

Ecosystems of Inheritance

Lindsey Bond

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Masters of Fine Arts
in Intermedia

Faculty of Arts in the Department of Art and Design

University of Alberta

amiskwacîwâskahikan

or Edmonton, Alberta

Treaty 6 Territory

January, 2022

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Abstract

This document accompanies my MFA thesis exhibition, [*Ecosystems of Inheritance*](#). The exhibit was on view at the Fine Art Building (FAB) Gallery at the University of Alberta and includes photography, photo-sculptures, textile and video works that were on display from November 8 through to December 3, 2021. The exhibit addresses slow textile and intermedia processes to remember and restory inherited women's agrarian stories around the Battle River from my family "red rose tea tin" archive. In this "creation-as-research" (Sawchuck and Chapman 2015) project, I situate myself as white settler, intermedia artist-mother, granddaughter and niece. The photo-sculptures, unconventional quilts, fiber panels and video work emerge from conversations with inherited harms present in women's farm stories, more-than-human beings and nêhiyaw (cree) knowledges in Treaty 6 Territory.

Ecosystems of Inheritance serves to unsettle inherited family and local archives by sewing a material legacy in conversation with colonial inheritance, intergenerational memory and everyday decolonial practices. Visiting with place, working ethically with stones, sewing as conversation and dyeing as relational practices process *how* to do the work of unsettling archives within reoccurring colonial structures. Working with stones, plastic, cloth and more-than-human neighbours form a foundation for building reciprocal relationships and future decolonial calls to action in solidarity with nêhiyaw, queer and land back initiatives.

Keywords: Inheritance; Unsettle; Archive; Everyday decolonial practices; Conversation; Red rose tea tin; Battle River; Textile art; Intermedia; Intergenerational memory; Creation-as-research; Treaty 6 Territory.

Land Acknowledgment

I am honored to be writing this thesis document from my kitchen studio in amiskwacîwâskahikan, meaning Beaver Hills House in nêhiyawewin, also known as Edmonton in Treaty 6 Territory. Beaver Hills House is a traditional gathering place for many Indigenous nations including the nêhiyawak (Cree), Tsuut'ina, Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux), the Nakota Sioux, the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the Métis. I wish to share my deep gratitude of the nêhiyaw ways of knowing in Treaty 6 Territory and offer my deep respect for teachers and Elders who have guided me over the last two years. Nânaskamon kisiskâciwanisîpiy and nônitinosipy, or the North Saskatchewan River and Battle River for nourishing life and guiding us. My hope is for the slow textile conversations to serve in the repairing and rebuilding of relationships here in this place, so we can remember and move forward in the spirit that Treaty 6 was signed.

Family and Community Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my son Theo and partner Roger for the unconditional love and support in the process of creating and completing *Ecosystems of Inheritance*. Thank you to my Aunts who handed down the red rose tea tin and generously shared stories and hand-me-down fabric. You remind me how important it is to remember our responsibility to the place where our relatives settled. You hold me accountable and help me realize that caring involves asking the hard questions.

I would also like to say nânaskamon to nôhkom Jo-Ann Saddleback (Saddle Lake Cree First Nation) and Pipe Carrier and spiritual adviser Dale Saddleback (Samson Cree First Nation) and Dr. Dwayne Donald (Papachase Cree) who guided and supported these visual arts projects.

Nânaskamon, Dr. Donald who taught us the nêhiyawewin meaning of kisiskâciwanisîpiy, swift

flowing river in relationship with a swift human walking pace. We walk alongside the river as a process to develop relationships as good neighbors.

I would like to deeply thank Tanya Harnett and Marilène Oliver, Natalie Loveless and Megan Strickfadden, my University of Alberta supervisors and co-committee members. Thank you for your time, patience, guidance and for holding me accountable. I am in debt to my supervisors Tanya and Marilène for teaching me how to do the creative studio-based work again and guiding me through unlearning processes to get to a place of being able to create again.

Finally, thank you so much for your help and generosity Daniela Barrales and Roxanne Tootoosis whose wonderful Kenmore sewing machine made all of the sewing projects possible. A huge thank you to Roger Garcia and Alex Thompson for your expertise and help installing and striking the exhibition.

Funding acknowledgment

I wish to gratefully acknowledge the financial support from The University of Alberta Graduate Awards, The Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and The Friends of the University of Alberta Society. I also wish to say thank you to The Manitoba Arts Council for the Learn Scholarship. Finally thank you to the GSA Childcare Grant whose funds helped with childcare fees throughout my degree.

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Figure 1. *Rusted Red Rose Tea Tin in Autumn*, 2021 light jet photograph, dibond mount, 24"x36".

Artist Research Statement

“The generations to come, the children not born yet, they [nêhiyaw warrior /clan women] wanted to leave them something. So, they said we will share the land. So, they made Treaty entitlements, Treaty agreements that the children would live off the land through agriculture and this is to benefit the generations to come, and this is what the women decided. The Treaty entitlement to agriculture is very significant. The one square mile per family of five is still to be implemented, to be utilized by the Treaty people. I hope for the future that will begin to be revitalized because that is our Treaty inheritance. That is what those women *willed* for the generations so that they would live off of the land in a new way. Because they understood that the buffalo were gone and that the land would be shared.”

(Sylvia McAdams 2014)

Ecosystems of Inheritance engages in slow textile conversations. As a white settler, intermedia artist-mother, granddaughter and niece I remember and restory inherited women’s agrarian narratives around the Battle River from my family “red rose tea tin” archive. The archive points to the Hamlet of Lone Rock, a place named after a Buffalo Rubbing Stone. It was a place I had never been before and visiting the place became central to the research. *Ecosystems of Inheritance* reflects on archival memory, land-based and embodied memory to explore tensions between the incomplete and unequal relationships amid settler memory and traditional Indigenous and land-based knowledges (Decter 2020).

My son Theo, and I traveled between our home in amiskwacîwâskahikan/ Edmonton and the nôtinitosîpiy/ Battle River. In visiting with place, we witnessed the Buffalo Rubbing Stone sitting at Lone Rock and the river as giver of life and a natural boundary that curves east of where four generations of my family settled. Through family visits in Lone Rock and Calgary, my aunts “performed” (Langford 2001), our family photographs. Our intergenerational memory-work thinks

through our responsibility to family memories, pointing beyond archival narratives towards an entangled web of relationships beside the river. The photo-sculptures, unconventional quilts, fiber panels and video work emerge from conversations present in women's farm stories, more-than-human beings and nêhiyaw (cree) knowledges in Treaty 6 Territory.

The *Ecosystems of Inheritance* exhibition created a reflective space where folks could meander, sit-with, and complicate structures of settler colonialism inherent in family and local archives while sewing a relational dialogue with nêhiyaw and land-based knowledges. This exhibition is comprised of photo-sculptures, unconventional quilts, fiber panels and video work. As a river flows, the viewer can meander through the four section in FAB gallery. The viewer is greeted by the audio piece *Dear Family Archive* (pg. 19) emanating from the red rose tea tin. The visitor hears the sound of the Battle River and the artist reading a poem. The red rose tea tin also holds old and empty yellow kodak photo envelopes dated 1958. As the viewer moves further in the first room, the photographic research work is presented through a series of large photographs, *Memory Work with Theo* (Figure 20.), stone cast *photo-sculptures* (Figure 16.) and a photographic textile, *The Folds of Buzzard Coulee* (Figure 28.).

In the second gallery the viewer will encounter four drawings made by Theo (Figure 23.) and a large, heavy unconventional quilt *Inheritance is a Gift and also a Burden* (Figure 21.) that occupies the Northeast wall. In the third gallery, one experiences a textile/video piece, *Sewing Yarrow Flowers* (Figure 32.), a bundle dyed fiber panels, *Reimagining My Grandmothers Wallpaper* (Figure 9.) and quilt, *Why Can't We Swim in the River, Mom?* (Figure 29.). Projected in the fourth gallery is the video work *The Weight of Inheritance* (Figure 13.). During the exhibition

the public was invited to participate in two calls to action through relational art projects (Bourriaud 2002). The first, *Enfolding a Heavy Oil Field: Sewing Action* (Figure 31.) invited viewers to cross-stitch text to restory family conversations about impact of oil fracking, carbon tax and sustainable agriculture across Treaty 6 Territory. The second *Collab Quilt* took place through a virtual makers space inviting self-identified artists and parents, inclusive of 2SLGBTQQA community members to sew material conversations about decolonizing, queering the patchwork quilt, and building Treaty relationships through ecological art practices.



Figure 2. *Ecosystems of Inheritance First Room Detail, Memory work with Theo*, 2021, FAB Gallery, dimensions variable.

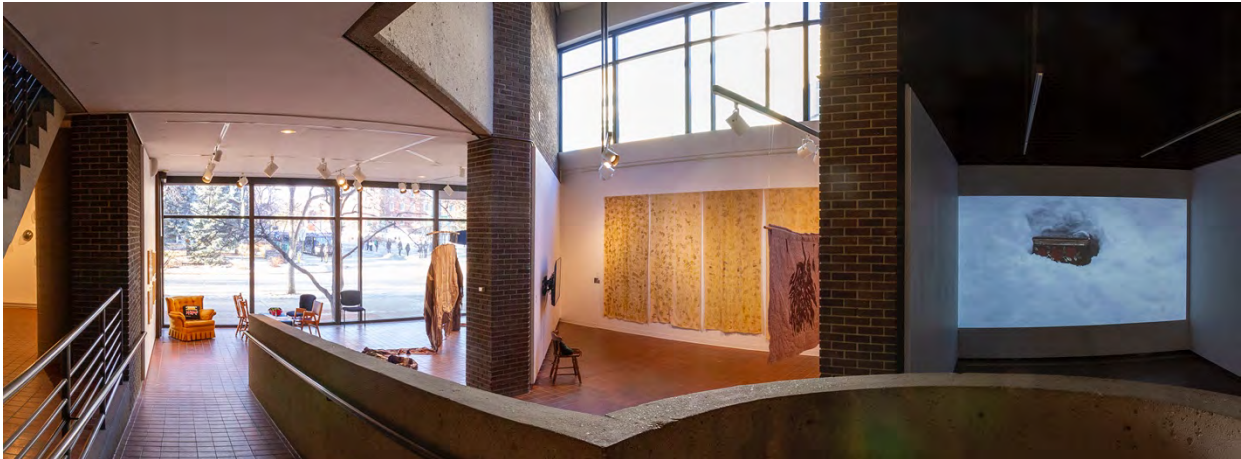


Figure 3. *Ecosystems of Inheritance Panoramic Detail 1*, 2021, FAB Gallery, dimensions variable.

Methodologies and methods

I have created this thesis document to bring my “creation-as-research” (Chapman and Sawchuck 2015), processes into conversation with nêhiyaw public knowledges and academic scholarship. The slow textile and intermedia processes, online conversations and relationship building that is central to my work are presented in this paper through five entangled subjects; the “red rose tea tin” archive, Buffalo Rubbing Stone; Motherhood and memory work; Oil; and Family and Textile Conversations. *Ecosystems of Inheritance* brings together the following methodologies and methods to complicate and contextualize my thesis work.

Unsettling The Red Rose Tea Tin Archive

The red rose tea tin archive began my visual exploration to think through how to care for family stories by acknowledging settler colonial harms and building relationships with nêhiyaw and land-based knowledges. Marianne Hirsch’s “extra-familial looking” reminded me to look back in to the archive with care. Working from a white settler perspective, Leah Decter’s methodology of “Memoration” has been invaluable in creating the artworks: *Red Rose Tea Pillow* (Figure 7.), *Reimagining my Grandmothers Wallpaper* (Figure 9.) and *Weight of Inheritance* (Figure 13.). In these works, I attempt to subvert settler colonial narratives by interrogating idealized symbols, connecting waterways and relational dyeing practices.

Buffalo Rubbing Stone (learning to work ethically with stones)

In witnessing and learning with the Buffalo Rubbing Stone sitting at Lone Rock, it became

important to step outside of an auto-ethnographic framework to learn different ways to encounter *with place*. *Ecosystems of Inheritance* embraces a “Critical Place Inquiry” (Tuck, McKenzie 2015) methodology to engage directly, ethically and in a sustained way with place. “Critical Place Inquiry” centered Indigenous methods to “ethically imagine new actions and collaborations” (Tuck, McKenzie 2015). The stone-cast *photo-sculptures* (Figure 16.) and photo series *Memory Work with Theo* (Figure 19.), visualize complex relationships between memory, the archive and place. To learn how to interpret the relationships between stone and place. Dr. Donald’s practice of “Indigenous Métissage” supported and developed a safe educational framework to engage with nêhiyaw spiritual advisors to unpack the stone and settler monument. Learning how to work ethically with stones is central to the photographic work, and begins a dialogue with nêhiyaw and place-based knowledge.

Decolonizing Motherhood and Memory Work

The act of “visiting” is a method that closes the distance between home, family stories and nêhiyaw worldview (Gaudet 2019). “Visiting” as method holds me accountable as a settler researcher working with more-than-human and nêhiyaw knowledges in Treaty 6 Territory. The intermedia and sewing processes in *Memory Work with Theo* (Figure 19.), drawings by Theo (Figure 23.) and *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a Burden* (Figure 21.) were created with methods of self-reflexivity (Rose 2012),(Decter 2018) and “Rotational authorship” (Maternal Fantasies 2020). The resulting drawing, photography and sewing work emerge as intergenerational memory work between artists of different ages and gender. Further, “Everyday decolonial praxis” (Hunt and Holmes 2015) calls attention to artful decolonial acts. Drawings interpreted as quilt pieces are

framed as decolonial conversations that shifts away from white women's work and motherhood to embrace a queer Indigenous and Settler family model of allyship through intimate conversations at home.

Oil and Conversations with Family

Ecosystems of Inheritance works to unsettle settler colonial ideologies in an ethical way via conversations with my family. The artwork takes to heart Dr. Dallas Hunts call to settler families to have conversations with their relatives about profiting from colonial dispossessions and erasures of Indigenous families in local archives (Hunt 2016). "Sewing as material conversation" (Strohmayer 2021) is an important method that embodied the weight of inheritance and subverts structures of settler colonialism via material culture. *Sewing Yarrow Flowers* (Figure 32.), *Why Can't We Swim in the River* (Figure 29.) and *Inheritance is a gift and it's also a burden* (Figure 21.) and *Enfolding a Heavy Oil Field* (Figure 31.) work with "subversive stitches" (Parker 1989) to make critical space for family conversations to provoke thought and discussion of settler responsibility, accountability, and acknowledge the impact of oil in Treaty 6 Territory.

Visiting with place, working ethically with stones, sewing as conversation and dyeing as relational practices have processed *how* to do the work of unsettling family and local archives through building reciprocal relationships within reoccurring colonial structures. Working with stones, plastic, cloth and more-than-human neighbours formed a foundation for future decolonial calls to action in solidarity with nêhiyaw, queer and land back initiatives.

Family Introduction

I am a descendant from Scottish (MacLean), English (Reynolds/Bond) and German (Weich/Hoffman) ancestors who played a part in settling in Treaty 6 and 7 the ancestral lands of Papaschase Cree, Nêhiyawak, Tsuut'ina, Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux), the Nakota Sioux, the Niitsitapi and the Métis. The last four generations of the Reynolds/ Bond family lived in Nunebor/Lone Rock, SK (Treaty 6), the Hoffman family from Hannah/ Okotoks, AB (Treaty 7) and the MacLean family from Fredericton, NB, unceded territory of the Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) Peoples. Theo, my son was born in Winnipeg, Treaty 1 Territory, the ancestral lands of the Métis Nation, Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples. Both sides of my family lived in places named for rocks. Okatok means “big rock” to the Niitsitapi, and Lone Rock is the name the settlers gave to the area based around the Buffalo Rubbing Stone.

The recent history (last 150 years) of the Shaw settlement, Nunebor and Lone Rock are kept very separate as their own local archives before 1967. My aunts distinguish my relatives as being from the Nunebor district which was previously called the Shaw Settlement. My family archives talk about the isolation of the communities and how it contributed to form the way of life and worldview. I grew up knowing very little about my family history. I also didn't know my Grandmother because she passed away in 1962. I often think I did not hear about my family stories because she passed away. I remember hearing only one story and it went like this “...your Grandfather Bond came over from England, met a nice Canadian girl and they homesteaded in the Lloydminster area”. This simple story created what Lorenzo Veracini calls a “narrative deficit”

(Decter 2018). It is what pushes me to complicate white settler women's roles in the constructing stories of home.

To begin unsettling and decolonizing my family archive, I address Kathy Absolon's request to create a respectful making and researching practice. "An Indigenous worldview seeks that you identify yourself to the Spirit, the people and the spirit of the work you intend on doing to establish the beginning of respectful practice." (Absolon 2015). I wish to situate myself and make clear my intentions for this work and who it serves. My thesis artwork is intended to process and carry the weight of my family's engagement in and benefit from practices of Indigenous peoples erasure in local archives in Treaty 6 Territory. Further, my work in being a responsible settler and good relative includes respecting my relatives' experiences to understand the importance of retelling family stories to include women roles in settler colonialism.

The nôtinitosipy or Battle River meanders out of kisiskâciwanisîpiy, going south east and meets together after the Battleford area. It is beside the Battle River that I acknowledge my family's privilege of being able to swim, picnic and settle there for four generations. I met and visited with my elderly Aunts and they told me about the river's whirlpools that took my relatives lives as they attempted to cross at Unwin Bridge. My Great Aunt Beatrice's story goes like this:

"Aunt Violeta with her husband Tom Campbell and baby Gordon also came in the spring of 1907 and filed on Northwest of 4-47-27 about 4 miles North East. Tragically Tom Campbell was drowned while fording the Battle River, south of Unwin in the spring of 1908. Where they had forded safely the previous fall the sand had shifted and left a hole. A valuable team of mares was lost at the same time."

(Sinfield 1967).

This is a significant story as my family has “spilled blood” (Harnett 2022), and left an imprint in this place. The stories written in my family archive and oral stories told by my family members caution me about crossing the river. As part of *Ecosystems of Inheritance*, I complicate my own and my relative’s relationship with the river as a natural and powerful living entity. The act of sewing quilted whirlpools and plants around the river in *Inheritance is a gift, but it is also a Burden* (Figure 21.) builds a relationship with the river as giver of life and ever flowing boundary who we need to respect and understand more deeply.



Figure 4. *Grandma and Aunt Dorothy Swimming*, 1940’s, Silver Gelatin Negative, Red Rose Tea Tin Archive, 120mm.

Let me introduce you to my Grandmother Dorothy Bond (nee Reynolds). This is a photograph from the ‘red rose tea tin’ archive showing my Grandma Dorothy and my Great Aunt Beatrice Sinfield (nee Reynolds) swimming in the Battle River, by the Unwin Bridge in the 1940’s. My Grandmother was the first child in my family born in what was called the “Nunebor district”, a

name the early settler families gave the area, (a mix of Nunnington and Ibor, ancient name of York) (Nunebor Archive, 1967). Today, we know this area as the Municipality of Wilton, in Northeastern Saskatchewan, Treaty 6 Territory. Schooling was very important to the women in my family, with my Great Grandmother insisting her daughters focus on their education, before the Great Depression. Dorothy completed grades 9 and 10 by correspondence as the local Eagle Butte School didn't go past Grade 8. My Great Aunt Beatrice writes "...our fates were determined by the Great Depression..." as they couldn't attend higher education and instead "became farm wives" (Sinfield 1967). I am told, Grandma Dorothy had a great memory for dates, she was very kind and valued community. She wrote the letters for the family, news for the local paper and taught the local sewing club and raised five children while helping to run the homestead with my Grandfather Bond. This is a photograph I took of my two of my aunts, Aunty Betty (left) and Aunty Francis (right) who contributed their time, memories, stories and hand-me-down sheets to this project.



Figure 5. *Aunty Betty and Aunty Frances at kitchen table performing the photographs*, 2020, digital image, 4"x6".

In *Ecosystems of Inheritance*, I work with the terms “unsettle” and “decolonize”. The first as a process to unravel and the second as an action to restory. Settler colonial ideologies can also be referred to as a “settler imaginary” (Decter 2018) storied through the pioneer hero narrative. Avril Bell describes it as “a set of ideas and values advance by and for majority populations in settler states that underpins dominant discourses of national identity” (Decter 2018). My family archive and my aunts’ stories are told with a strong pioneer hero undercurrent. My Great Aunt Beatrice included this poem as frontispiece to our written family archive. An excerpt reads:

“...Our eyes grow dim and
throats choke up with pride
While minds are thronged
with poignant memories of
these our kin, fine honest folk
Who lived and toiled and died
to open up the West...”

(Sinfield 1967).

Doing the work of remembering with my family archive cautions me to realize what stories were told and that there were many stories not told. I begin to answer Dr. Dallas Hunt’s call and I look back into the archive to locate where personal family memories are woven together with national colonial narratives. Hunt writes, “It is necessary to recognize this one story is emblematic of the larger narrative of Canada, wherein settlers become great “pioneers”, and Indigenous people ghosts.” (Hunt 2016). The local Nunebor and Lone Rock archives begin around 1905 were organized through the local Ladies Club and told from strictly a settler point of view.

Dr. Leah Decter reminds me that much of the national identity in the colonial project of Canada is “deeply dependent on selective historical narratives and enduring mythologies that de-emphasize the historical and ongoing violence of colonization” and that we as descendants of White settlers’

profit from the “spoils” based from settler colonial race-based structures. (Decter, 2018). In taking time to look back into the archive, as a great, great grandchild, I can see the pattern of what was selectively forgotten over generations and what was systematically repressed. Paul Connorton in *Seven Types of Forgetting*, discusses forgetting within the formation of new identity. I observe this “forgetting” as particularly relevant to the renaming of stone and place by the early settlers. There are small reoccurring silences in my family stories, as well as in the local archives. Connorton writes about these silences not as random acts of forgetting, but that they are in fact purposefully patterned (Connorton 2008). In the intermedia and textile work of *Ecosystems of Inheritance*, I begin to unravel the complex glorious histories and sew together harms.

The *Dear Family Archive* poem works in response to the frontispiece poem in my family archive instead as a relational acknowledgment to my family, nêhiyaw knowledges and our more than human neighbors who nourished the artwork and are an integral part of the Battle River. *Dear Family Archive* (with sounds of Battle river, swallows and Theo playing), was played in stereo audio from the red rose tea tin at the entrance of the exhibit welcoming folks into the gallery, my family archive and beside the river.

Dear Family Archive,

*Thank you, my Grandma's,
You're in my hands
You help me to make and stitch*

*I wish we had met
I wish you could teach me
How to sew and repair
To darn socks with care*

*I have instead these photographs
Passed down from hand to hand
To show me the paths that you have tread*

*Thank you, my aunties,
I love you and miss you
we have our different world views
and this work helps me to understand you.*

*Thank you for your stories
Your voices together with photographs
Kodak Meander*

*Thank you for what you pictured
You help me to look back and remember
The roles we play in colonization today
What was left out and what was erased
Echo in the silence of grace.*

*And what can our privileged hands replace
Perhaps giving space
to share and know
we've only been here 100 years or so.*

*Consider the meander pattern key
Oh, I finally understand
You were meant to connect waterways
Your linear form meanders
Back and forth for eternity.*

*Like the North Saskatchewan
kisiskâciwanisîpiy
thank you for your patience thank you for hold
us and nourishing us
Giving life and flow you are at once connected
to another river named from battles long ago.
Today, I root to you river as the rose bush
grows deep
Thank you rose for teaching me how to care
and about beauty
And how to root down and be prickly.*

*And Tansy and Mountain ash
Your bright colours take over the path
You overstep as an invasive friend
But perhaps you will naturalize and understand
to grow only where you are needed
and be the mirror we ought to see.
To show us that taking over isn't helpful
but sticking to our patches is where we ought to*

be.

*Grandfather stones you are the oldest
knowledge keepers in this place
You have more experience than I can retrace
We pick you up and move you for our own
needs
If only we took more care to understand our
greed's
We exercise our movement on you but perhaps
If we sat down, over a thousand years span,
with open ears to listen and be still
we might hear your stories to retell.*

*The oil sands go boom and bust
I am embarrassed by the capitalist tempest
So much damage and mistrust
And I ask, farms are saved at what cost?*

*The decorative rose is seen again, but let's keep
one petal so she can bloom again
The rose bush digs down deep
holding us together
to keep our promise to share
as long as the sun shines and rivers travel fair.*

*Thank you, mother earth, for taking care
Can we repair?
I ask, as I watch my son play in your mud and
light
and as we drive home at night.
In my concern for care I have few answers.
In my stitching I retell these stories
to perform and play
to pass down something better than today.*



Figure 6. *Red Rose Tea Tin Archive, 1940, Metal tin, 6"x8"7"* and *Battle River, 2020, digital photograph, dimensions variable.*

Unsettling The Red Rose Tea Tin Archive

In 2018, I inherited my late Grandma Dorothy Bond's (nee Reynolds) red rose tea tin. The tin holds family photographs and negatives dated from years 1891 to 1962. During this time my relatives settled land 15 km northeast of the Battle River, near what is presently called the Lone Rock, in the Rural Municipality of Wilton, Saskatchewan, Treaty 6 Territory.

The Red Rose Tea Tin Origin / Maker: unknown

Date: 1940's-1960's

Description: A metal tin approximately 6"x8"x4" with rounded feet on the bottom and delicate metal handles on each side (Figure 6.). The tin is coated with a high-quality paint that depicts three red roses on the upper part of a black background with a gold Meander pattern on the bottom quarter section flowing around the tin. All edges and handles have a faux gold trim and rim that has been rubbed and scratched off in places due to wear and tear. The lid is fixed at the back with a simple rod hinge (slightly twisted leaving the lid ajar). The decorative flowers on the front are faded to a light dusty rose colour whereas the backside has seen less light so the full deep rose colour is visible.

After discussion with Dr. Megan Strickfadden as well as a vendor and clerk at the Old Strathcona Antique Mall, all of them agreed that this tea tin is not made specifically by Red Rose Tea Company in Fredericton, New Brunswick. They understand it to have held loose black tea but not directly from the Red Rose Tea Company. The decorative design is reminiscent of Art Deco decorative style, but closely resembles a knock off design. The design of the tin borrows from exotic cultural motifs e.g., Asia Minor (meander pattern/ Greek key) as

well as the rounded metal design harmonizes metal item with natural forms. The tin maker is still unknown which adds to its ubiquitous nature. The meander pattern comes from a linear form interpreted from the Menderes River, that flows through southwestern Turkey (Mayhew 2018) and represents “the eternal flow of things” (Knuffs 2019). It is an infinity symbol – an unbroken line that is repeated over and over again through the four seasons ironically represented by the four corners.

The tin may have held biscuits, loose tea, or packaged tea originally. My Aunt Betty Dilling who passed the tea tin down told me it was my Great Grandmother Reynolds (nee Jefford) who passed it down to her daughter Dorothy Bond (nee Reynolds) and then to her daughter, my Aunt Betty. Besides its first use of possibly holding loose tea, my Aunt tells me in her memory it always held the family negatives and prints. My Aunt remembers seeing it in the family home in Nunebor till my Grandmothers death in 1962 when Grandpa gave it to her for safe keeping. It remained in her bedroom closet taken out in the 1980’s for a family album project (printing from negatives) then it lived there till 2019 when she gave it to me.

When I began working with the red rose tea tin archive, I began working through an auto-ethnographic framework to learn about my family stories. This framework enabled me to engage with my aunts and learn our family stories. My Aunts tell stories based on the family photographs. I recall photography scholar, Martha Langford, describing the “performance work of photography” which is necessary to understanding the “fabric of memory” (Langford, 2001). It is difficult to have conversations with family members about our complicity and privileges in those memories. As descendants from British women in the colonial project of what is now

known as Canada, archive scholar, Marianne Hirsch reminds me that the photographs in the archive were created with an audience that valued a dominant white pioneer hero mythology. A narrative that I am complicit in and have the privilege to critically examine in this body of work and thesis paper. Hirsch writes “... the multiple looks that circulate within the family, position family members in relationship to one another and to the conventions and ideologies of family through which they see themselves...” (Hirsch 1999). My family archive is positioned to recall a settler imaginary (Decter 2018). I carefully look back into the archive and I see my aunts as small children and grow to adults with children like myself. I am encouraged by Leah Decter’s methodology “memoration” offers a pathway that disturbs coloniality and draws attention to the space where personal memory is activated with the collective impulse to recall or commemorate. I respect my aunt’s experiences and memories *and* recognize the settler colonial harms that the symbols and stories perpetuate.



Figure 7. *Red Rose Pillow, 2021*, appliqué pillow with embroidery, hand-me down and natural dyed cotton, 16”x16”.

The Red Rose Tea Pillow (Figure 7.) is an embroidered and appliqué quilted pillow that deconstructs imperial symbols on the tea tin and connects waterways. Our home waterways center much of my thesis work and teach us how to be better neighbors. Quilting the rose and embroidering the meander pattern enabled me to slow down and understand them more deeply. The embroidery shifts and flows the meander pattern into waterways that are closer to home specifically the North Saskatchewan and Battle rivers. The rose has a complex history as a symbol with many interrelated references and meanings based from love to Christianity to new imperialism to the Alberta coat of arms. I have sewn in a root system for the roses to help them to root down, be prickly and give them a chance to perhaps bloom again next summer.

My Grandmother's Wallpaper Reimagined is four textile panels that work to restory the decorative rose through bundle dyeing as a relational process. The textile panels were inspired from a photograph from the “red rose tea tin” archive that shows my Grandmother’s living room. I noticed that the wallpaper in the photograph, had a leaf pattern, but we couldn’t recognize any of the leaf patterns in the image. I was told the wallpaper was imported from England and sold at my Grandmother’s local hardware store. It made sense we didn’t recognize the plants. To begin to reconnect with some part of my Grandmother, her taste in wallpaper, I began reconnecting instead the plants from Treaty 6. I didn’t get the chance to meet my Grandmother and seeing the inside her house brought up many emotions of loss, but also a sense of longing to re connect.



Figure 8. *Inside my Grandmothers Living Room*, silver gelatin negative, 1950's, red rose tea tin archive, 35mm.

In *My Grandmother's Wallpaper Re-imagined*, I have re-interpreted William Morris's hand-made wallpaper from the Arts and Craft Movement to move past the English decorative arts and instead work from a relational perspective. My Grandmother's wallpaper in the photograph functions aesthetically on principals of depicting natural beauty of plants as the everyday person might encounter them, as William Morris intended (Cobden-Sanderson, T. J. 1905). This textile work instead makes space for the plants to leave their own imprints and patterns that speak to their differences, the seasons and entanglement. The four textile panels depict four seasons through which the wild rose, cultivated rose, tansy, mountain ash tree, choke cherry and golden rod leave their imprint. These plants work together to give strength and stability to the river bank of kisiskâciwanisîpiy / the North Saskatchewan river.



Figure 9. *My Grandmother's Wallpaper Reimagined*, 2021, four recycled silk panels (bundle dyed with wild and cultivated rose, tansy, mountain ash tree and golden rod), Late autumn, early autumn, late summer, early summer (left to right) 55"H x 115"W



Early on in my research, the first version of the wallpaper interpreted the generic leaf pattern and recomposed them to form a grey scale “family lattice” that was purposefully disconnected with unidentified leaf and vines patterns. In the negative spaces, I stenciled in rose-coral flowers, changing from a hand painted leaf structure to a stenciled flower. The rose-coral stenciled flowers were painted with water-based ink and as the panels shift and grow beyond the lattice the ink is blended with red rose tea and rose hip tea from foraged rosehips from my backyard and neighbourhood. I originally drew the roses inspired by the rose blossoms on the tea tin, roses from grandmother’s dress (from archive) and rose emblem from visiting her gravestone in Lloydminster.



Figure 10. *Watercolor wallpaper detail, 2021, rosehip watercolour, waterbased ink on cotton rag paper, 20”x80”.*

In the watercolour wallpaper (Figure 10.) I experimented with creating my own watercolor from red rose tea tin and rose hips in an effort to create a more situated wallpaper. My hand drawing didn’t shift away from the decorative English style as I had hoped, so I followed my

research in working with natural dyeing and hand-made watercolors. I began researching other methods of natural printing. My colleague and mother friend Kerri Lynn Reeves helped me begin to learn more about natural dyeing processes. I began to read about bundle dyeing (eco printing) and understand how prepared fabric can receive and hold marks made by plants. The bundle dyeing process, simply put, is working with fresh leaves placed on mordanted fabric (usually a protein fiber), tightly rolled over a stick and steamed for three hours.

In learning the process of bundle dyeing my son and I visited the river. We began to learn the complex relationship between native and invasive species of plants. I met with nêhiyaw Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback from Saddlelake Cree Nation who resides in amiskwacîwâskahikan. I offered protocol and spoke to her about my focus of unsettling the rose as a decorative symbol and asked her about how to work with the rose in this place, Treaty 6 Territory. Nôhkom Jo-ann taught me protocol of giving tobacco to the earth before picking and reminded me that “the wild rose isn’t any more or any less important than any other plant even though it is not a traditional medicine.” (Saddleback, 2021). Nôhkom Jo-Ann was so generous in her teaching about the relationality of the plants beside the river and also nêhiyaw protocol for collecting leaves for an honorable harvest. I passed down nôhkom Jo-Ann’s nêhiyaw ethical harvest principals to my son, so we foraged in our backyard and in areas where the plants were healthy. We only picked a little bit in each area and were mindful to leave some for the plant and the animals. We carefully asked each plant if we could pick leaves. This was a fun part because my son Theo, would ask the plant and then look at me and ask “Mom, what did it say?” I suggested to use his gut and listen.



Figure 11. *Bundle dye process detail*, 2021, wild and cultivated rose, tansy, golden rod, choke cherry on recycled silk, 55" x 115"

The tansy flower is an invasive species that spreads out to naturalize, but sticks to its patches. The rose bush could also be considered an invasive native species that roots down and spreads out. Their differences are important to acknowledge and also their work to hold the riverbank together. I began working with foraging and dyeing invasive species as tests for the bundle dyed panels, but I remembered nôhkom Jo-Ann's words and realized I needed to bundle dye with the plants together. Leah Decter writes "relational practices interrogate and actively work to unseat white settler dominance" (Decter 2018). To "unseat" the decorative rose as a complex colonial visual, my family and I engaged in a relational practice of ethical harvest and bundle dyeing to create the "wallpaper". The textile panels serve as an everyday decolonial act of the repair work as descendants of settlers, and the importance of relationship building. *My Grandmother's Wallpaper Re-imagined* adds to the complex conversation of native and invasive plants as metaphor for decolonizing through ecological material culture.

To engage directly, ethically and in a sustained way with place, it is important to honor reciprocity. Reciprocity is most significant in ongoing intimate acts that form relationship of trust and going forward allyship (Hunt and Holmes 2017). To honor the knowledge that nôhkom Jo-Ann shared we bundle dyed a special shawl (Figure 12.) made with plants and medicines to say thank you. We look forward to continuing to develop reciprocal relationships through curiosity and gift giving.



Figure 12. *Bundle dyed (Eco printed) shawl*, 2021, Silk, bamboo cotton, wild rose, raspberry leaf, sage, cedar, golden rod and orange day lilies, 79" x 35" (2 meters).

The red rose tea tin sinks from its own weight into the snow, leaving a hole and disappearing from our view. *The Weight of Inheritance* (Figure 13.) is projected into the fourth gallery. When the archive ceases to exist what is left over? What marks are left behind and what will we find when the snow melts? This video work documents the cycle of the red rose tea tin as exposed to heat and weight. The video is looped and after 3:40 minutes the tin pops back up- referencing in ongoing decolonial work, we must keep addressing colonial structures within our inheritance. The photograph, *Rusted Red Rose Tea Tin in Autumn* (Figure 1.) displays the tea tin in the patch of decomposing tansy flowers completing its natural cycle. Looking forward, we can imagine how the red rose tea tin will shift and break down over time, and what might grow there in the spring.



Figure 13. *The Weight of Inheritance* installation detail room 3, 2021, video projection, 158”x79”.

Buffalo Rubbing Stone (Learning how to work ethically with stones)

The first room in the *Ecosystems of Inheritance* displayed photographic series *Memory Work with Theo* (figure 19.) that included nine light jet photographs, dibond mounted and hung in an overlapping horizontal pattern across the wall. To the right of the photo series, stone cast photo-sculptures (16)... are hung like a family photo wall. With light as an active participant, the sculptures distort the archival family photos and picture plants from beside the river.

On our first visit to Lone Rock, we were shocked to witness the Buffalo Rubbing Stone as pioneer monument. The plaques overtop the stone tells two stories, one of the Buffalo Rubbing Stone and the other monumentalizes settler pioneers of Lone Rock. There are two stories that are written, but only the settler story is acknowledged and the Buffalo Rubbing Stone is cemented over. I ask, “how do I, as settler descendant, work ethically with stones?”

When I began my degree, I intended to reshape my family archive based off of a dream. In the dream photographs fell out of the rectangle photo album and shifted into organic, womb like shapes; the memories grew to be alive and re-connected with mother earth. The memories were grassy and water-like, reflecting light around the room. I tried creating clay shapes based from my memories of the dream and came up with simple rock like shapes. I paused and reflected that I didn't need to re-invent what mother earth had already created and so began what would be a very long process to make molds with stones. I moved some river rocks from the banks of the North Saskatchewan to my studio to begin the mold making process. At this point the critiques with my supervisors and colleagues came in and helped me realize that moving stones is a process that should be reconsidered. I began to unlearn the physical embodiment of my settler

colonial inheritance. I don't have much connection with my Scottish relatives or their understanding, spiritual or otherwise of stones, so my only understanding about stones resides in an agrarian perspective of observing stones by the river and helping to move stones in farm fields. I became aware that I needed to learn how to acknowledge the relationships between stones and mother earth here in Treaty 6. I ask Dr. Dwayne Donald and he put me into contact with otoscâpewisima / pipe carrier Dale Saddleback (Samson First Nation).

To begin working with stones, as a non-Indigenous mother and artist living in Treaty 6, I stepped outside my western, auto-ethnographic framework and I ask for help on how to work ethically with stones. I met with Dale Saddleback who first taught me about presenting protocol. We discussed the Buffalo Rubbing Stone as it was removed from its original home and the renaming as settler monument. I ask him how to acknowledge and repair the ruptured relationships between the stone and mother earth? Dale was very generous and shared knowledge about stones. He spoke about the gift of stones is they remain still in one place for a long time and we as mobile humans need to take more consideration in what we pick up and move around (Saddleback, D, 2020). Dale also shared that from a nêhiyaw perspective, stones are understood as Grandfathers and instead of moving them we need to go to them, as we would the Old people, rather than moving them to us (Saddleback, Dale 2020). Further, Dr. Donald writes about the significance of rocks to Aboriginal people of the Prairies as animate, deeply spiritual entities connecting people to the past in a cyclical energy cycle. He also writes about rocks as markers on the land that provided guidance to travelers to help them orient themselves. (Donald 2009). We began to work in this ethic with our more-than-human neighbours or nêhiyaw Grandfathers.



Figure 14: *Buffalo Rubbing Stone at Lone Rock early research and quilt piece, 2021*, pigment ink on paper, cotton thread and cotton sheets, dimensions variable.

Early in my research, I felt obligated to acknowledge traditional nêhiyaw and land-based knowledges, that were “forgotten” (Connorton, 2008) in the local Lone Rock /Nunehor archives. Dr. Donald’s methodology of *Indigenous Métissage* guides on how to navigate the complex relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, artifacts and place through the relational ethics of place-stories and artifacts (Donald 2009). “*Ethical relationality*” was an ethic through which to learn about the shared colonial histories of the Buffalo Rubbing Stone and working/playing beside the nôtinitosipy / Battle River. Further, Artifacts, as described by Dr. Donald are imbued with meaning and are “tangible incarnations of social relationships embodying the attitudes and behaviors of the past” (Donald 2009). I attempted to understand the monument as

artifact and the stone as connected to the buffalo spirit. After meeting with Dale, I shifted practices and instead of moving the stones to the studio, we brought the studio to the riverbank. I made one-part stone molds with plaster (Figure 15.). It is a very challenging process to work with plaster and stones. I brought the molds (some had to be repaired), to the University and vacuum formed them with recycled, and later plant-based plastic. The front casts in the photo-sculptures were made from molds we shaped from stones and stone holes beside the nôtinitosipy / Battle river.



Figure 15. *Mold-making beside Battle River detail*, 2020, digital still images, dimensions variable.

Back in my kitchen studio, I placed the recycled plastic casts on top of printed photographs and observed how the cast distorted the underlying photograph. The introduction of light created reflections and refractions disturbing the image further. Light transformed the sculpture to a rippled watery surface full of diffracted and reflected light. It is a beautiful, alluring effect breaking down the photograph back to its basic component of collected light. *Photo-graphy*, means drawing with light and is an inherently complex and controlled colonial practice of collecting. The photo-sculptures revealed patterns of collected light and I asked, what if light

could enter and exit on its own in the gallery space? Sovereign light. In a perfect installation, the light is free to interact with the photo-sculptures in the daily rotation of the sun.

The stone casts created a new lens, a “stone lens” through which to look at archival photographs and new photos from our visits to the river. The distortion from the casts became a very important part of the photo-sculptures. The distorted view was at once a mirror that reflected my own relationship with my family stories and also a reflection of the unsettling process. I likened it to looking into the river, murky with so many unknowable entangled relationships. I brought the photo sculptures to the Battle River. I documented the photo sculptures in the places where they were first pictured and included large stones and the river as an attempt to visualize a dialogue between memory and place. The sculptures became temporal memory sites or memory droplets with obscured meanings.



Figure 16. *Stone Cast Photo-sculptures with archival photographs*, 2020-2021, photo-sculpture titles: Chokecherry Bush, Rose flower, Goldenfinger Potenilla, Grandma swimming in river, Yarrow Flower, Girls with Horses, Family Picnic, Rose Bush, Battle River, Framed digital pigment prints, 12" circle and 7" oval, thermoformed recycled and plant-based plastic cast (outer), digital pigment print, balsa wood with varnish, dimensions variable.



Figure 17. *Grandma Swimming in the Battle River 2020*, photo-sculpture and digital photograph, variable sizes.



Figure 18. *Family Picnic and Yarrow Flowers stone cast photo-sculptures, 2020-2021* thermoformed recycled and plant-based plastic cast (outer), digital pigment print, balsa wood with varnish, 8”x6”x7”, 8”x11”x9”.

The series, *Memory Work with Theo* (Figure 2.) lives in an uncomfortable tension between reflection and diffraction. In the process of visiting and documenting the photo-sculptures in the landscape, I came to the realization that I was running the risk, as Donna Haraway says, of “mirroring sameness”. I was risking perpetuating or monumentalizing my family settler imagery in the land, the very images that I was attempting to re-story. Haraway writes “...Unlike reflections, diffractions do not displace the same elsewhere, in more or less a distorted from...Rather diffraction can be a metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness ...one committed to making a difference and not to repeating the Sacred Image of Same.” (Haraway 2015) I ask, “do the sculptures re-insert my family stories back into the land, or do they offer critical difference?”

To think through the photographs, I remember Dr. Donald’s artifact framework and the practice of “Indigenous Métissage”. Donald writes, “Indigenous Métissage is a practice to interpret the relationship between an artifact and place by examining the Aboriginal and Canadian perspective of the artifact and place as they are rooted in colonial histories and logics that are both simultaneously and paradoxically antagonistic and conjoined” (Donald 2009). The photographs and photo-sculptures in *Memory Work with Theo* series become artifacts into the gallery that contemplate our relationship with place. The first two photographs in the *Memory Work with Theo* (Figure 19.) series depict the shape of animal dens in a canola field where the Buffalo Rubbing Stone once lived and where its buffalo descendants made wallows. The animals, perhaps coyotes or moose, made their dens in the same areas where the buffalo used to make wallows. The shape of the dens in the field tells of the animal memory in this place. The images combined together speaks to the complicated relationship between the artifacts of my inheritance and the intersectional layered knowledges in this place.



Figure 21. *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden*, 2021, cotton sheets, natural dyed Canadian national railway table cloth, wool, cotton thread, 80"x70".

Flowing down the exhibition, we enter the second gallery. *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden* (Figure 21.) is an appliqué quilt that acknowledges the harms and gifts of inheritance by physically sewing personal family stories together with the national settler colonial narratives. The quilt is framed by a flowing material river (references the nôtinitosipy/ Battle river), it has 40 patches that attempts to visualize multiple material conversations shifting the pioneer monologue to a material dialogue with place. I intervene in my family archive by using layers of hand and machine stitching, printable sewing interfacing, cross-stitch and embroidery to re-story the role settler women play in constructing narratives of home. There are gaps in the archive, in my aunts' memories and so I have left spaces open and unfinished in the quilt. Many loose threads hang down and spill into and connect patches like root systems.

During our visits with the Buffalo Rubbing Stone we holding true to a *Critical Place Inquiry*, engaging in a direct, ethical and sustained way. My immediate family participates in attending and witnessing māmawiw kākîsimowin (a peaceful spiritual ceremony that acknowledges and prays home the spirit of the buffalo that has been displaced), with otoscâpewisima (Elder helper) Dale Saddleback (from Samson Cree First Nation) and Dr. Dwayne Donald. This traditional ceremony as Dale says, is done in four parts and is the first of many steps, that will take a long time and works to re-matriate¹ the Buffalo Rubbing Stone.



Figure 22. Detail of Buffalo Rubbing Stone/ Stone Back quilt patch, *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden*, 2021, cotton-blend sheets, wool, cotton thread, 6”x8”.

I began to sew the “Buffalo Rubbing Stone/ Stone Back” patch after the first pipe ceremony with otoscâpewisima Dale Saddleback with fabric from the ceremony. This piece is centered on the

¹ I use the term re-matriation when working with Elder Dale Saddleback. I draw from his experience of being visited by Grandmother buffalo spirit during our first sweat lodge ceremony. I also draw from his articulation of Eve Tuck and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson contextualizing matriarchy and alternate futures for justice specifically in our context thinking about the reciprocal relationship of grandmother buffalo stone with mother earth as oppose to the colonial understanding of “land” to be settled.

quilt and acknowledges a fraught colonial relationship of the present state of the stone cemented as pioneer monument. The patch represents the stone as buffalo and the complex ecological relationships it held before the settlers came to the area in 1905. The act of stitching the stone into the quilt interprets the relationship between the stone, monument, place through material culture. While making this patch, I contemplated the spiritual complexity of the stone and the actions of the early settlers who didn't comprehend the significance and removed the stone and renamed it to reflect their new identity.

The settlers removed and then cemented over the Buffalo Rubbing Stone rupturing the stones identity that had existed for centuries. Does the patch repair moving and renaming a sacred stone? I am reminded of Connorton's discussion of the violence of forgetting in the formation of new identity. He describes how long term forgetting occurs because of cultural discarding in the interest of forming a new identity (Connorton 2008). To subvert this violent act, I have intervened into the archive and sewed the buffalo and stone together with a hand stitched note "stone back". This piece is a gesture of hope and creates a material artifact that can begin decolonial conversations to mend ruptures caused by the forgetful actions of the early settlers.

Decolonizing Mothering and Memory Work

I define myself as mother and this refers to me being situated and engaged in a complex set of interdependent relations. Artist mother group, Maternal Fantasies describe motherhood as “a social and political position; a relationship and responsibility.” (Maternal Fantasies 2020). I am positioned in this work through a state of “collective production” where I find myself undertaking artistic responsibilities, as well as the domestic and emotional labour of taking care of my son. (Maternal Fantasies 2020). My deliberate recognition of myself as mother in my thesis is in itself a subversive act of care that attempts to subvert settler colonialism that used female reproduction as a tool to expand the British empire across Turtle Island. Historian Dr. Sarah Carter writes “...a thousand Englishmen in a colony are a thousand men and no more, every English woman that you take out at the same time carries with her, as it were, four potential English colonists as well.” (Carter 2015). By welcoming motherhood into my Graduate thesis work, I am attempting to nurture experiences and situations where my son can learn about and challenge the complex colonial history in the place where our relatives settled.

Beside the river my son and I engage in intergenerational memory work through Theo’s natural inclination to play. Theo’s method of encountering “the knots we call beings” (Haraway2016), has taught me to embrace curiosity as a way to build relationships with the land. His curiosity and creativity sparked our new relationships with plants and animals who live beside the river. We engaged in a method of “rotational authorship” (Maternal Fantasies 2020) to begin our intergenerational work. Theo and I work with memories from our visits to the river through drawing and quilting. Our family conversations while drawing at the kitchen table and in the car

became intimate sites where we confront and challenge the dominant white pioneer narrative of home, putting to work “everyday decolonial praxis” (Hunt and Holmes 2015).



Figure 23. *Birds Under the Bridge, Secret Den, Rotting Oil Silo and Oil Silo Tubes*, 2020-2021, graphite and watercolour by Theo Bond- Price, framed 16”x20”.

Theo’s natural play connected us with the mud, water and plants. These times of play by the river were nourishing and invited us into direct contact with place without any motives of seeing or recording, rather, just *being with* place. Theo drew what he remembered from our trips including the trucks driving over the Unwin Bridge with swallows, battle river, coyote den, and rusted oil silos. To make tangible, what I am calling our intergenerational memory work in *Inheritance is a Gift, but it is also a Burden* (Figure 21.), I interpreted his drawings and made them into quilt pieces, sewing his memory into the material family archive. I invited Theo to talk a little bit about his work and I have transcribed what he said.

“These are my drawings. Um I made them after we went to where my mom is doing all her work and stuff near Lloydminster, [pause]. The first one is at the

Battle River Bridge. We found swallows living under the bridge in their nests. They built them with sorta gravel and dirt and mud. The second one is a coyote or wolf den with cow bones on the doorstep. The third one is a picture of an oil silo rotting from oil it had. And the fourth one is just a bunch of oil silos we saw on our trips. The first two I drew and then put watercolour on them. The last two are pencil and markers.” (Theo Bond Price 2022).

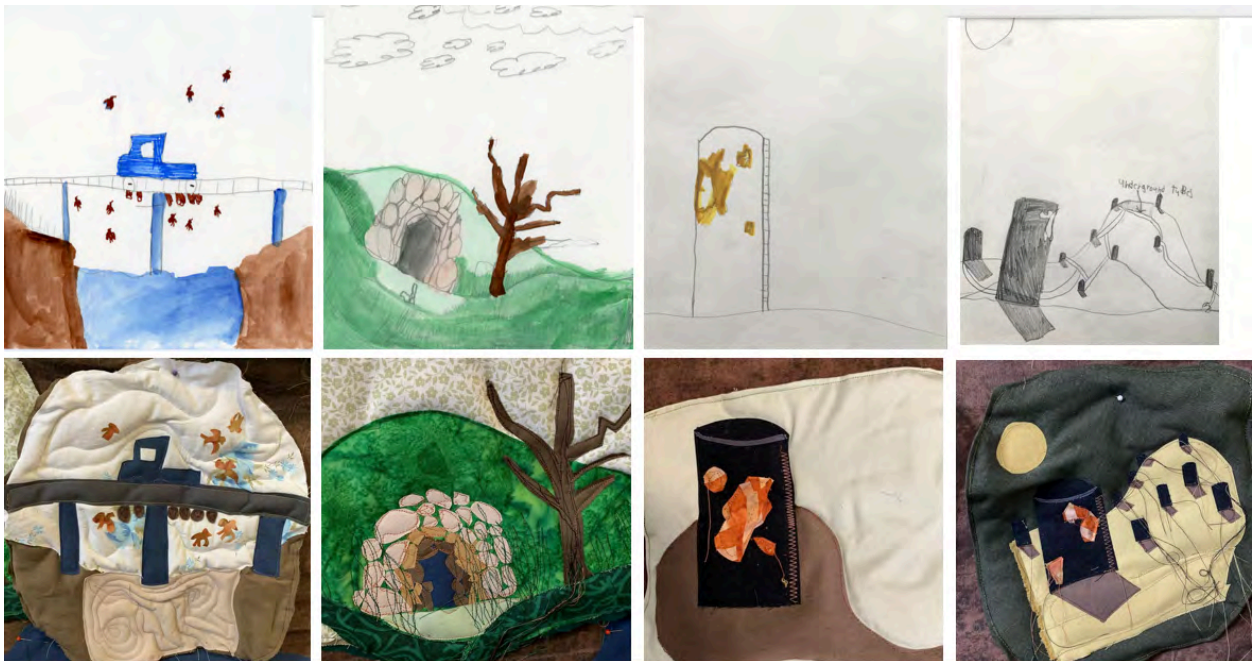


Figure 24. *Birds Under the Bridge, Secret Den, Rotting Oil Silo and Oil Silo Tube with quilted interpretations, 2020-2021, graphite and watercolour, cotton blend sheets, cotton thread, dimensions variable.*

Intergenerational memory work can be done without the biological mother title. The term mother can also represent a dedication or attention to, a protection of, or as mother artist group, Maternal Fantasies describes “a state of mind full of interruptions that gives rise to a distinctive worldview (Maternal Fantasies 2019). I began to research more conversation and feminist story-based decolonial models engaging with children, neighbors and folkx from outside a cisgender, straight, white woman perspective. The “everyday decolonial praxis” (Hunt and Holmes 2015) by cisgender queer Indigenous and White settler scholars Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes is an

inspiring model following allyship through everyday interactions to build reciprocal relationships at home. Within the quiet actions of Theo drawing his memories of visiting the river, we had multiple conversations that question settler colonial ideologies specifically around the legacy of agriculture and the oil and gas industry.

His drawings (Figure 23.) are made from his perspective - as his eyes saw them. He hasn't learned about "birds-eye-view" or Google maps relationship to how we popularly observe and map space. It became to interpret how Theo saw the river, birds and trucks etc... as a child that hasn't been exposed to Eurocentric ways of mapping. Quilting Theo's drawings into the material archive sewed connections from his memories into our family legacy and remapped the archive. In the quilt we pass down our responsibility as settler descendants and the legacy of oil silos, but also and perhaps more importantly his relationship with the river, animals and plants. The intergenerational memory work, through intimate conversations, drawings and quilting memories, make space for reciprocal relationships alongside the Battle river. These intimate acts rupture dominant colonial mapping systems that are ever present in the immaculate patchwork grid of the prairies.



Figure 25. *Looking at the Future through a Stone lens*, 2020-2021, Memory work with Theo series, Lightjet photograph, dibond mount, 36"x24".



Figure 26. *Standing on the Footprint of the Farm*, 2020-2021, Memory work with Theo series, Lightjet photograph, dibond mount, 36"x24".

I pictured my son Theo in *Looking at the Future through a Stone Lens* (Figure 25.) at the beginning of the exhibition. He is standing along the river bank playing with a stick with coulee hills in the background and oil silos in the far distance. On our visit, Theo and I play a game with the plastic casts. We take them off the sculptures and Theo holds one up to look through it like an actual stone lens. I look through it to take a photograph of him, wondering what his relationship with this place will be when I am gone. In another photograph *Standing on the Footprint of the Farm*, (Figure 26.), Theo is standing in an agriculture field near the old family homestead. His feet are pictured near a salt lick, prairie sage, mixed grasses and cow dung. It is an intentional decision to include him in the photograph as a way to shift the archive to include how he is connected to this place going forward.

On the exhibit wall, our family images shift to show our growing relationships with plants viewed through the stone cast photo-sculptures (Figure 16.). Recycled and plant-based plastic was used as the casting material and represents a relationship between the plants, that hold the river bank together, and the extractive oil and gas industries that exist across Buzzard Coulee. On another visit, Theo picks up the stone cast and we again play looking through it. In *Bubble to the oil silo* (Figure 27.) , He pictures an oil silo and then it is my turn, I look through and picture the tree line of a farm field in *Bubble to the Trees* (Figure 27.). This element of play helps us to encounter as neighbors in this place to further understand our entangled connections. In this work, I don't know all the stories and I never will, but in visiting we learned more about our relationship and responsibility to this place where our relatives settled. Most of our visits, took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, we didn't visit with human family so we instead visited with the plants and river instead. The introduction of the plastic casts introduces oil and gas into

my family archive and also comments on our complicit relationship with oil.



Figure 27. *Bubble to the Oil Silo and Bubble to the Trees*, 2020-2021, Light jet photograph, dibond mount, 30" x 20".



Figure 28. *The Folds of Buzzard Coulee*, 2020 archival pigment ink on cotton blend fabric, 24" x 85".

Oil and Sewing Action Project

The Folds of Buzzard Coulee (Figure 28.) is a photographic textile work. This work takes the form of a ruptured panoramic photograph acknowledging the stones/ nêhiyaw knowledge keepers through the slow shifts and changes in Buzzard Coulee, Saskatchewan. The flexible photograph re-tells witnessing a pile of moved stones and an abandoned oil well, the legacy of the heavy oil fields. The layered exposures of the still digital image offer a place to begin investigating the layers where coulee life emerges and the creases where Google map folds in on itself. This piece transitions the work from printed photographs into textile work in FAB gallery.



Figure 29. "Why can't we swim in the river, Mom?", 2021 applique quilt, cotton blend (hand-me-down sheets) bundle dyed, thread, polybatting, 80" x 60.

Why Can't We Swim in the River, Mom? (Figure 29.) is an appliqué quilt that depicts the fracking sites in Buzzard Coulee (north of the Battle River) made in response to my son's question "Why can't we swim in the river Mom?" Imagery of the oil and gas industry was forgotten in my family and local archive and in visiting the Lone Rock area, we were surprised at the extent of the extractive industries that exist². The quilt is made of hand-me-down sheets and naturally dyed "grandma" fabrics and bundle dyed fabric with rose and raspberry leaves. The tea tin shape is used again to call attention to the grid and the sperm like shapes represent the oil fracking tap dug outs spotted over the entire landscape. The quilt visuals respond to the Google map images of the heavy oil field south east of Lloydminster that began in the 1950's. The quilt sews together the birds eye view to communicate the intense extraction that is occurring and contrasts it by depicting the fracking sites with warm cozy "grandma fabrics". The blanket asks the viewer to reconsider the naturalization of oil that exists around us every day.

² Based on our first experiences of witnessing the heavy oil fields south east of Lloydminster that contains over 12,000 oil silos, (BRWA, 2014) and observing the heavy agriculture farms or "Dow Land" as the locals call it, we demised the river water was not safe for Theo to swim in. 53/54The nôtinitosipy or Battle River doesn't have a head water source like the kisiskâciwanisîpiy or the North Saskatchewan, so the water quality and temperature are impacted by prairie run off. Many pollutants can affect the quality of the water including local towns discharging their partially treated waste water into the river. Non-point pollutants can also impact the river including oil and gas industry and agriculture, specifically nitrogen inducing fertilizer. The oil and gas industry are regulated however almost all of the water safety plans are non-regulatory advice, so they are based on voluntary implementations of residents and municipality decision makers (BRWA 2014). The Unwin bridge is a point of crossing and is also a site where the water is tested and monitored for flow, temperature as well as metals, nutrients, bacteria and pesticides.



Figure 30: *Heavy Oil Field RM of Wilton*, Google maps screen shot, 2021, *digital still image and details of Why Can't we Swim in the River, Mom?* Appliqué quilt, 80"x60".

My Aunt Frances says to me “oil is in everything” (Aunty Frances 2020), and this comment is absolutely true, however offers no discussion of how to use less, or support of other green energy options. Oil just is. The naturalization of oil reminds me of Vercini’s



“narrative deficit”(Decter 2018) and the monologue that naturalizes the oil and gas industry with little to no meaningful discussion of change. How do we begin to move forward the discussion of oil? My Aunt Lauri says “...the quilting is what makes the quilt...” (Aunty Lauri 2020). The long-arm quilt stitching brings the front and back together creating a story that can be viewed from both sides. The very nature of the quilt reflects what is needed to recognize the monologue and sew a dialogue. The layers of the earth are stitched into the very fabric of the quilt acknowledging how the land has been shaped by the Battle river, settlement, the plants

and animal paths over time. On the other hand, the quilting represents a topographical map of Buzzard Coulee drawing attention to how extractive industry views the coulee as sites for fracking and resource extraction. In the stitching, I reflect on Dr. Donald's writing about layers as "symbols as sediments of experience and memory that characterize contested cultural territories" (Donald 2009). The quilt as a flexible membrane can begin a conversation to uproot settler maps (Hunt 2016). On the reverse side, I have sewn a rose root system (Figure 30.). Where there is extraction, there are also deeper and more complex root systems holding the ground together. These systems actively work to process carbon, intervene and offer a hopeful model for reparation in these settled lands. I ask, "How can we better support the rose roots?"

Enfolding a Heavy Oil Field: Sewing Action (Figure 31.) is a relational art project (Bourriaud 2002) that offers a way forward through a collective sewing action. During the exhibit, participants were invited to cross-stitch text to re-story family conversations about sustainability, carbon tax, and impact of oil fracking across Treaty 6 Territory. Participants were invited to follow the conversation, and or intervene and stitch their thoughts into the material. This work offers a way to sit with and deepen conversations about the impact of oil in daily life. This work was inspired by Jaime Isaac and Leah Decter sewing action project "Official Denial Trade Value in Progress" as a platform for reflection, dialogue and exchange (Decter and Isaac 2012).



Figure 31. *Enfolding a Heavy Oil Field: a sewing action project, FAB Gallery, 2021, cotton thread, cotton embroidery cloth, wooden hoops, 8”x10”ea.*

This project was inspired by a conversation between my Aunts and myself. It was originally consensually recorded, transcribed into a word document and key phrases from the conversation were designed with the freely sourced “Hovden Stitch” font and laser printed on cut embroidery squares 8”x11”. The embroidery font was inspired by my aunts love of cross stitch as their chosen visual language. The conversation began as follows; I ask my Aunts to talk about the changes in the Lone Rock area since the 1950’s when the first oil well was dug (Eaton and Zinc

2017). My Aunt Betty began recalling a memory about the windmill in the farm that served as a water pump. She said "...if the wind didn't blow there was no water..." and reflected that "...there was never enough water..." (Aunt Betty 2020) so the water pump mechanism was disabled from the windmill and they sourced water from a different well system. We began talking about green energy sources that use wind power such as the wind turbines. My Aunts grew critical during our conversation about green energy, (as an alternate to the oil and gas industry) and criticized the wind turbines because of their large batteries that can leach acid into the land after their disuse. They also grew critical of paying carbon tax and the conversation stood still. I suggested that carbon tax is important because it holds us citizens accountable for how much energy we use and encourages us all to conserve and use less. I suggested that based on their memories, they were experts in conservation back on the farm. I then asked "so how did you conserve on the farm?" The conversation turned around and they happily shared stories of how they hung dry their clothes outside and how wonderful it smelled in the winter. etc....

During the exhibition folks from across the University participated in the cross-stitch project. After the first session of cross stitching, the group quickly realized was how the cross-stitch cloth and printed text occupied different spaces. As the cross-stitcher, you have to choose between threading the needle through a pre-made hole or pushing it through the cotton without. The grid of the cross-stitch fabric is a reminder of structures that we can never fully exit from. Cross-stitch reminds us to see the grids inherent within the oil fracking industry. Some of the cross-stitch pieces were stitched ignoring the text and opting for the simple cross stitch grid and other pieces were stitched purposefully ignoring the grid to stick to the printed text. What results is a mix of cross stitch that wobbles in and out of the inherent grid pattern. This project is ongoing will be sewn around the outside of the quilt "Why Can't We Swim in the River, Mom?".

Family and Textile Conversations

Ecosystems of Inheritance works to unsettle settler colonial ideologies in a relational way through textile and family conversations. I draw upon Angelika Strohmayer connections between sewing as conversation and craft practices for social justice. Strohmayer quotes Claire Hunter:

“...sewing is a graphic way to add information and meaning. But it is not a monologue, it is part of a conversation, a dialogue, a correspondence only fully realized once it is seen and its messages are read.” (Strohmayer 2021).

The material conversations in *Sewing Yarrow Flowers* (Figure 32.) and *Inheritance is a Gift, but it can also be a Burden*, (Figure 21.) sew through tensions between family stories and underlying settler colonial narratives. The textile video piece and quilt become memory-sites where I intervene with subversive stitches shifting the archive from a colonial monologue into a material dialogue. In these pieces I worked from digitized family archives. The Covid-19 pandemic turned our kitchen table conversations into online conversations via platforms like Facebook video chat and Zoom meetings. My Aunts had a great deal of difficulty with the switch to online and we ended up meeting on Facebook, my role shifted to being technical difficulties manager. Conversations that were intimate and deep around the kitchen table were simplified and cut short due to technical difficulties.

On our first visit to my Grandparents homestead we notice native yarrow flowers growing by my Grandmother's house. *Sewing Yarrow Flowers* is a 4-minute video piece where I machine-sew and hand-stitch a yarrow flower textile piece to call attention to the agency of the yarrow flowers return to a now untended place where my relatives settled and have now left. In the video I sew and participate in an online conversation with my aunts, father and sister who

consider connections between our family’s absence and how the yarrow flowers came to grow there again. I work between hand stitching and machine stitching as I am still learning the difference. I think about the difference between planting seeds by hand and planting them by machine.

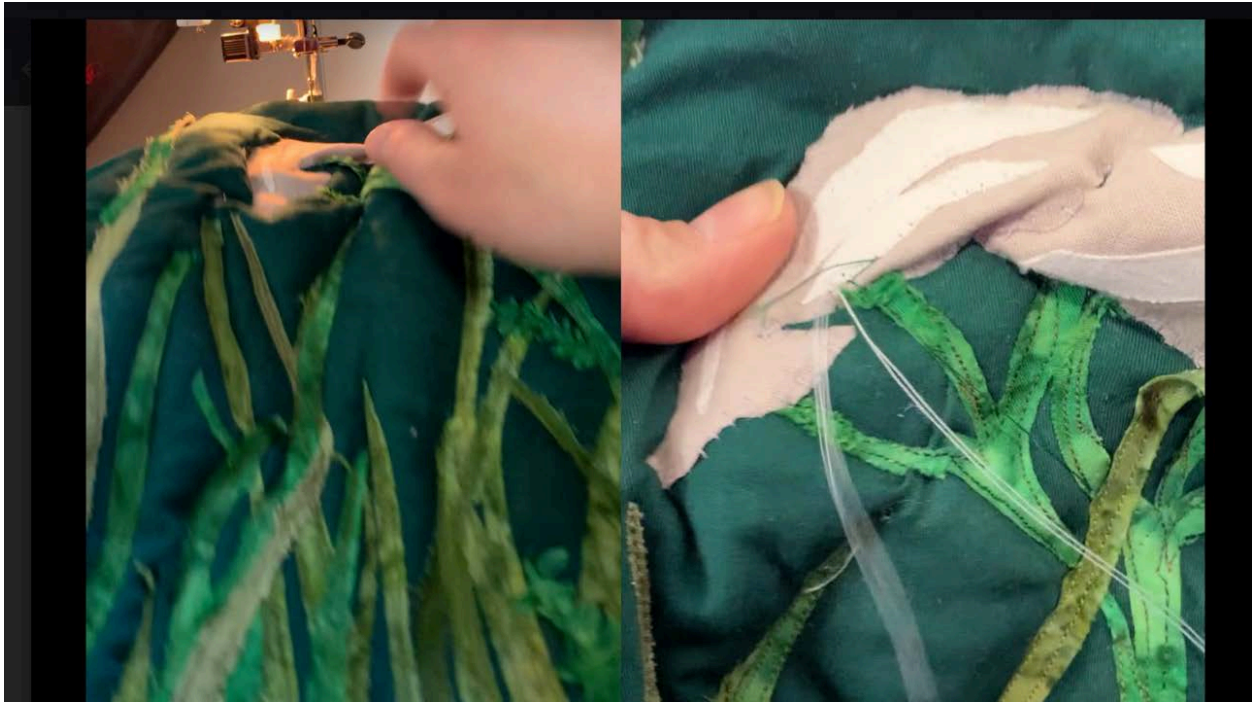


Figure 32. *Sewing Yarrow flowers still, 2021, video monitor, video 4:20, <https://vimeo.com/544871654>, 48'x24''.*

I begin the conversation by asking my aunts if they recognize the yarrow flower. My aunts and father don’t recognize the yarrow flower. My Aunt Carol says

“I really don’t recall this flower all over the place. Not at all. The field... was totally plowed, like we planted potatoes... there was some grass behind the house and east of the house. And it was the garden. We had... lilacs. And then out by the garden there was the pine tree... The land around the house was plowed, and fields that had been planted with grain and whatnot. It was tilled and worked every year.” (Aunt Carol 2021).

There are moments in the conversation where my family equates taking care of the land to it being cultivated. They vent frustrations that the current steward is leaving the land to disrepair.

Towards the end of our conversation, my sister points out that perhaps it is because the land has been left and not tilled, that we have given space for the native yarrow flower to grow again.

This is the first time that my family realizes that there might be a benefit to our family leaving the homestead. My aunt says “the place *changed* after mom died”. They vent frustrations that the current farmer/steward is leaving the land to disrepair. As I sew and listen, I realize we have different understandings of what “taking care” means. I also remember my Great Aunt Beatrice’s story about government ads distributed in the early 1900’s that display perfectly manicured farms. I realize how British ideals of occupied and cultivated land are embedded in the fabric my family’s memory and consciousness.

I tell my family about how Yarrow means “to-repair” in the Dutch to English translation and we talk about its medicinal properties. Yarrow’s root structure is strong and the flowers can be chewed and used as a blood coagulant to heal wounds topically. They can also be made into tea as a women’s herb to help balance hormones among other healing properties. (Armstrong, 2020) (Grey 2011). *Sewing Yarrow Flowers* calls attention to the repair work of leaving and letting be. In our absence, the yarrow flower takes root to help repair and regenerate the land.



Figure 33. *Sewing Yarrow flowers still*, 2021, video monitor, <https://vimeo.com/544871654>, 48"x24".



Figure 34. *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden detail 2*, 2021, cotton sheets, wool, thread, 80”x70”.

CNR Tablecloth as Patchwork Quilt

There are many uncomfortable conversations between the patchwork quilt and the Dominion Land Survey in the Prairies. Dr. Sarah Carter references the “immaculate grid” as observed from a bird’s eye view as explicitly interwoven with settler prairie women’s weaving and textile work. (Carter 2016). Gina Starblanket and Dallas Hunt write in *Storying Violence*, that one of the first textual recording of this connection is visualized by Duncan Campbell Scott in 1906. Scott writes ““ceded land” across Canada is like a patchwork blanket; as far north as the confines of the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta the patches lie edge to edge.” (Starblanket and Hunt 2020). When making a patchwork quilt the form is in itself a direct tie to the legacy of colonial mapping. Those of us who live in the Prairies are complicit within the grid, and quilting offers ways to enter and exit the grid, to resist, to subvert and to be in conversation with it. My conversation with the grid began through naturally dyeing a hand-me down sheet in *Inheritance is a Gift, but it is also a burden*.

The backing of the quilt was hand-me-down fabric that my Aunty Betty sent after she cleaned out her linen closet. At the time, I was using it to experiment with some natural dyeing techniques with red rose tea and walnut husks. I read stories about how my aunts would pick hazelnuts by the nôtinitosipy / Battle River, but as this was the early summer and they were not ripe (and there was a drought so I was very hesitant to pick any), I decided to dye with locally purchased walnut instead. I soaked and mordanted the fabric over the course of two weeks, I almost forgot about it and then returning to my studio, washed and hung the large piece of fabric to dry. As I hung it up I realized there was embossing on the fabric and slowly the cloth revealed itself to be a Canadian National Railway table cloth with the CNR insignia in the center and maple leaf embossing around the four corners (Figure 35.).



Figure 35. *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden detail 3, 2021*, cotton sheets, wool, thread, 80"x70".

The CNR tablecloth lived in my aunt's linen closet for years. I am reminded of Jeanette Armstrong's critical discussion about the imperial garden in *Unsettling the Settler Within* by

Paulette Regan. Armstrong writes, "...the imperial garden we have cultivated with our colonial tools on the lands and in the lives of Indigenous Peoples." (Regan 2010). She asks us to turn over the rocks in the garden and face whatever ugly creatures slither out examining them "honestly and unflinchingly" (Regan 2010). *Inheritance is a Gift, but it can also be a Burden*, aligns with Armstrong's work and attempts to challenge the romantic myths in my family archive and share openly what I have learned. Sewing an unconventional patchwork quilt became a method that changed our family legacy. The linen closet from which the fabric came, shifted in its practical function of holding cloth to a necessary critical and reflexive space. Similar to Armstrong's garden framework, the white settler linen closet is at once a privileged construct and the fabric held within must be examined "honestly and unflinchingly" (Regan 2010).

This quilt has two sides and can tell more than one story. The fabric is a flexible or porous membrane (Hunt 2016), in which family stories and colonial narratives are interwoven. I reversed the table cloth as the quilt backing, so when it is looked at it from the front, the CNR insignia is backwards. The reversal was inspired by and recalls how the Canadian flag is turned upside down in Indigenous resistance movements who challenge the monolithic settler nation state. Leah Decter states, "the settler state knows what to know and what not to know, which stories to tell and to hear and which to ignore" (Decter 2018). In my family archive, the railway and land plots are galvanized as glorious pioneer stories. They don't tell any of the harms because my family didn't see the harms, instead they were privileged to reap the benefits of living on good farm land. The back of the quilt calls attention to Canada as a colonial map with land plots and railway infrastructure. On the front, the quilt has the reversed tablecloth, re-contextualizing and situating personal family stories on un-surrendered Treaty 6 Territory. On

the back, the CNR insignia has hand-sewn red threads that recognize the harms that have been forgotten in my family stories. On the front of the quilt, the patches have been sewn on, some partially sewn as patches that can be removed. I was told that the earth can ever really be owned, it can only be bought for a time (Harnett 2021). The stitched patches speak to how the next generation of stories will change, the patches can be lifted off, unraveled and re-stitched to recognize that shift and change.

Quilt Patches



Figure 36. *My Aunts Hand* and *Grandma and Aunt Beatrice Swimming in the River*, 2021, from *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden* quilt, cotton sheets, wool, thread, 6” x8”.

My aunts originally conceived of a family patchwork quilt as a way to have their hands in our family archive project. Cross-stitch, embroidery or quilting are slow textile processes they knew well, and offered a personal space in which they could look back into their memory, choose a memory of the farm and pass it down. Unfortunately, due to poor health and old hands, only one of my Aunt’s was able to contribute a cross-stitch piece and my other three aunts sent fabric. After sharing stories from the archive, they passed their memories to me and with my young hands I made a quilt that spoke to hard conversations with care. The greatest gift of working with my aunts was their process of sharing stories and fabric. Our roles in the project became clear.

We could unsettle the family photo archive together, but in our own separate ways. They shared stories and fabric, and I re-storied their stories and fabric to create an unconventional “patchwork” quilt, interpreting a tradition interwoven with women’s work in the Prairies.

To begin making *Inheritance is a gift and also a burden*, I began by selecting visual and oral stories that depicted the roles women play(ed) in constructing narratives of home which, often simultaneously uplifted the hero pioneer myth in the archive. The stories are layered, edited and sewn together. The archival photographs were printed on printable interfacing and sewn one patch at a time. Sewing the photographs was challenging and presented questions about what I wanted to include and not include. My role, as listening Granddaughter and archive observer was activated to novice quiltmaker and conversation starter. Since I knew the quilt would be shown publicly, the family archive would need to shift to include public stories that includes settler propaganda and Treaty 6. Other visual conversations center relationships between plants and animals shift stories away from settler propaganda models of progress to my family’s relationship to the river. The shape of the “red rose tea tin” patch represents a shifting settlement grid. As the patches flow down to the river, they take shape based on the organic coulee formation.

In some of the photo patches, I deliberately chose to take out my relatives faces and left the imprint of their figures in cloth to represent the roles they played in relationship to place and simultaneously in the colonial project of Canada. In my family archive, my Great Aunt Beatrice writes “...at this time, the government ads were promoting homesteads in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan” (Sinfield 1967). I often wonder how much the settler propaganda

from the turn of the century, constructed and shifted my family's vision and values of what home looks like. For example, in *Our Role in Colonization* (Figure 38.). I quilted a patch based from a beautiful photograph of my Grandmother holding my Aunt Carol, in front of their farmhouse and garden. The photograph is remarkably similar to the early government ads that were used in constructing settler colonial agricultural narratives across the Prairies. As Granddaughter, I was horrified to realize the overlap of visuals between the photographers (my Grandfather) vision, the photograph of my Grandmother and her child, and the government ads they would have seen. I decided to remove my Grandmother's representational image (face/ clothes), so just her silhouette remains. The act of removing my Grandmother's likeness from the quilted patch may seem more harmful, however I see it as an act of care revealing the harms present in the archive. In this public quilt, my Grandmother's face, body, spirit, is no longer tied to the role of colonizer, like the woman in *Canada West Magazine*, rather in sewing, the role and responsibility is put back onto the Government's shoulders.



Figure 37. *Canada- The New Homeland*, *Canada West Magazine* cover, 2020, beside *Grandmother Dorothy holding Aunty Betty*, silver gelatin 120mm negative, red rose tea tin archive, dimensions variable.



Figure 38. *Our role in colonization*, 2021, from *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden* quilt, cotton sheets, wool, thread, 6" x8".



Figure 39. *Inheritance is a gift, but it can also be a burden detail 4*, 2021, cotton, sheets, wool, thread, 80"x70".

One of the ways my Aunts were involved in this project was sending fabric for the quilt. In response to our discussion (quilting personal memories rather than archival stories) my Aunt sent me a bright green fabric with floating red barns shown in Figure 39. On the cloth edge the manufacturing label reads “farm fresh” fabric. When I received this fabric I was very surprised, because we had discussed sharing fabric that represented a personal memory. I asked my aunt and she said “this fabric sums up the farm for me”. The fabric struck me that it is possible for generic symbols of the farm to distill her experiences or to even replace them. This fabric is violent because of how it simplifies and replaces her complex personal experience. Stepping from an autoethnographic framework, I felt obligated to make this piece from a place of settler colonial criticality. Dr. Leah Decter works from a white settler perspective, who’s artwork and scholarship recognizes the localized effects of settler colonial inheritance. (Decter 2018.). Decter’s work leads and interrogates idealized conceptions of the past and has inspired me to subvert settler colonialism in the fabric of my family archive.

I intervened in this patch by quilting it to accentuate the floating barns. It is necessary to laugh at a colonial structure you can’t completely exit. Laughter can be used in tense situations to lighten the mood and to settler colonialism more accessible to discuss. The quilted farm fabric can disrupt and reveal generic white farm memories. While making this piece, I asked myself if my aunt is forgetting her actual experiences to instead foster what she has been taught to see, a generic national narrative. This patch pokes questions at the legacy of generic nation building visuals present in my family’s linen closet.



Figure 40. *Family conversation at Lone Rock community center, July 2021, digital still, photo credit: Roger Garcia, dimension variable.*

In July 2021, I meet with my extended family at the Lone Rock community center built directly in front of the Buffalo Rubbing Stone. We were gathered for the memorial of my Great Aunt Beatrice who passed in 2020. I brought the quilt as many of my aunts were keen to see its development. Showing the quilt to them was my first thesis defense. They observed and asked inquisitively about each piece and why I made them. As I explained the different pieces, there was a lot nodding, silences and then more questions. They asked if it was done based on all of the loose threads. I spoke about how I was attempting to unravel the stories and sew my interpretation of photographs (stories from the archives), but more specifically stories that were not included. They were surprised by my aesthetic choices as it differs quite drastically from traditional quilting methods and said “oh, but it’s an art quilt” as a more comfortable resolution to my stray threads and irregular patches. They were proud of me as aunties are of their nieces who are interested in family history, but I am unsure how they felt or made sense of my re-storying. Silences hold a lot of weight.

Conclusion and reflection

Sylvia McAdams speaks about agriculture and Treaty from a nêhiyawiskwêw (cree woman) perspective. She says, “That is what those women *willed* for the generations so that they would live off of the land in a new way. Because they understood that the buffalo were gone and that the land would be shared.” (McAdams 2014). I continue think about her words and the work that is left to do. Her words inspire me to hold space and further ask, “how can we sew models for co-habitation in these settled lands?”

Engaging in critical conversations with family is really important and is for the most part invisible work that I have attempted to visualize in *Ecosystems of Inheritance*. But it is not enough. Hunt and Holmes remind me that allyship needs intimate acts of solidarity with Indigenous peoples to continue to acknowledge and repair to build reciprocal relationships (Hunt and Holmes 2015). The artworks are entangled together in what Loveless describes as a “situated complexity” (Loveless- Sawchuck and Chapman 2015). The imperfect stitches, the threads left and the tangles of bobbin thread on the reverse side is telling that my version of the stories is not perfect. This imperfection leaves room for another family member in the future to take out the stitches and/or stitch a different way telling another version based on where they stand.

An on-going part of this project surrounds the re-matriation of the Buffalo Rubbing Stone at Lone Rock. This work has begun and will extend past my Graduate thesis focusing on rebuilding relationships and land back/decolonizing actions. I am currently working to decolonize the place where four generations of my family settled, in what is now known as

Lone Rock, SK. The decolonization work is connected to the unsettling work, but has a direct connection with the land through the Buffalo Rubbing Stone and establishing relationship and community with the Dale Saddleback and Dr. Dwayne Donald. We continue to visit the place where my relatives previously settled to take responsibility and keep conversations going with my family members laying the groundwork to re-matriate the Buffalo Rubbing Stone.

My explorations continue to bring up more and more questions. I began my MFA degree wishing to situate my family stories in relationship with Treaty 6 Territory and further contextualize those stories through critical white settler research and digital textile processes. Working with casting, textiles and natural dyeing have shifted my photo-based practice to a visual arts realm I actually never thought I would explore. The Covid-19 pandemic played a part in determining my studio practice and resulting thesis research. In March 2020, I moved out of my studio at the University of Alberta due to Covid-19 pandemic safety measures. There was little to no access to my studio, traditional / digital photography or Industrial Design facilities for extended periods of time for the following two years. Theo, my son, wasn't allowed with me on campus for the duration of my degree. I made the decision to work from home with digitally inspired textiles which, as I found out was imperative to the reflexive nature of the unsettling work.

A significant outcome from this creative research are the textile conversations that intersect and diverge building story and relationships. This body of artwork and thesis paper have been an incredible making journey that has taught me the importance of looking back and sewing as conversation. The process of making is vital to nonlinear relationship building that sews a more flexible family legacy forward.

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Biography

Lindsey Bond (she/her) is an intermedia artist-mother born in amiskwacîwâskahikan (Beaver Hills House) or Edmonton. Using slow textile and photographic processes she intervenes in her white-settler family archive to think-through her responsibility as mother and settler descendant to remember and sew a relationship with the earth. Lindsey recently defended her MFA thesis [Ecosystems of Inheritance](#) at The University of Alberta. She also received her BFA in Photography from Emily Carr University of Art + Design and studied Visual Communications at Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland. Her artwork has been exhibited in The TREX Program, Gallery 44, MAWA, and The Richmond International Film + Media Arts Festival.
Website: www.lindseybond.ca