photos from my family's archive juxtaposed with ongoing resistance that took place, in what I discuss is the civil war that took place in our territories in the late 1980s. And so to continue, most recently, the concept of resurgence has emerged in the Canadian indigenous intellectual landscape as a strategy for empowerment and action. I've been thinking about the difference between how sovereignty is used in the broader discourse of Native American and Indigenous Studies in relationship to the use of resurgence. In the mid-1980s, I had rejected a legal definition of sovereignty and felt that visual sovereignty was an appropriate strategy to use as it applied to art and photography specifically. There's a sentiment against the use of the word and concept of sovereignty today in Canada. But this is still used in the US and within the Hodinöhsö: Ni' territories in Canada. The use of this idea of sovereignty coincides with Lenalope scholar Joan Barkers argument that, "It's impossible to stabilize what sovereignty means outside of the specific historical and cultural conditions of the indigenous peoples who evoke the term."

0:26:51.4 Jolene: She further states, sovereignty and its related histories perspectives and identities is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning, therefore the more familiar deployment of sovereignty by Agamben, recognizing unlimited executive power exercised by sovereign heads of state as a state of exception is not the way the term is applied within indigenous movements for self-determination. Similarly, Mohawk scholar and political theorist Taiaiake Alfred, problemization of sovereignty as an articulation of dominance that is in direct opposition to traditional indigenous philosophies focuses primarily on sovereignty as an application of governance. He argues that the challenge for indigenous peoples in building appropriate post-colonial governing systems is to disconnect the notion of sovereignty from its Western legal roots to transform it.

0:28:01.6 Jolene: And so part of the synergistic movement in the 1980s, the idea of our art serving indigenous communities reinforced my understanding that sovereignty is more than a legal concept, eventually I came to articulate that among sovereignty's many interpretations, visual sovereignty is one of the most dominant expressions of self-determination.

0:28:26.0 Jolene: I contend that the narrow interpretation of sovereignty based on Western legal jurisprudence does not represent Hodinöhsö: Ni' foundational concepts of natural law, nor does it adequately address intellectual, cultural, artistic and visual expansion of this concept. Scholars blinded by western notions of sovereignty as a singular legal construct are slow to embrace a more fluid and diverse interpretation, although Lakota and legal scholar Vine Deloria Junior's expression of sovereignty, "as an open-ended process", for example, acknowledges multiple historic interests. It is very centered on nation building and governance.

0:29:13.9 Jolene: Lakota historian Elizabeth Cooke Lynn's call for native writers to create a nation-centered sovereignty more accurately captures the possibilities between ongoing formations of nationhood and expressions of indigenous resurgence, both Deloria and Cooke link the assertion of sovereignty to place-based action. But at the time, Deloria in 1998, provided a cautionary

perspective. "Today, the definition of sovereignty covers a multitude of sins, having lost its political moorings and now is adrift on the currents of individual fancy."

0:30:01.4 Jolene: He goes on to state further, "individual self-determination and intellectual sovereignty are scary concepts because they mean that a whole generation of Indians are not going to be responsible to the Indian people, they are simply going to be isolated individuals playing with the symbol of Indians." The most recent issue of *Wicazo Sa* journal published in 2016 is dedicated to Elizabeth Cooke Lynn, where editors, Melanie Yazie and Nick Estees summarize Cooke Lynn's perspective as, sovereignty is thus meant to defend and ensure the survival of tribal thinking, that coheres the political inflections of indigenous. Cooke Lynn contextualizes tribal thinking as Ethno-endogenous epistemology. The tension between sovereignty being expressed as an individual fancy to the survival of tribal thinking is the crux of the dilemma. As controversial as the term is, sovereignty as governance, has transformed into a signifying de-colonial gesture that pushes beyond nation-centered imaginaries to redefine an indigenous present and future. The inflection of the space is being negotiated in a different way in Canada.

0:31:34.6 Jolene: Both Alfred and Simpson have shifted to identify the core of resurgence as coming from indigenous philosophical thought. The core must be founded by [0:31:44.7] thinking in order to move beyond colonial mentalities and systems of power and control in [0:31:55.9], the people.

0:31:58.3 Jolene: Perhaps we need both concepts to stake the intellectual, physical and philosophical imaginaries that precede the physical engagement. Can visual thought as art, photographs, performance, Machinima, film and etcetera, be that bridge between the current colonial conditions to an emancipated indigenous future? I still think this is what artists are doing, the political armature of either sovereignty or resurgence is embodied in contemporary artwork. In the early 1980s, there was a sprinkling of artists within the confederacy, and these are just some of my curatorial efforts where I privilege the photograph over the object, and this was part of the inaugural exhibition at the National Museum of the American Indian. And so it played a big role in my curatorial, it plays a big role in my curatorial work.

0:33:08.3 Jolene: And so to continue, in the early 1980s, there were a sprinkling of artists within the confederacy that were beginning to receive broader recognition, amongst the most well-known are George Longfish with Seneca Tuscarora from Six Nations, but raised outside of Chicago, Carson Waterman and Pete Jemison, Seneca from the Cattaraugus community. And I'm gonna put Louis Hall in there from Kahnawake. Note that I'm referencing practitioners of plastic or 2D or painting or drawing practices. There was an earlier generation of artists that emerged through the efforts of the Works Progress Administration or WPA, or the Seneca arts project implemented in the Tonawanda Seneca community from 1939 to 1940, through the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

0:34:01.4 Jolene: The project involved approximately 100 artists and produced over 5000 works of art and reproductions, including wooden False Face masks, bolts, cradles, ladles and spoons, silver brooches, earrings, woven baskets, burden straps or trumplines and embroidered beadwork, moose hair, porcupine quillwork and paintings of Iroquois life, including watercolors and oil paintings. The most prominent artist in the WPA project were painters, Ernest Smith and Jesse Cornplanter,

and False Face or Hadu'I carvers, Harrison Grond and Elon Webster. Arthur Parker was the story-whisperer to Ernest Smith directing the focus of his painting to illustrate the stories told by the old Senecas, about stone-coated giants, little people who painted the strawberries and turned them to ripen, horned serpents and flying heads. The visualization of these stories was a form of a technological shift for the Hodinöhsö: Ni'.

0:35:05.2 Jolene: Smith and the WPA artists adapted narrative visualization strategies to give physical form to what was primarily an oral history. Earlier versions of these storied spirit forces or helpers can be seen in the work of Dennis Cusick, who is attributed with founding the Iroquois realist style of painting in the early 1800s. The attention shifted in the 1970s to stone-carving, up until this point, the contemporary artistic marker of the Hodinöhsö: Ni' was primarily recognized through soapstone-carving from the 1970s until the early 1990s.

0:35:45.7 Jolene: The Hodinöhsö: Ni' never really... The Hodinöhsö: Ni' had never really risen as 2D or masters of what was referred to as the plastic arts, it did manage to find a toehold of recognition in stone-carving based on the enormous popularity of Inuit print and stone-carving. I'm sure this history is well known in Canada, but not understood in the US. The market space opened up in Canada for appreciating and valuing Inuit stone-carving, motivated Tuscarora carver Duffy Wilson to begin carving, thereby influencing a generation of stone-carvers from Tuscarora and I would argue the Six Nations community, but this is a project I'm qualifying right now.

0:36:35.0 Jolene: The paramount movement of stone-carving at Six Nation or Ohsweken and throughout the Confederacy created a very male-centered aesthetic practice based in soapstone. The rapid lineage of stone as being a traditional art is based on the heritage of carving of medicine or Hadu'I mask. The figure of the Hadu'I in Hodinöhsö: Ni' cosmology goes back to the beginning of human existence. Today, there's a taboo against showing the false face mask, but carvers continue to refer to the photographic documentation of these masks that are reproduced from the field work of William Fenton in the 20th century. Additionally, the masks are considered cultural patrimony within the US repatriation law, and are routinely returned to communities. Within the scope of this talk, I'm less concerned about the physical representation of the masks, but I'm thinking through why artists in our communities focus on certain objects at certain times.

0:37:39.6 Jolene: My consultation in archives in North America, in Europe, first for across borders and followed by my curatorial work for the NMAI has informed this observation. In the 1970s art about our Hodinöhsö: Ni' resistance to further colonization, emerged as an outward thrust, but within our communities, art focused on the story tradition that slipped in and out of a realm of the helpers... That artwork that slipped in and out of the realm of the helpers was equally active.

0:38:18.1 Jolene: Not a new observation, but worth mentioning, the market for stone-carvings was lucrative, due to its material and aesthetic form being valued in Euro American art markets. My point in mentioning this is that the carvers found a way to make an income of their artistic labor, but also are involved in learning about Hodinöhsö: Ni' traditions, the exuberant visualization of these stories in stone, was complicated by the work of artists like Jemison, Longfish and Waterman.

0:38:49.6 Jolene: Carson Waterman broke out with the Seneca in an astronaut suit in outer space, but throwing a snow snake, a Snow Snake is a medicine game, it's a kind of fresh and radical in the

early 1980s, here's the Seneca artist imagining indigenous peoples in the future, but still performing our ceremonies by throwing the Snow Snake in the medicine game. This work is both an imagining, but very descriptive, it is the work of... Here's the Seneca on the moon, Seneca's have landed, and then this is the image of the Snow Snake, and so it's the work of George Longfish. Goodbye Norma Jean, the Chief Is Dead in 1989, that opens the door to another clue or visualization about the traditional teaching that we are simultaneously individuals, but we are all embodied in the universe.

0:39:57.9 Jolene: And so I see through a number of artists in the communities at this period of time, this need to represent ceremony in some way. And we see in James Luna's performance in *Emendatio*, which was actually over three hours long in its original iteration and moved and tried to evoke a space of ceremony, both Longfish and Luna are gesturing toward our relationship to the human, non-human, but animate or forces or energies that populate our cosmological stories, and so I'm gonna just be off script a moment here, and so these are just some installation shots from that performance. And so part of the performance in this case was to disrupt this idea that one could experience the performance in a very short period of time, and so the factor of this work actually having a three-hour duration was really quite challenging for the audience, for the reception of the piece, for the reproduction of the piece, etcetera. And so we could see here an aerial view with...

0:41:16.4 Jolene: There's... See Rebecca Belmore on the outside of the circle and Joanna Osborne Bigfeather and some other helpers there. And so this ceremonial site that he sets up is also populated by the impact of elements of colonization with of course, the first image, which was the image on the poster, and the needles that one uses if you're monitoring your health with insulin. And so on another quadrant in this, he had small spam cans and he had some medicine bundles, and so all of the accoutrements were there to describe ceremony, but it was actually the experience of the length of time that was the critical element in this piece.

0:42:15.9 Jolene: And so we see a kind of shift here in the work of Shelley Niro and this piece, the *Sky Woman* series, is where I see a shift in the role of voice of women amongst the *Hodinöhsö: Ni'* as reclaiming a kind of agency in the expression of our culture. And Shelley combined, this moment in photography was the moment where photography made a transition from not being considered an art. And I would argue this was that moment where photography made that transition.

0:43:04.4 Jolene: And all of these works in the early '80s are chemical-based process, and so it's an incredibly laborious method of making images, but it's interesting because I think the impulse to want to reconstruct space and to bring in different time periods within a single image anticipated the technological move towards a software like Photoshop where now this is just a regular practice, it's not something that's special. And so in this case, she took photographs of objects from the archive, in this case, the photographs are quill and beaded symbols that suggests the Sky-dome and the double curve motif. Some people have identified that as the portal to the sky world, and she combined this with the assertive figure of a woman's body flying. And so it was at this moment that I was collecting stories from artists in our community, and for those of you that conduct oral histories, you know that you don't ask what you're looking for, you don't direct the discussion, and so I would visit artists studios to see what they're working on, and one of the things I was fascinated by, which directed my research and curatorial project in my own work, to create an exhibit called *In the Shadow of the Eagle*, which focused on *Sky Woman* in 1994.

0:45:04.6 Jolene: And that's what this piece was part of that series. At the same time, I later produced a series of my own work, and I don't apologize for the fact that I go back and forth between making critiquing, writing, thinking, doing, although, as I've expressed in seminar this morning, at that period of time, it was strongly discouraged. But today, I think most of us understand that what we're doing is we're idea makers, and we find the best way to locate the idea, and sometimes it's better in an exhibit, sometimes it's better in a work of art, sometimes it's better in a piece of media, sometimes it's better in a text.

0:45:49.5 Jolene: And so I think it's positive that our work is interrelated in this way, and so this is a series that I did that references that moment when Sky-Woman is in a portal in the upper world, about to bring life to this world, and I take three sequences in this piece, and it's interesting because this again is a large piece of film set on a light box that was built around a welded frame that was woven with red whip. And so for those of you that know our history, you know that the red whip is often used to help guide men in our communities to balance negative behavior.

0:46:36.8 Jolene: And so I wove this giant circle of red whip and placed my concern for water, the reflective gaze that... What we're doing is we use these stories to look back into ourselves and that we look to the future. And in this case, the future that I was looking at was LA, and this sort of new shining city on the West Coast. And so this idea of the portal and the way in which women in my communities began focusing on this moment in our history, I think was a turn in our territories. And I see this across the indigenous Americas, where once the history and focus is primarily on the work of very dominantly male ideas in these cultures, and then there's a moment where there's a shift. And what causes that moment to come out?

0:47:46.8 Jolene: And so my assessment of this is that we had just been through a violent time in our communities, and people in our communities were looking towards stories, were looking for a way to recover the peace. And we had to go right back to the beginning. We had to go right back to that moment in the sky world where there was an end of one world and a beginning of another world. And so that's how I see this work.

0:48:25.4 Jolene: And we're at that point again. And I look at the relationship between Skawennati's She Falls For Ages, and her practice as a multi-media artist in relationship to the earliest lens-based technology. And it's interesting to me that there's over 150 years between these two pieces yet they are in dialogue with each other. Because the single photograph, the daguerreotype of Carolyn Parker, I would argue, was that single image that gave women in our communities permission to reclaim our sense of place after the burnt earth campaign of the Sullivan campaign in the late 1700s where most of our people were dispossessed from their homelands and pushed to different parts of our conceptual longhouse. And so this portrait of her isn't long after that moment of extreme rupture.

0:49:48.4 Jolene: And so it was incredibly inspiring for me to be able to engage Skawennati's practice because she's re-imagining that time in the sky world again, and she's creating a new way, a new language for us to understand that story in these times. And her work in many ways celebrates the woman's body, but at the same time, it also changes the way in which we understand our arrival. And that, in this case, our arrival is an act of empowerment. And so I see this work as a demonstration of both the political armature of sovereignty in relationship to the call here in Canada

by intellectual... The intellectual community for resurgence. And so I'm still gonna argue that we need both of these experiences in order to push forward our notion of time, our idea of cosmologies, our inherited cosmologies and epistemology.

0:51:21.9 Jolene: And I have to confess, I went back to Fabian's Time and Other, and carefully went through it for four months. And then I had the opportunity to do it a little longer because I was supposed to be here in the fall and couldn't make it, and I'm so happy to be here now. And what I'm left with is, I'm not ready yet to create that bridge between the way in which we are marginalized in a Euro-Western construction of time, because the way in which time is constructed within Hodinöhsö: Ni' space... And I think that it would be possible to generalize indigenous space, but I do think we need to be careful with these broad generalizations, and so I do try to provide a historic grounding in these comments, but the...

0:52:24.6 Jolene: The fact that artists want to deal with the Hadu'I, that we're talking about this time of emergence and renewal, that we ourselves are trying to reconnect to what our ancestors understood as the helpers. And so that's the language that we use in our communities to describe these spirit forces that they're actual, for lack of a better term, entities that our storied world has informed us about, that have been mythologized, and through the discourse of mythology have been reduced to an imaginary space. But at the same time, I'm gonna argue that perhaps we just don't really understand how real that space is and what time we're actually in now, so I hope you have some questions and thank you.

[applause]

0:53:44.8 Jason: Okay, so yes, we have some time for questions, thank you very much Jolene, we appreciate that. Lots to think about. Who wants to start? There we go.

0:54:00.1 S6: If I've understood you correctly, you seem to be suggesting that as the way of reclaiming one's identity, one can link one's past with the future, thereby ignoring the present. Now, I'm not sure if that's a different sense of time or whether that is just a different use of time, and I think that the difference between those two ideas, if you can elaborate a little more about what you mean when you say that there's an indigenous concept of time that's different than the colonist's time.

0:54:49.1 Jolene: I'm not suggesting that we ignore the present, I'm suggesting that the negotiation between our past, present and future is simultaneous and that that space is acknowledged within our tradition, within our... In the space called ceremony, and so that it's difficult to share or let in to the site of ceremony people outside of those biological communities, and they biological and this was something that Skawennati has carefully named. I think that this is a struggle that we have within our own communities, how much can we reveal?

0:55:40.3 Jolene: How much do we want to share? But at the same time, this is what people in our communities are deeply invested in and trying to come to terms with. And so we believe there is a profound knowledge in the relationship to both place, physical place, but to ancestors, sometimes expressed through objects and to how the future can be determined by our actions now. And I think we're trying to understand why our ancestors constructed the world in this way. And if we look at

our creation story, it has all of those elements in it.

0:56:40.1 S6: Thank you.

0:56:41.9 Jason: Next question. Okay, I'll ask a question.

0:56:51.4 S?: Mic.

0:56:52.1 Jason: The mic. One of the things we talked about in the interview and also today in the graduate seminar was thinking about how art... Using art practice as a practice for theorizing. And you talked about it some here but I was wondering if you could sort of expand on that a little more, to help understand that.

0:57:13.8 Jolene: Yeah. And so I've come to my own understanding that the creative practice opens up a way for us to actually understand the knowledge within some of these ceremonial spaces that the people that came before us practiced. And so by engaging with the process of imagining, I think we open up possibilities in our own way of thinking that defy... Not defy like in a sense of negative thing but that overcome our limitations of anchoring everything in the way in which science is constructed at present, or the kind of science that we know. And so I do think it would be really interesting and profitable to have people that are really interested in a more in-determinant world in dialogue with ceremonialists, because there is a way in which they're both looking for the way in which energy works.

0:59:04.2 Jolene: And so how do we open up those spaces, that's I guess what I want to consider because in all of our cultures, we've inherited these spaces of transition, and so Sky World comes from the upper world to this world to manifest a new place, in the work of... Oh, I don't know what I did [laughter] Sorry.

[background conversation]

0:59:53.2 Jolene: So it's a humble little drawing by Cusick, but this spirit force that he's dealing with in this drawing, I think what I would say is that it's interesting that at this point of the genocide against our people in the Cayuga homelands, which is where I work now at Cornell, that the visualization of this story was taken up, because up until this period of time when we look at what was produced in our communities, it was a very abstract interpretation of these spaces and tradition, which is representative in the bead work around circle for a celestial Orb for this flower, this notion of a flower on this tree of life in the sky world. And so here we see this transition to a narrative of our tradition, and I think this is an indication of a kind of rupture that happened and that there was a need at this point in time to confirm what our world was. And so I see making as both imagining, but confirmation, imagining, but confirmation, and I specifically selected to include a range of styles because I think there isn't a particular Hodinöhsö: Ni style, except for there is a very codified structure of bead work. But from that point in time, there's complete innovation on the form. Does that...

1:02:01.3 S?: Can I just follow up on that? The 1860 photograph with the gown with the celestial

tree on that, would that form of the celestial tree represent the figuration of what was previously only abstract? Or is that itself a sort of semi abstract?

1:02:21.2 Jolene: I think it's semi-abstract because... And I didn't include this image, but there's actually an image of, by Earnest Smith, which actually visualizes an actual tree as a Celestial Tree, and so in...

1:02:39.8 S?: Would you speculate that pre 1800 it would have been even more abstract?

1:02:45.9 Jolene: And so what do we have to look at to know this? And so part of the problem is that the ephemeral quality of the materials they were dealing with, both quill and because contact had occurred well over a 100 years before this point in time, we were already using trade materials, and so we don't really have a huge inventory of material to look at. And so I can't answer that authoritatively [laughter] I guess in the pottery, but what I would say is that we could look at the rims of pots, and we could say that the rim of the skirt is really consistent with the rim of the pot, and often people describe the multiple parallel lines in the rim of the skirt as sometimes being the four directions or being the winds, the water, the earth, and the sky.

1:03:44.3 Jolene: And so there is that conceptualization, and then we see in the smaller dome, we see three little sprouts in there, and so sometimes that's described as the three sisters, Corn, Beans and Squash, and then above it, we see the proliferation of three again, and then this portal to the upper world or this figure of the, what they call the double curve, and the double curve was pervasive in the North East. It certainly was a large part of the Hodinöhsö: Ni worldview, and today we have interpreted this as that visual link between this world and the sky world, and so...

1:04:34.2 Jolene: The thing to move beyond is that the sky world is up here, that the Earth is here, and that the forces are beneath it, which is the way in which it gets visualized in two-dimensional space, and that's what's so exciting I have to say about the Machinima in Second Life that Skawennati has produced, because it gives us an opportunity to rethink that the narrative of an upper middle, a middle and a lower, and to rethink it and to rethink it as a kind of encompassing spatial environment. And I think that's a huge shift.

1:05:22.3 Jason: Next question.

1:05:26.7 S?: Thank you. Just when you talked about the Luna performance, and you talked about the duration being challenging, I was just sort of thinking about what you were saying in terms of ceremonial space where time falls into question and then also with Skawennati, even though it's lent space, it's on... But it's also occupying time, so it's I'm curious how you might frame or understand indigenous artists that are using time strategically now as, maybe, as the creation of a ceremonial space or the alteration into a ceremonial space?

1:06:05.0 Jolene: That's a great observation. I do think we are walking that very fine line at the moment, and we're afraid to call ourselves ceremonialists. Who were the ceremonialists in the past? One of the things I know about singing societies in our communities is they're always making up new songs, and so songs that were made 50 years ago now become the traditional songs, and so this

idea that our tradition is static is the thing we need to let go of. Because the only thing that most of us recognize about our traditions is that they're always changing, but what is it we're calling through as these changes are occurring?

1:06:52.6 Jolene: That's what I think we're trying to understand that. And so how we're located, I think, is really complex, that some of us are really deeply invested in these interior lengthy understandings of these tradition and knowledge, some of us are really on the outside of it, but I don't think that means that one negates the other. I feel that there's enough evidence that there's so many people that are trying to understand what their relationship is to these practices, that we have to pay attention to it, but the ambivalence that we have in terms of sharing interior knowledge, if someone really has that, I think that this is an ethical question that we have to resolve between ourselves and feel confident with what we do.

1:07:58.0 Jolene: Barbara Tedlock, an anthropologist who works with indigenous people of China, and you know of course that it's illegal to be indigenous in China. She makes the point that the space of healers in indigenous communities is a very public experience because they're incredibly confident with their knowledge, and she's seen a kind of change from when she began doing this work in the '70s to today, where the oppressive condition of the state has closed it in. And so we can't ignore the fact that because of the suppression of these practices in our communities, that today we can't... It's really a difficult space to negotiate, both internally and externally, but if we're gonna talk about time, if we're gonna talk about art, if we're gonna insist that the Americas become a multi-epistemological philosophical space, if we're gonna insist that that's what's happened, that that's what the world needs to be, we have to begin to confront just the question that this gentleman asked, what are those... How do those slippages work?

1:09:30.3 Jolene: And so in New Zealand, I think that because they're a mono-indigenous culture, the Maori, in relationship to a dominant Euro-New Zealand state, that some of this becomes more magnified, it becomes more present because they passed legislation where everything in New Zealand has to be in I think it's Pākehā, which is English or white in Maori. So their insistence upon recovering the naming of their cities, the naming of their places, the way in which this is articulated in the structure of their society, I think is important to be aware of, but at the core of this... Now, you have to really begin to understand how to pronounce Maori because they're using their language in the expression of their ideas, and so I think it's kind of a wonderful time of complication in that way.

1:10:49.3 S?: You're focusing on the beads as a time, they come from... The indigenous people get the beads from trading.

1:11:00.1 Jolene: I don't really focus on the material because it's the concept that I'm concerned with.

1:11:07.2 S?: Then where did the beads first come from?

1:11:09.4 Jolene: The beads were initially... We used reeds with hollow reeds and we made things from hollow reeds, and then we used hollowed bones, and then we use porcupine quill, and then we

used ground whelk and quahaug shell as wampum, and then we adapted glass beads when contact occurred. So there's just this kind of continuous folding in of this new materiality, but what stays constant, and this little lineage that I just traced for you is what stays constant in the recollection of the coming of the peacemaker. There's multiple insertions in the historic record, and in our oral history that talk about that moment, that the peacemaker... And so the thing that... I hesitate in sharing some of the particulars of some of these stories, because it's very easy to reduce this knowledge to the narrative, and what I'm trying to do is what is the metaphoric knowledge within it.

1:12:31.3 Jolene: And so that moment of stitching together these pieces of stick or the pieces of bone or the pieces of shell, the symbolic gesture was about healing, it was about recovering from trauma. And so in a way, when I looked at the proliferation of beadwork in our communities in the 1800s, I see it with both of those pressures that we recovered from the trauma of the internment in small land bases, although we fought for those land bases and at the same time we were...

1:13:15.7 Jolene: We have a really different story to tell about our economies, and it really wasn't until the late or the early 1900s that we can really see a distancing of the economic stability in our communities in the emergent industrial space. And so there's so much work to do and there's very little that's been written about this piece of it, but the historic records are there that we can, I think, still put those stories together for ourselves, but does that help in understanding the materials? And now, of course, we're doing it in digital form [chuckle] and in film, and in virtual space. So it just goes on. Right?

1:14:19.4 Jason: Final question before we close the evening? Final chance? Okay, so thank you very much.

[applause]

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