“Tienes Que Ser Bien Educada”: A Call for Art, Reconciliation, and Justice in Education

Eileen Graciela Jimenez

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Reading Committee:

Robin Minthorn, Co-Chair

Michelle Montgomery, Co-Chair

Laura Rendon

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Dedication

Di beña i mä nänä. Mana pa ga nuhu. Na pa gañandihu. Di mödi i.

This dissertation, this degree and this heartwork is dedicated to my *maese*, mä nänä, maria cruz jimenez martinez saavedra.

Acknowledgement

Vuela amigo, vuela alto

No seas gaviota en el mar.

I can still hear my mother humming this line of one of her favorite songs. One of the most painful experiences has been navigating this doctoral journey and my journey back to connection without her physical presence in my life, and yet, I can feel her spirit continuing to guide me, to walk beside me, especially when I play her songs. My mother was so full of life, and walked with so much joy despite experiencing so much pain. I never understood that until now. I now understand the kind of strength and love she carried in her body- her love and joy transcended pain because of her Indigeneity. Her extraordinary brilliance, her resilience and her visions of the future fed her spirit and her spirit fed mine. I am so inspired by the women in my life- my mother, my grandmother, my aunties, my friends- because as matriarchs, as culture keepers, as leaders, they fuel the fires that keep our generations and our stories alive. Often when I yearn for connection with my mother, my grandmothers and my ancestors, I imagine I'm making my way to them. I meet them in my grandmother's yard off Broadway street in Anaheim, they're speaking to me in our family's language. I don't speak it, but I understand it, and I know what they are saying- "you are safe now, you are loved, you will be more than okay". I can feel the cool breeze on my skin, and I know they are right. I know we are connected and always will be.

I don't have enough words to share how full of gratitude I feel for the support I've felt throughout this journey to and through this degree. I am eternally grateful for my loved ones who have made me felt loved and cared for- from making space for my experiences, my visioning, my reflections about readings, this degree, this dissertation and my future, to making sure I had the books I needed for classes, to cooking meals for me on days I had class, for keeping me

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Abstract

"Tienes Que Ser Bien Educada": A Call for Art, Reconciliation, and Justice in Education

Eileen Graciela Jimenez

Co-Chairs of the Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Robin Minthorn and Dr. Michelle Montgomery

Department of Educational Leadership

Settler colonialism and colonized methodologies have created systems and power dynamics that continue to allow the holders of power and decision makers to deem what is ethical and what is appropriate as it concerns research of others, but in particular, Indigenous peoples. The voices that are given the most visibility in research are those who conduct and produce research through the paradigm of Western education and with standards of Western research. Settler colonialism has warped the purpose and the responsibility of educators. This study created space for understanding about our collective responsibility in teaching, learning and education for the community and students. We serve as a vehicle for disrupting Western paradigms and Western research standards. This research showed that art can also be a means of research and can help us, as educators, community members and leaders, reconnect to the sacred and emotional experiences of ourselves, our communities and visions for the future. Art and Indigenous artwork specifically, has the power to transcend colonial limits of what it means to learn and to share stories.

The research questions produced a space for connection and reconciliation through a community art show that centered voices and experiences of community members that are usually excluded from storytelling platforms and gallery spaces. Artwork centered culture keeper/artist perceptions of what decolonized education and knowledge is, looks like and feels like. The research in this study created space for understanding of how settler colonialism oppresses education and learning, and how it creates an illusion of the severing of emotional connection to place. This research also explored liberatory education and specifically, how we reimagine what it means to learn and how we put emotion back into learning and education. Finally, this research explored how the complex concept of reconciliation can exist in the context of knowledge, education and learning.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historically, it has been seen and is evident that the United States has created an educational system that upholds settler colonialism and supremacy. Cajete (1994) explains that educational processes in the United States "emphasize objective content and experiences detached from primary sources and community" and is a "foundational element of the crisis of American education and the alienation of modern man from his own being and the natural world" (p. 26). “Schooling—the colonial arm of empire building—is one example of how the coloniality of memory functions to prohibit, silence, erase, and dispense of particular children and their childhoods” (Solís, 2017, p. 199). Boarding schools were used to not only separate Indigenous youth from their families, but also to teach Christianity and to eradicate Indigenous epistemes, languages, and cultural practices, thus creating an illusion of severing the emotional connection to place (Trujillo & Alston, 2005). No Child Left Behind (NCLB), for example, was used to control what was being taught and who was doing the teaching. NCLB decentralized Indigenous ways of knowing and centralizes national standards and curriculum that does not take into consideration Indigenous knowledge (pp. 18 – 19). The decentralization of Indigenous knowledge is not surprising, but instead expected, because education and the organization of knowledge in the US upholds settler supremacy. “Even though Indigenous knowledge systems predate, expand, update, and complicate the curricula found in most public schools, schools attended by poor Indigenous students are among those most regimented in attempts to comply with federal mandates” (Tuck & Wang, 2012, p. 22).

Settler colonial education is hyperfocused on acquisition, expertise, competition, and consumption and as such, this creates a distinct culture of competition. Beyond the competition culture within settler colonial schooling, “individuals are [also] cut off from each other, from

their place on the earth, and their communities—even their own immediate families. Often, they are not able to think well, to be creative and happy, or to thrive under these conditions." Individuals are cut off from each other and therefore, this begins to create the illusion of a severing to the Land and our ways of knowing (Jacob, RunningHawk Johnson and Chappell, 2021, p. 279).

Indigenous teaching methods are, in many ways, able to repair this severing, and in healing, they shift the focus and centering back onto Indigenous students and communities. In Indigenous teaching methods and pedagogy, Elders are the experts. "Instructors engage Indigenous leaders and Elders regarding curricular priorities and methods for delivering instruction, and Indigenous students who hold cultural knowledge are regarded as possessing expertise. This dismantling of the traditional western notion of power and knowledge hierarchies in classrooms respects Indigenous ways of conceptualizing horizontal forms of hierarchy, aka power sharing" (p. 279).

"Higher education has a unique role in America. It has been granted tax-free status, the ability to receive public and private funds, and academic freedom, in exchange for educating students and producing the knowledge that will result in a thriving civil society. For these reasons, higher education has a moral and social responsibility to rise to this challenge." American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment" (Merculieff & Roderick, 2013, p. 36). In order to be transformational, it is important for higher education to prioritize Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. It is also important to understand the language that is being used to describe Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, both by Indigenous communities and researchers and non-Indigenous communities or researchers.

My research aimed to bridge the gap between existing literature regarding the impact of settler colonialism and reconciliation of knowledge and self. It is important for higher education institutions to create an environment for learning that honors the space students have to breathe outside their body.

My research questions were:

1. How does settler colonialism oppress education and learning? How does it create an illusion of the severing of emotional connection to place?
2. Who defines for whom the meaning of education and the relationship to place?
3. How do we reimagine what it means to learn?
4. How do we put emotion back into learning and education?
5. What is reconciliation in the context of knowledge, education and learning?

Statement of the Problem

The United States has created an educational system that upholds settler colonialism and supremacy (Cajete, 1994; Duhaney & El-Lahib, 2021). The educational system has decentralized Indigenous knowledge and as such has also created an illusion of severance to the Land and to ourselves as whole beings. Dr. Laura Rendon (2011) describes the concept of a whole person as a "persona educada" someone who is "a sage in the community—wise, experienced, respectful, friendly, controlled, considerate of others, personally and socially responsible, and open to diverse perspectives…These personas educadas possess habits of the mind and heart. They embrace reasoned thinking as well as emotional intelligence and diverse ways of knowing. They know when to act slowly as well as spontaneously. They are deeply perceptive and judicious in their actions, respect all forms of life, and are concerned about matters of equity and social justice" (p. 2).

The decentralization of self and community in education, is not surprising, but instead expected, because education and the organization of knowledge in the US upholds settler supremacy. My research questions aimed to inquire about traditional knowledge and specifically focus on the transformation of educational experiences for Indigenous students. My research questions required an examination of how settler colonialism oppresses education and learning, and an examination of how it creates an illusion of the severing of emotional connection to place. They also require an examination of who defines for whom the meaning of education and the relationship to place. The impact of settler colonialism on our emotional connection to place is evident and documented in literature. Further, it is also important to understand the impact that emotion has on learning and memory. There is literature that reports how positive emotions help in the learning process and actually positively impacts academic achievement (Um, Plass, Hayward & Homer, 2012). Negative emotional states have shown to impair learning and memory (Vogel & Schwabe, 2016). As I examined how we got to this place, I was excited by the parts of my research that allowed me to focus on reconciliation. I was excited by the parts of my research that allowed me to reimagine what it means to learn and how to put emotion back into learning and education.

As an artist I am able to metabolize ideas through art. Recently, the research on reconciliation has motivated me to explore “justice”. I created the following linocut piece shown in Figure 1 to explore the question of justice and our roles in justice. “What does justice demand of us?”, especially in a system where justice will not always be given to us by those who hold power. My research aimed to do that, to understand what justice, especially in the context of educational systems, looks and feels like.

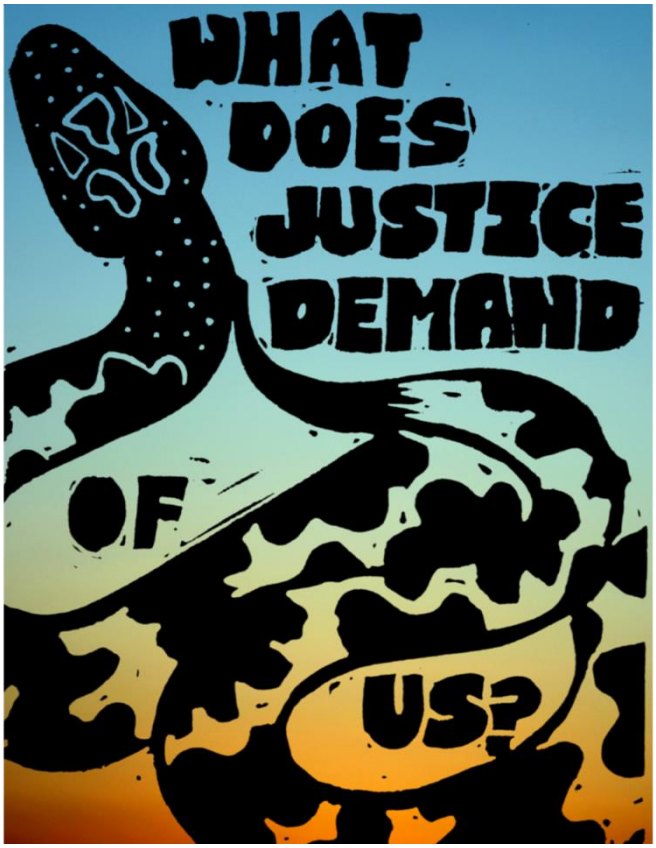


Figure 1. Justice (Eileen Jimenez., 2021)

Purpose of this Study

While there is some body of research that discusses how settler colonialism has impacted education and educational experiences, and some literature that discusses how learning can be grounded in traditional knowledge, there is a gap that describes how educators can bring those things together. My research described how our emotions, our emotional experiences and our emotional connection to Land are embodied and impacted by settler colonialism, and how we can create environments where we can find healing. Beyond healing, my research aimed to expand on how educators and administrators of colleges and universities can create environments that nurture growth, expansion, light and connection to Land.

I created this image, Figure 2, to describe where I see my research fitting into the current body of work surrounding education and Land. The image was created in my usual medium,

linocut. Linocut lends itself to my art because of the process of creating and the involved nature of carving, a physical manifestation of a vision of feelings and longings. The image is nestled in a blue waves background, depicting water and hands. My artwork always depicts hands because what I remember the most from the matriarchs in my family are their hands, the lines in their hands and the way their hands were the vessel of transformation for them.

In this image, “understanding” is shown as an input flowing into the hands. “Understanding” in this image means context, history, groundedness and understanding the impacts to ourselves and our communities. Understanding is connected to “re-imagine” through waves and at the point of the image where one hand is shown to be taking the pulse of the other. “Re-imagine” in this image means the work that is needed to create and make space for a different educational experience for Indigenous peoples, and non-Indigenous peoples alike. In “re-imagine”, there exists a nurturing of connection to the Land, a connection to ways of knowing, a connection to each other and a shift in the “purpose” of education. In this model, the purpose of education is not expertise, but connection to ourselves, to our communities and to the Land. Understanding and reimagining yields growth into transformation. This transformation is symbolized by a pink stargazer lily. Pink stargazer lilies symbolize transformation, rebirth, devotion, prosperity, and abundance. In this model of understanding, reimagining and transformation, transformation would mean that those words symbolized by the lilly would be a reality for our communities.

Figure 2. Embodied (Eileen Jimenez., 2021)

As I was delving deeper into the research, I was finding a deeper longing for understanding. In my own college experience, I navigated higher education and my college education at UCLA, an elitist institution that was entrenched with emotional violence. I struggled as a math major, and found that my challenges were due to racism and everyday difficult interactions, as well as an intense difficulty to learn and remember information. My brain felt as if it was in a constant fog, and it did not matter what I did, or how I tried to study, I couldn't remember information. I now understand that was a direct impact of the complex trauma I had experienced my entire life, but it was compounded at UCLA. Now, as someone whose job it is to help the students furthest from educational justice navigate an unjust and violent system, I can see this even more clearly. I can see my students struggle with learning and remembering information due to the trauma they are experiencing in a settler colonial society and educational

system. I often have students who ask for advice on how to make sure they can graduate and transfer and my response always involves me sharing the importance of caring for themselves. Often students feel dissatisfied about this answer or share that they don't have the time for self care. This reminds me of Audre Lorde's quote, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." In my office I have the following linocut displayed that shows this quote and a daffodil since it represents rebirth and new beginnings.

Figure 3. Self Care (Eileen Jimenez., 2021)

I explain to students how caring for ourselves is radical and how we ensure the futurity of our communities. They often wonder how they can practice self care without money for massages or vacations because of the way that self-care is marketed and branded in our society. I am able to explain to them that self care to me is beyond money and the bounds of how money can make us feel: self care is free. Caring for ourselves can be as simple as taking a minute to listen to what our bodies are telling us they need, whether it be water, hydration, connection, warmth, care, rest, etc. Listening to our bodies can strengthen our connection and our ability to learn and to continue to move in the directions of our longings.

I also ask students to ask themselves questions and to journal. I tell students about the value that reflection can have and the gift that it can give us. I start with the following questions: when did you feel the most engaged? When did you feel the least engaged? What kinds of activities did you find the most affirming or helpful? What surprised you most about today? What did you learn about yourself today? What did you learn about your family or community? This kind of reflection can lead to a gradual opening of self, emotions and emotional connection to place, and this is the kind of transformation that students yearn for and can become possible in decolonized education. In particular, because connection and reflection can bring up a deepening connection to ancestral knowledge is the connection to the Land and the way that connection is embodied in our bodies and in our lives. Ancestral knowledge exists beyond written language and beyond formal education.

As I reflect on this myself, I am on a journey to unlearn and, in many ways, remove the toxicity that formal education permeated into my life and me. This detox journey informs how I approach my work, my research and the kind of leader I envision myself becoming. I have always had a keen sense of government corruption since this was a frequent conversation in my

household, specifically related to politics and leadership in Mexico. In my home, there were many conversations about the bravery that the Zapatistas in Chiapas were exhibiting, a deep sense of pride because they were Indigenous, and they were standing up for their community. I always wondered if they were scared, especially in a place that felt so lawless. Along with their actions being discussed often in my home, I also remember my family frequently repeating Emiliano Zapata's words "La tierra es de quien la trabaja", which translates to "the land belongs to those that steward it." I recently returned home for a family funeral, and over breakfast with my aunt, she began to tell me family stories and brought up this quote again. Hearing her repeat these words has made me reflect on how these words guide my research and my vision for myself as a leader. The Zapatista non-hierarchical leadership modality and ethic of care resonates with me still. I am enthralled by the idea that a group of Indigenous people collectively decided that since the government, governmental leaders, and existing systems did not meet their needs, they created their own. The Zapatistas have their schools, their doctors, their food systems, and their ways of implementing their ways of knowing into their ways of being. Even at six years old, I recognized how incredible this kind of love was. They were fed up with the corrupt systems in place and so they created their own. Their love for their community fuels them to push past fear and to practice community care. This is the kind of educational system I picture when I think about the kinds of educational systems our communities deserve.

As I move through my research and my theoretical frameworks that frame my research, these are the reflections I keep at the center, and the ways of knowing that guide my work and my understanding of how to move this work forward.

Theoretical Framework

In this section I discuss the theoretical frameworks used to guide my research. The theoretical frameworks used to guide, frame and examine the educational experiences of Indigenous peoples, in particular the Indigenous diaspora living in the United States were Indigenous Theoretical Frameworks and critical race theories, including Undocumented Critical Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory and Quantitative Critical Race Theory, as well as counter-storytelling methodology.

Critical Race Theories

The intersections and variances in CRTs feel particularly important when examining the educational experiences of Indigenous peoples. Brayboy's (2005) discussion of Tribal Crit is the foundation for much of the literature on place and education. Brayboy's framework ties the most closely with answering my research questions. Brayboy writes, "1. Colonization is endemic to society. 2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain. 3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities. 4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification. 5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens. 6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation. 7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups. 8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being. 9. Theory and practice are

connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change" (pp 429 - 430). His nine tenets address the history, the impact and the ways that these can shift the educational landscape from settler colonialism to a more authentic Indigenous way of being and knowing. Colonization of this continent, broken treaties, and relative laws and policies set up by the US government, are a few illustrations of how Brayboy's (2005) tenets are applicable to my work.

Quantitative Critical Race Theory (QuantCrit) gives a framework for exploring quantitative methodologies with a critical race perspective to reveal inequities and to reexamine previously used scales or understandings of student experiences. For example, Pérez Huber, Vélez, and Solórzano (2018) utilize QuantCrit counterstory to examine educational attainment and occupational outcomes of Communities of Color and Latinx populations and use cultural intuition and groundtruthing to challenge dominant notions of degree value and prestige. Fong, Alejandro, Krou, Segovia and Johnston-Ashton (2019) re-conceptualize sense of belonging factors as it relates to Indigenous students using a QuantCrit theoretical framework. They found that both traditional and native specific constructions of sense of belonging were salient to Indigenous students.

Undocumented Critical Theory aims to validate and create space to honor the varied experiences of undocumented individuals and communities (Aguilar, 2019). Tenets in UndocuCrit include: "Fear is endemic among immigrant communities, Different experiences of liminality translate into different experiences of reality, Parental sacrificios become a form of capital and Acompañamiento is the embodiment of mentorship, academic redemption, and community engagement" (pp. 154 – 157). The tenets and framework of UndocuCrit allow for an

additional lens to other branches of Critical Race Theory because it makes space for the ways in which undocumented communities experience belonging, legality and access with a critical lens.

Solorzano and Yosso (2001) use counter-storytelling methodology and the critical race theory framework to discuss the following theoretical and conceptual issues: self-doubt, survivor guilt, impostor syndrome, and invisibility. This theoretical framework is important because not only do we learn about important lived experiences through critical methodologies, but there are also important recommendations and implications for school administrators in order to create an educational environment with conditions for students to be able to self-actualize.

Yosso (2005) uses the community cultural wealth model as a critical race theory and uses it to challenge the traditional and deficit lens and interpretations of cultural capital. The author focuses on the capitals, or rich cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities that are often underutilized, unrecognized and unacknowledged in the classroom. Yosso's forms of capital are: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capitals. Yosso asserts that by identifying and documenting cultural wealth, educational institutions can find ways to acknowledge the multiple strengths of students of color, especially since these skills and knowledge are abundant in Communities of Color. The acknowledgement of these skills and knowledge is important so schools can better serve Communities of Color and create a stronger connection from the community to the academy.

Indigenous Theoretical Frameworks

Current literature also demonstrates the shift in the educational system through Indigenous pedagogy and methodology. Martin and Mirraboopa (2003) outline how Indigenist research is based on the principles, philosophies and ways of knowing of Indigenous peoples. The purpose of Indigenist research is to allow for and create space for Indigenous peoples to not

only represent their worlds, but also move towards liberation using their own ways of knowing. In New Zealand, “any pathways forward for Māori must come out of the heart and the mind of Māori” (Eketone & Walker, 2013, p. 260). Smith (1999) expands on this by and for Māori concept of Kaupapa Māori,it has “ three significant components: (i) a ‘conscientization’ that critiqued and deconstructed the hegemony of the dominant culture of the Pakeha and the associated privilege that came with that dominance; (ii) a focus on resistance to the dominant Western structures that created and maintained ‘oppression, exploitation, manipulation and containment’; and (iii) praxis or the need to reflect on the world in order to change it” (p. 38).

Styres and Zinga’s (2013) Land-centered Theoretical Framework has a foundation of the five Rs, Kirkness and Bernhardt’s (1991) four R’s, respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility, but include their own R, relationships. Their Land-centered framework offers a decolonizing approach that requires deliberate considerations in everyday interactions, while creating space for transformational practice. They compare their framework as their own “wampum”, as they see their knowledge sharing as a way to share interconnected values and common threads that can guide the work. The framework is intended to be used in collaboration to nurture a space for transformational change through knowledge.

Robin Wall Kimmerer (2002) outlines how the weaving of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into Biological Education can inform our understanding of the need to Indigenize education. Wall Kimmerer says, “Traditional ecological knowledge [TEK] refers to the knowledge, practice, and belief concerning the relationship of living beings to one another and to the physical environment...It is born of long intimacy and attentiveness to a homeland and can arise wherever people are materially and spiritually integrated with their landscape...TEK is rational and reliable knowledge that has been developed through generations of intimate contact

by native peoples with their lands" (pp. 432-433). She also outlines that TEK "has much in common with scientific ecological knowledge (SEK), which is not surprising since both traditions derive from the same source: systematic observations of nature.Both knowledge systems yield detailed empirical information of natural phenomena and relationships among ecosystem components. Both SEK and TEK have predictive power, and in both intellectual traditions, observations are interpreted within a particular cultural context" (p. 433). Understanding and examining TEK and SEK can not only bring different and important perspectives into education, but can also increase the participation of Indigenous students in education. Additionally, by recognizing and prioritizing traditional knowledge in education will allow for opportunities for partnership and understanding between "Western" scientists and those in the academy and Indigenous peoples. Wall Kimmerer's work inspires my own theoretical framework and ideas I am having about Land, Power, Place and reconciliation.

Theoretical Frameworks: A Model

These theoretical frameworks all give us a framework for thinking about the work of decolonizing education. Critical Race Theories help us think about the history of education, while also moving the understanding and vision forward as it relates to different populations that have not been usually considered in higher education. Critical Race Theories push us to think about the ways that institutions harm our communities with our preconceived notions of how to serve them. The breaking down of the systems that settler colonialism has created , and their reimagining through critical race theories and Indigenous theoretical frameworks made me reflect on healing. The frameworks and space that Indigenous ways of knowing have especially allowed me to reflect on my own ways of knowing and how that guides my research. I keep having this image of an axolotl, *ambystoma mexicanum*.

Figure 4. Ajolote (Eileen Jimenez., 2021)

Figure 4 shows an axolotl linocut I made for a mural in Federal Way, WA to represent the healing and renewal axolotls can make for themselves. My ability to create using my hands and my way of knowing and to metabolize ideas with physical tools reminds me of how traditional knowledge guides Indigenous peoples to inform the ways they move in the world. The image of the axolotl has been central to me as I have reflected on how we and their ability to regenerate parts of their bodies, their entire central nervous system, and even parts of their brains feels important as I'm trying to understand and articulate how we can heal and regenerate ourselves from the trauma of settler colonialism.

The word "axolotl" is a word in the Nahuatl language, which was the language the Aztecs spoke and it means "water dog." It has mythological connections to Xolotl, who was the god of fire and death. The Axolotl is only found in two lakes in Mexico, in the Xochimilvo-Chalco basin, but is on the World Wildlife Fund list for critically endangered species due to pollution

and the development of the basin they live in. A couple of months ago, when visiting the greater Mexico City area, I was warned to not visit Xochimilco at night because of the increasing femicides in the area. According to Amnesty International (2021), in the state of Mexico (where Xochilmilco is) at least 10 women and girls are killed every day and "Mexico is continuing to fail to fulfill its duty to investigate and, therefore, its duty to guarantee the rights to life and personal integrity of the victims as well as to prevent violence against women" (p. 5). It feels painful, ironic, and fitting that both the axolotl and women, as representatives of the divine, are being killed and not protected. Keeping these things in mind, I wonder what these two realities and truths can teach us about the reconciliation needed in education. I wonder what Indigenous knowledge and reverence for the divine and matriarchs can teach those of us who aim to put emotion back into learning and education and to those of us who want to move in the direction of liberation of our communities. The Axolotl frameworks allow us to consider the ways that again, our communities have been harmed, but also, with a foundation in CRT and Indigenous frameworks, push us to reimagine what education would look like and what we would feel like if we were able to regenerate the synapses in our brains and connections in our bodies that colonization has severed and distorted.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Current literature also demonstrates the shift in the educational system through Indigenous pedagogy. The important aspect of education is the relational piece and the purpose of education is beyond mastery of a subject (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). The following literature review explores current research on Land and Place, especially as it relates to lived experiences, reimagining education, healing emotional connection to place, spirituality, and relationships and belonging. The following literature review also outlines current literature on decolonizing education, neurodecolonization and Indigenous teaching methods in the classroom.

Land and Place

Emotional connection to place is impacted through the meticulous erasure of Indigenous knowledge. The impact of a shift in connection to Land and place is most starkly seen in the experiences of the Indigenous "diaspora" living in the US, in particular those who are native to this content but due to colonization are considered immigrants and have "undocumented" legal status. Munoz (2019), for example, presents an investigation of generations of militarization and shifting of the narratives of the Land and Indigeneity as well as dissonance around borderland identity. The author uses the story of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas and Laredo, Texas to demonstrate an important point about collective and individual memory and somatic experiences. Munoz draws the connection of how Indigenous peoples have forgotten that we are "people of the land..[and that] the DNA of my ancestors are in this soil" (p. 17). This is particularly important as it provides a perspective of borderlands communities as it relates to indigeneity, and the impact of colonization and connection to place.

While there is a limited body of literature discussing the experiences and intersections of educational experiences as it relates to emotional connection to place, there is literature that

touches upon facets of my research questions. In this section there will be an overview of literature about the militarization of borders, and the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples, in particular undocumented individuals. In addition, there is a discussion of current research regarding new ways of learning and healing emotional connection to place, transformed by Indigenous ways of knowing. There will also be an overview of literature about existing theoretical frameworks including Chicana Feminism, Māori ways of knowing, being and doing, a community-first Land-centered theoretical framework and the weaving of traditional ecological knowledge into education.

Impact and Lived Experiences

The militarization of borders and the impacts of colonization are seen in the experiences of Indigenous peoples and in educational policies that uphold settler supremacy. One of those impacts is in the immigration policies that change the ways in which undocumented peoples navigate life in the US, even those who are Indigenous to this continent. Undocumented immigrant young adults face important navigational issues in the United States, especially in education (López & Fernández, 2020; Sanchez, 2018; Siemons, 2016). The literature also expands on mental health impacts of colonialism (Alberto, 2017; Casanova, 2012; Cooper, Gonzalez & Wilson, 2015). Fernandez, Evans-Campbell, Johnson-Jennings, Beltran, Schultz, Stroud, and Walters (n.d.) explore how Indigenous peoples' health and health outcomes are directly related to their relationship to place. The results of interviews revealed and discussed the "embodied stress" that Indigenous peoples feel when they physically reside in historical trauma sites because it reminds them of their own traumas. While participants were reminded of their historical and contemporary trauma, they also connected to place through "embodied resilience". This article is important because the authors discuss how displaced Indigenous peoples can also

experience trauma at the sites of trauma for Indigenous peoples of that place, therefore impacting their connection to that place. Kovats Sánchez (2018) outlined this impact of place-based trauma by drawing an important connection between the discrimination that Indigenous groups face in Mexican society and the discrimination they continue to experience in the United States. When examining the educational experiences of Ñuu Savi (Mixtec) college graduates Sánchez illustrates how Mexican Indigenous groups continue to experience the same kinds of discrimination at home and school both in Mexico and in the US. This discrimination is detrimental to student identity development and self-concept. Alberto (2017) also found that students realized it was not safe to share that they were Indigenous and coped by developing a private and public indigeneity. While Indigenous students were deeply committed to their Indigenous values, they did not share their Indigenous identities outside their community of familial structures. An interesting and hopeful finding was that for many of these students, college was the place where they felt safe to share their indigeneity, especially if they felt supported in spaces, clubs, or by staff or faculty. Some literature also suggests that indigeneity for Mexican Indigenous peoples transcends physical, biological, or linguistic traits (SánchezLópez, 2017).

Reimagining Education through Place

The connection that Indigenous peoples have to place and Land is not necessarily valued or nurtured in US colonial and settler systems. In particular, the connection and severing of emotional connection for Indigenous people has been accomplished in the US by the regulation of education and educational practices. Deloria and Wildcat (2001) explained this succinctly with their concept of power and Place. They wrote that “place [is] the relationship of things to each other” (pp. 22 - 23). In native or traditional knowledge, one sees “our place and our

responsibility" as our community experiences it (p. 46). In formal education, and in education that perpetuates settler supremacy, the goal is to become an expert in a subject matter and an expert in how things work (p. 46). In order for students to feel whole (connected to themselves and to their communities) and self-actualized, it is important for students to be able to continue to intertwine their ways of knowing with the knowledge they are learning in formal education. In Indigenous education and leadership, theory and stories are not separate, instead they coexist as ways of knowing and being (Brayboy, 2006; Calderon, 2014; Pidgeon, 2012; Smith, 2012).

Healing Emotional Connection to Place

The question of how we begin to heal and bring back the connection to place is discussed in the literature as well. Archibald (2008) focuses on how storytelling educates and heals the mind, body and spirit. Meaning making is achieved through the framing of storytelling and the seven principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. These points feel especially helpful when thinking about the principles that Indigenous peoples use to guide their ways of knowing and healing. There are several examples of Indigenous communities doing this work already including Alaska's native peoples (Corral, 2013), Mayan students at Ixil University in Guatemala (Batz, 2018) and the Zapatista movement and leadership modality in Chiapas, Mexico (Mora, 2017).

Spirituality

Merculieff and Roderick (2013) discussed the importance of spirituality too, and shared that when Indigenous peoples "speak of traditional spirituality they are referring to something that involves neither religion nor Western self-exploration philosophies or practices. They understand spirituality to be the embodied personal and collective experience of a living, reciprocal relationship between the natural and human worlds. It is a deep sense of being actively

connected to, informed by, and participating in life along with rivers, winds, trees, creatures, other people, sounds, smells, fish, plants, and so on. It is an embodied process and experience rather than a belief" (p. 88). This is important when thinking about emotional connection to Land, place and Power, especially since to Indigenous peoples, the self and human beings are not the center of the world or life. Through spirituality, the goal is to be someone who has a complex relationship with the natural and social worlds.

Land, Relationship and Belonging

The literature also explores the concepts of Land and our relationship to Land and remembering and healing. Solís (2017) writes, "Land is where we come from, the places we inhabit, it is the ground we walk on, the waters that engulf us, and all the life in it. I consider Land to be the flesh of our mothers and our grandmothers, their labor, their impermanence, their permeability, and their presence. Land is where learning and remembering how to suture and heal are practices that teach us how to thrive, respect, and tend to our relations and our long and deep wounds (p. 199). She makes the connection from Land to our mothers, grandmothers and to our bodies. She also discusses how healing happens in the remembering since schooling has caused erasure. Land is how we remember, and how we cultivate "our mother's and grandmother's insurgent praxis" (p. 201) and it "sustains and amplifies our vitality, intimacies, and survival as it remains vigilant of the everyday colonial warfare we continue to endure" (p.201).

Dillard (2012) also discusses how learning to remember is to recognize the "principles or notions of identity"(p.15) that we accepted as our own. Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983) tell us "a theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of

necessity" (p. 21). This is present in the ways of knowing of our mothers and grandmothers, even though we have experienced an illusion of severance from the Land. This is true and important for those of us who have been made to believe that we have no homelands or ancestral and elder knowledge, even though our bodies as woven with knowledge. "Land is the flesh of our mothers and grandmothers, their embodiments, the constant and closest place to Indigenous lands I know, and the only lands I can give to you (Solís, p. 200).

Beyond the importance of remembering, is the importance of building relationships. "Rather than viewing ourselves as being in relationship with other people or things, we are the relationship that we hold and are a part of" (Wilson, 2008, p. 80) Wilson's points about relationships feel incredibly salient to me in my work, in particular his discussion about the different kinds of relationship we are in: with people, with the Environment/Land, with the Cosmos, and with Ideas. "Research is a practice of restoring accountability: to family, to nations, to environment, to idealism to ancestors, to cosmos/the universe. Our activity as researchers, when we're acting on our values and practicing accountability to our relations, the activity is reconciliation" (p. 17).

Indigenous cultural teachings hold Land as center and foundational, "Land education puts Indigenous epistemological and ontological accounts of land at the center, including Indigenous understandings of land, Indigenous language in relation to land, and Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism" (Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy, 2014). It is important to also extend race-based theories and include colonization and the importance of Land to Indigenous peoples. Jacob, RunningHawk Johnson and Chappell (2021) provided specific examples of how to connect Land based pedagogy in the classroom. They write, "Journalism students could report on the weather or the activities of non-human species. Psychology and nursing students might

consider how being connected to the natural world affects a person's overall health and well-being. Justice and sociology students might analyze behaviors as expressions of disconnection from the natural world. Business students might consider the impacts of financial decisions on the lands and waters in your region" (p. 18). In the reflection activities, they continued to offer more practical examples and described how pausing and sitting quietly outside gave them the opportunity to find time for "profound thoughts or memories that helped [them] process our potential to be strong Indigenous leaders or non-Indigenous allies in the process of decolonization (p. 54).

Decolonizing Education

There is a significant body of literature that discusses how to reimagine what education and learning looks like, but I am particularly drawn to literature that outlines and defines learning radically and grounded in traditional knowledge. I am also particularly interested in the knowledge and body of work in outlining emotion back into education and learning. Tuck and Wang (2012) describe that "Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools" (p. 1). It is important to acknowledge that decolonization is not accountable to settler colonialism or settler futurity but instead, decolonization is accountable to Indigenous futurity. "Decolonization offers a different perspective to human and civil rights based approaches to justice, an unsettling one, rather than a complementary one. Decolonization is not an "and". It is an elsewhere" (p. 36). This concept of not complimentary or polite feels important and resonant in my research as well. The decolonization and the prioritization of Indigenous knowledge is not complimentary to white settler futurity, instead it offers the hope for a future.

Yellow Bird (2013) also discusses decolonization with his work on decolonizing social work. His literature and work is particularly important because it addresses and recognizes the "limitations and imperialist frameworks of Western social work that must be contested on behalf of populations that have been victimized rather than helped by these approaches" (p. 336). Tuck and Yang (2012) also discuss the limitations of engaging in decolonizing work inside the settler colonial academy. They outline how important this work is in the settings we find ourselves in, and how this is the beginning of an "elsewhere".

Neurodecolonization

Yellow Bird (2013) defines neurodecolonizaiton and breaks it down in his chapter in Decolonizing Social Work. He says, "the first part of the term in "neuro" – refers to neurons which are specialized cells in the nervous system – brain and spinal cord – that send and receive electric signals throughout the body. "Decolonization" refers to activities that weaken the effects of colonialism, facilitate resistance, and create opportunities to promote traditional practices in present-day settings. Neurodecolonization involves combining mindfulness approaches with traditional and contemporary secular and sacred contemplative practices to replace negative patterns of thought, emotion and behavior with healthy, productive ones." (p. 336). In neurodecolonization the aim is to deactivate "old, ineffective brain networks" and to understand how the mind and brain are shaped and in many ways impacted by the stressors of colonialism like "racism, hate crimes; loss of territories, culture and pride; high levels of mortality, poverty, and poor health; and disregard of Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty and rights" (p. 337).

Bringing Indigenous Teaching Methods into the Classroom

The Indigenous perspective, ways of knowing, ways of being and presence is systemically and repeatedly erased from schooling and the historical narrative. Jacob,

RunningHawk Johnson and Chappell (2021) write about how this erasure causes individuals to feel lost (pp. 278 - 279). They write “We believe that using Indigenous teaching and learning methods in our classrooms can help us counter the settler colonial violence that is an integral structure in western society. This work is necessary to imagine the possibilities of decolonizing our institutions and our lives” (p. 279). They also discuss the importance of starting with the present aliveness of Indigenous peoples and place, and how the practice of journaling could be helpful in engaging learners and teachers in this practice of centering Indigenous futurity. The journaling prompts they suggest, for example, are: “Why am I here? What did I bring? How am I today? How do I want to be?” (p. 280). These questions create space to reflect on positionality, Power, Land and Place.

Literature Review Foundations

The literature outlined in this literature review focused on Land and Place, and specifically on how Land, Place and Indigenous and traditional ways of knowing can help us reimagine how education is and can be. From reflections on how borders and settler colonialism can impact our connection to place, and ourselves to examinations of how Indigenous teaching methods in the classroom can heal and repair our brains and our connections to each other and to knowledge. This literature is foundational to my study as my study examines how art creates the space for emotional connection to knowledge and our ways of knowing. This literature is essential in understanding the research in my study and foundational in understanding what it means to decolonize education.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND METHODOLOGY

Research in Context

Taking current literature in mind, along with my research questions, it feels important to think about this research and work in the context of reconciliation. Wilson, Breen, and Dupre (2019) talk about research and reconciliation through the concept of "love in action". They write, "Sakihewaywin- love in action. To me, if you acted with love all the time you'd be acting in a spirit of reconciliation all the time, because you'd always be working toward harmony in relationships. Because everything is relationships, so in our research, we're working toward equilibrium in relationship, or toward harmony. It is not perpetual growth but equilibrium" (p. 17). It feels important that I ask myself what reconciliation is, in the context of knowledge, education and learning. Delving into reconciliation also demands that I ask myself my positionality and philosophy about reconciliation and my place in it. It is important to parse out the complexities of reconciliation, in particular to reconciliation as it relates to education and justice. Finding healing through reconciliation or self and relationship to the Land feels incredibly important as we move towards our longings and towards educational sovereignty. Questions that feel important to ask and examine are:

1. How do we bring our whole selves into what justice demands of us?
2. How do we educate whole selves of others when we are only using or bringing our partial selves?
3. How do we translate and honor community and family in education?
4. What am I trying to reconcile? What are the layers of reconciliation that I am trying to surface?
5. Where do I fit into this? How do I reconcile myself to do reconciliation work?

Research Design

My research questions aim to inquire about traditional knowledge and specifically focus on the transformation of educational experiences for Indigenous students.

My research questions are:

1. How does settler colonialism oppress education and learning? How does it create an illusion of the severing of emotional connection to place?
2. Who defines for whom the meaning of education and the relationship to place?
3. How do we reimagine what it means to learn?
4. How do we put emotion back into learning and education?
5. What is reconciliation in the context of knowledge, education and learning?

In my research I will answer my research questions by doing an applied project and public art that grapples with my research questions. My aim is to understand what the community connects with reconciliation, and healing as it relates to education, knowledge and a radical future.

Figure 5 is a piece I created myself and inspired this idea based on my research questions. This piece was created as a linocut. This image demonstrates what I mean by “healing” as it takes the image of our bodies, and in warm hues, and full of strength, joy, bounty and resilience as personified through the sunflower. My image of education, knowledge and a radical future is exactly what is represented by this linocut: for my community and I to be in a place of growth, bounty and joy. In the educational spaces I imagine, I imagine places where healing means robust life like this.

Figure 5. Healing (Eileen Jimenez., 2021)

Methodology

I created a nationwide open call for art so that entries would be representative of the population in the United States. I wanted my art call to be open nationwide since often, in person gallery shows, are restrictive to regional areas. Applicants were eligible for shipping costs of mailing their artwork to Seattle, Washington and therefore this created open access to this opportunity and more participants who may not usually be able to do this kind of art call due to financial restrictions were able to participate. I recruited participants using snowball sampling, where participants were asked to help recruit participants. Snowball sampling was easier to do as well since I have an extensive social media following and have access to the social media

following of local and national organizations I am connected to. In my recruitment processes, I also centered equity by emphasizing recruitment efforts to populations that are often marginalized in art, for example reaching out to my contacts at different tribes across the country. By creating this process where participants could express their stories and ways of knowing through art, it created pathways and reconciliation with communities who have been harmed and excluded from research in the past. I wanted to center doing this in a meaningful way, and in a way that protects my participants and their stories. Haig-Brown and Dannenmann (2002), King (2003), and Wilson (2008) write how it is important to understand that one has to be careful when sharing stories, and which stories are shared because once stories are told, they are loose in the world, are transformed and can be endangered. In this process, I made sure to make that clear to participants, that their stories are sacred and that they will be protected. I also asked participants to submit a written statement with their pieces, and again, I made it clear that they do not need to share anything that they do not want to or need to share. In order for me to protect these stories, I also started the gallery show with a prayer and song.

One of the considerations that took into account is the concept of reconciliation and how I wanted to make concerted efforts to ensure that there is extensive communication about the purpose of this study and that it is clear that there is no obligation to participate and that there will be no harm to participants. I especially understand that researchers have traditionally harmed Indigenous communities and therefore, this was a consideration I continued to keep at the forefront as I recruited participants and connected with Indigenous communities.

Another consideration I kept at the center in participant recruitment was the location of the gallery show. When I first set out to find gallery space, I wanted to host two separate art shows, in two separate gallery spaces, the Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery in Seattle, Washington,

and La Peña in Austin, Texas. As an artist and active community member, I have close connections to Nepantla. I have not only displayed my own art, I have been extensively involved in planning shows and the implementation of community festivals at Nepantla. I have also curated art shows from beginning to end. One of the art shows I recently developed the concept for was “The Divine: Beyond the Bound of Queerness”. For this show, I implemented every step including arranging the dates of the show with the gallery owners, the recruitment, selection and notification of artists, the collecting of art pieces, hanging up artwork for the show, advertising and marketing the show, and coordinating an opening event. It was also important to me that this art show centered queer, Black, Indigenous, and artist of color interpretations of the divinity that exists in queerness. In my own professional experiences in higher education institutions, I also have extensive experience planning and coordinating large scale events, and recruiting marginalized populations to participate. Due to my extensive experience in planning and implementing goal driven projects, and my deep connection with my community, I felt confident in being able to recruit participants (artists and visitors) to engage with this new research project. I had solidified dates for the art shows for this dissertation and have had conversations with both of these spaces about my research and both places were excited about hosting. Dr. Laura Rendon, my third committee member, helped me connect me with the owner of Cynthia Perez, the owner of La Peña in Austin, Texas since I am not local to Austin. After the first art show in Seattle, I had enough data for this research study and decided not to host the show at La Peña in Austin afterall.

The location was very important in this study, since it created an open access space for this show and study. The Nepantla Cultural Arts Center in the White Center area in Seattle, is a community based art and cultural space with monthly art shows that are open to all community

members, including youth. The Nepantla Cultural Arts Center also produces free events for the community that centers culture and so it is known to the community. Hosting the art show here allowed me to also access the extensive community connections that Nepantla has already built in the community as well. For example, Nepantla hosts a different themed art show every month and exhibits between 45-60 artist artwork in their space.

Last year there were about 20,000 visitors to my website, and since January this year, I have had about 12,000 visitors so far. By offering a virtual space through my website, it will provide accessibility to the art show to those who are not able to visit the show at Nepantla. For example, I was a part of a group show at the Davidsons Galleries in Seattle and I had friends or visitors to my website who could not see the show in person, and they messaged me to let me know that it was great to have the virtual option. I have also linked my website and a video walk through of this gallery show on my art Instagram page where I have over 5000 followers.

At the art show, including the virtual gallery, community visitors were also considered participants in this study since they were also asked to share their understanding of the art. Participants were given a consent form before accessing the online survey and they were asked optional demographic information as well. At the physical gallery show, community visitors were asked for their own answers to the research question via an digitally accessible survey that they were able to access with a QR code and their smartphone. In the digital space, visitor participants also accessed both the consent form and the survey as a link in the virtual gallery.

I want to ascertain what education could look like and feel like, and this methodology of community engagement through art, and I did that by asking participants my research question about visions of liberatory education. The answers to this question came from the artist/culture keeper participants and from the community member visitor participants. I also conducted

member checking with artists as well to ensure that I have interpreted through my analysis of their responses in their narratives and artwork in the ways they wanted it interpreted.

Protection of Human Subjects

The Belmont Report Principles provide framework and foundation to ensure ethical principles are followed in research. In my research, it was important to not only follow the Belmont Report Principles, but to also ensure that the principles of respect were followed as well, since they are not enough to protect Indigenous peoples.

Beneficence

The principle of beneficence, for example, ensures that research does no harm to participants and also that it maximizes benefits and minimizes possible harm. I wanted to ensure that my research questions and research are grounded in joy. I also wanted to be general with the questions and not prescribed so participants could create the art that felt resonant to them. I did not want this project to create pain or retraumatize participants in any way. I planned to minimize the amount of unpaid labor from participants. I connected with resources to offer support for participants to process any of the information or feelings that may have come up as a result from this project.

One of the issues with beneficence is the question about who decides for who what is beneficial and what is harmful. This is a question I am asking myself as I wanted to be able to open this opportunity for processing and connection but also did not want to make assumptions that I understand what is harmful or beneficial for communities and individuals.

Justice

The principle of justice calls for “equals” to be treated “equally” and ensures that burdens and benefits are equally balanced. This principle ensures that there are fair procedures and outcomes and that any research risks are fairly distributed. In justice there is also an importance

and focus in participant selection as it is essential that the participant selection process is equitable.

Again, in my research, I made sure that participants were given open access to the artist call and that I was purposeful about the groups I reached out to as well. I wanted to try to ensure that individuals who do not usually have access to art calls are able to participate.

Respect for Persons

The principle of respect for persons calls for individuals to be treated as autonomous agents and for the protections of individuals with "diminished autonomy" . It was important that participants understood the research and what is happening, but also that there was space for them to be autonomous and for self-determination. In my research I also ensured that there was extensive documentation about the informed consent process. It was important that I considered how to implement and prioritize additional protections for vulnerable populations, and this included thinking about barriers in the research process.

Methodological Strategy

Expanding on that idea of community care, and the care I approach this research with, it was important that my research and data collection was grounded in principles of community care. A great example of how researchers ground their work in Indigenous and feminist ethics of care can be seen in climate research by Jamie Haverkamp (2021) for example. They write that by centering Indigenous and feminist ethics of care in their research they are able to "reclaim the more radical feminist and Indigenous elements – the affective, relational and political origins of collaborative knowledge production – and rethink research in the rupture of climate crises, relationally. The ethico-political frictions and tensions inherent in engaged climate scholarship are drawn into sharp relief, and deep reflection on the responsibility researchers take on when

asking questions in spaces and times of ecological loss, trauma and grief is offered" (p. 1). Haverkamp demonstrates that this shift allows a shift from a focus on method to intentionality, positionality and relationality. Most importantly, this shift makes it possible and creates space for cariño (warm care), as research politics and approach (p. 13).

I am committed to centering community care and center the importance of family, community, and Land. One of my favorite poems that I heard growing up and that greatly impacts my ways of knowing and being is, "In Lak'ech", a Mayan precept by discussed by Luiz Valdez in *Pensamiento Serpentino* (1971). This is what it says:

Tú eres mi otro yo.
You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti,
If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo.
I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto,
If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo.
I love and respect myself.

The value of collective and community care is resonant in this poem as well and it is one that also guides the Mayan people in "Mexico" and "Guatemala". These are values that my family believed in and therefore guides my own leadership and my research. This feels at a stark difference to Western and white-centric thought and practice which is competitive and individualistic, and this ends up harming and stunting the growth of communities. In Valdez' words, on the other hand, as in with many Indigenous communities, you see that the interconnectedness and importance of community support is valued. As an administrator and researcher, these are values that are reflected in the way I lead and in the things I am called to support and advocate for.

Before any data collection took place, it was important to me to connect to networks, and to apply for grants to pay for shipping and for frames for participants who participated in this research study. This felt like an essential part of this research study because it is important to honor the voices and ways of knowing of our community members and participants. I was awarded a research grant through the University of Washington to pay for these expenses.

Data Collection

I collected my data primarily through artwork and through accompanying narratives since the nature of my research questions lend themselves to qualitative data. The specific research question that was asked as the prompt for the art and narrative will be: "How do we reimagine what it means to learn?". Data was collected through the artwork and through the narratives that answer this question about reimagining what it means to learn. It felt important to allow participants to answer this question with artwork and narratives because of the ways that storytelling is valued in traditional knowledge and Indigenous communities. Collecting data in this way, with artwork and narratives, creates opportunity for participants to express themselves in ways that settler colonial research methods don't usually allow, especially since radical reimagination requires this kind of space and process. Data collected aimed to answer my research questions, specifically focused on the visions of liberatory education from community members. These narratives and responses from the participants also contributed to the understanding of what it means to be a "persona educada" and how one becomes a "persona educada" as discussed earlier in this dissertation proposal. Data was also collected from participants who visit the gallery shows where artwork is displayed.

Sample Set Size

The goal of this study was to recruit 20-60 artists to submit their art and narratives. In the past, I have been able to curate art shows with about 15-45 artists for a month-long gallery show. Past shows I have curated at Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery have had between an average of 20-60 visitors per day, so I anticipate this show to have about 600 visitors throughout the month of each show.

Data Analysis

My data was analyzed using critical discourse analysis. Fairclough's (1989) approach to critical discourse analysis provides a helpful model and framework to analyze text and images at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. A Micro level analysis is an in-depth text analysis that analyzes the ways in which text, word choice, tone and metaphors are used. A mezzo level analysis looks at how discourse is not only presented but also how it is consumed. A macro level analysis looks at how the text or images function within society. This is the model and three-dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis I used to analyze the text and artwork submitted by the participants as well as the visitors to the galleries, and at the same time parse out the articulation and implications of community visions for liberatory education through text and visual art. Finally, critical discourse analysis and this model helped me situate participant visions for liberatory education within societal context, especially the visitors who visited the art shows in Seattle since that text is also place based due to the nature of who visits local, cultural art spaces. Critical discourse analysis also provides a way to represent how things should be, and in many ways possible worlds (Jackson, 2015, p. 261), so this also lent itself to that re-imagining of education that my research questions inquire about. The discourse analysis on text and images was qualitative. It included an analysis of participant word choice and tone, looking at whether these are positive or negative. There was also visual discourse analysis of the imagery used in

participant artwork, looking for what was emoted in the images, what colors were used (warm, cool), how are people were presented and characterized, was there imagery that was tied to specific emotions or representations (example, an eagle as a symbol of strength), were images depicted in the artwork sharp or muted, are they abstract or clear, etc. Questions I asked myself as I was analyzing the artwork are offered by Lopez (2017) in their visual literacy framework: " What does the imagery and/or visual design communicate? Are there any sociocultural codes present? Are there any deeper allusions or connections to broader discourses/paradigms/theories?".

The analysis of artwork and text was then arranged into major themes and narratives and organized to highlight patterns across individuals and spaces. Artwork submitted served as artifacts and were used as a way of collecting data, coding, and analyzing for themes. This artifact analysis served to compare the themes and patterns from the narratives. Both narratives and artifacts were coded and categorized according to categories emerging from the conceptual framework. Also with "…sources of messages impacting upon beliefs, educational experience, cultural views of [knowledge and ways of knowing]... substantive categories which emerge as themes in participant [narratives and artifacts]...direct beliefs, statements of beliefs or ideas participants use to understand their experience and position" (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 156 - 157). Themes and findings went through continuous member checking as well in order to verify information, themes and findings.

Even though the participants only directly answered the question of "How do we reimagine what it means to learn?", the rest of the research questions were answered using the themes and findings from the narratives and artwork submitted by participants as well as the visitors at the art show and in the context of current literature and best practices. The complete

list of research questions, again, asks about settler colonialism and the oppression of education and learning and the illusion of the severing of emotional connection to place. Other research questions ask about reconciliation in the context of knowledge, education and learning.

Validity

Participants were treated as wisdom and culture keepers throughout the process and in the art call. It was made clear that I was interested in learning about their ways of knowing, their thinking, their views and their lived experiences. Since I work in higher education and am invested in traditional knowledge and Land and place based education, I needed to consider how bias may impact my work. In order to address any bias that I may have, I ensured that I was continuously reflecting on my own ideas and how they may or may not influence my research. I also continuously sought informed input from colleagues and committee members while I am undertaking reflection and analysis of narratives and artwork.

Reciprocity Statement

My study provided an opportunity for community members to create artwork that reflected community visions for decolonized education. The research was shared back out to the community through the art show, the analysis of the art show and written responses by artists and attendees. I also created an online gallery with all the art pieces submitted, with consent of the participants of course, and hosted this on my personal artist website. This online gallery will always be accessible, even after the art show has ended. Even though we ourselves are impermanent, in many ways, our wisdom and in this case, the artwork will live on after our time. Through artwork we are able to explore our significance, impermanence, and immortality alongside our elders. Through artwork, I exist, you exist, we exist; through this art and wisdom in this dissertation, we will continue to exist.

My research will also help inform higher education institutions about the desires and visions that our communities have for education and their institutions. I plan to share my knowledge and wisdom I learned with other higher education networks. As an administrator at a community college, for example, decolonized education is already something I am prioritizing in the way I approach my work. I have shared some of my dissertation work with my faculty and they are excited to learn more about this, and I am excited to share what I learn in my research, and also to go beyond my research, and nurture the desire to center Indigenous futurity, on and off campus.

Positionality Statement

In the next section I describe who I am as a researcher and how I engage with my community. As a current graduate student earning a doctoral degree, my positionality is shaped by my many intersecting and lived experiences. Academically, I earned a Master of Science in Counseling, with an option in Student Development in Higher Education at California State University, Long Beach and a Bachelor of Arts in French/Francophone Studies in Literature and Culture at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). My academic experiences were shaped by my identities as an Indigenous, queer, low income, first-generation college student. These identities and experiences also inform my positionality in the world and how I relate to the world, my work, my community and my research.

Even though I attended UCLA, a top research institution, as a student who struggled academically, I did not know how to access research opportunities. I did not know what research could look like or that my voice had a place in research. I first developed my interest in research in my master's program where I learned that there was research on the phenomena I experienced and that there were significant gaps in research that my lived experience could inform as well.

Even though I struggled significantly at UCLA, for example, my own aspirational, navigational, resistant, and linguistic capitals (Yosso, 2005) helped me navigate higher education and ultimately helped me to decide to pursue a master's degree and become a college counselor. The various professional positions I have held have allowed me to witness the experiences students experience at the community college. In particular, I have been struck by the challenges and barriers my students encounter while still maintaining their degree aspirations.

I also have reflected recently on everything that colonization has taken from Indigenous peoples. Growing up, I was taught that my family came to the United States for opportunity, and every narrative I heard was about everything I gained by coming here. My family never talked about everything we lost. More than the loss of history, memories, language, traditions, medicine, a constant concern is that my ancestors will not recognize me because of the impacts of colonization and how it has changed my community, my family, and myself, collectively and individually. The fact that I only witnessed my grandmother say one word in our language is painful. I can distinctly remember my mother reminding me to not tell teachers at school that I was Indigenous or spoke Spanish since she was scared the school would put me in remedial classes or forbid me from taking honors/AP courses. My mom did not speak English fluently, yet she made me get all school paperwork and communications in English to make sure this lie of white supremacy was upheld.

As I move forward in my research, I keep coming back to the reflection of what my role is in the institution and in my community. It is important for me to reflect on my positionality as a researcher, as I am writing this as a person with enormous privilege. In relation to my research, I, in many ways, have overcome many of the institutional racism barriers and earned academic degrees and have the ability to access information easily as well have access to a vast network of

communities and scholars. As a community college administrator, I am also now in a position of power and someone who can make decisions about college policies and processes. As a US citizen, I also have had the privilege to navigate life in the US with the benefits that affords, including access to federal resources, like financial aid, college access programs like TRIO, and other state-based aid. As a researcher, I have some insider and outsider status. While my family was undocumented until I was in 7th grade, I also have never experienced the impacts of legality to my self-concept, my personhood or my lived experiences. As I approach my work, I often think about my identities and the privileges many of them carry. As someone who is a displaced person, with the privilege to be able to live and thrive in a place that is not where I or my family is from, I am a commitment to justice and educational sovereignty for the Indigenous peoples whose Land I am also a guest on. Power, Land and Place are powerful influences in my life, my work and my research.

In Practice

Wilson (2008) explains our responsibility as researchers, "What is more important and meaningful is fulfilling a role and obligations. The researcher is therefore a part of his or her research and inseparable from the subject of that research. The knowledge that the researcher interprets must be respectful of and help to build the relationships that have been established though the process of finding out information" (Wilson, 2008, p. 77).

As an Indigenous person navigating Westernized educational systems, I always knew that there was an unspoken rule of keeping my traditional knowledge separate from the knowledge I was learning in my formal education through public school. I remember when I was writing stories about my family or my personal statements for college, and I think a lot about how my mother and grandmother were reluctant to allow me to talk about my family or our stories. To

my mother and grandmother, our stories were sacred; too sacred to share for a grade or for the enjoyment of others. As an adult, I now understand why this was, I now am also careful about how or when I share my family's stories and understand that stories are more than stories; I now understand the soul they carry. This concept of "sacredness" is something I am centering in my research, and making sure to protect stories that are too sacred to share in public. I am doing this through informed consent, but also in the ways that visitors to the art show will be able to interact with pieces and narratives. As someone who wants to conduct research within Indigenous communities, I plan to hold myself accountable by continually centering the Indigenous community priorities, needs, relationships, and the centering of elder wisdom and traditional knowledge.

Specifically, I really felt connected to the questions that Wilson (2001) says a researcher must ask themselves: "How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic I am studying and myself as a researcher (on multiple levels)? How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between myself and other research participants?
How can I relate respectfully to the other participants involved in this research so that together we can form a stronger relationship with the idea we will share? What is my role as researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities? Am I being responsible in fulfilling my role and obligations to the other participants, to the topic and all of my relations? What am I contributing or giving back to the relationship? Is the sharing, growth and learning that is taking place reciprocal?" (p.77). Wilson's questions are a guiding point to hold myself accountable when conducting research alongside Indigenous communities. In particular, these questions demonstrate how essential it is that research helps build, repair, cultivate, nurture, create space for healing, for community and for care.

In my research I also move as if research is a way to restore accountability. Wilson (2008) also discusses this concept. He says, “Research is a practice of restoring accountability: to family, to nations, to environment, to idealism to ancestors, to cosmos/the universe. Our activity as researchers, when we’re acting on our values and practicing accountability to our relations, the activity is reconciliation” (p. 17). Especially because research has been harmful to Indigenous communities in the past, it is important that through research we are accountable to each other and that our research is full of love and care. Research is our opportunity to work towards balancing and healing our relationships, and true reconciliation.

CHAPTER 4: HONORING COMMUNITY, LAND AND PLACE

Creating Indigenous Sovereignty: Curating an Indigenous Space

The recruitment, curation, planning and execution of the art show opening was intentional. It was important for cultural protocol to be centered. As an Indigenous artist myself, it was important for me to walk in my Indigeneity and with my ancestors as I curated this space for my community. Throughout this process, it was important to center the community, and specifically to center the "by us, for us" philosophy.

Artist Selection and Notification

I had several calls of art on social media since I have a large following and presence on social media, but key in this process was connecting with Indigenous organizations, groups and artists. I also sent the art call to specific members in the art community. I found that many of the artists who submitted were artists I was connected to in the community as well. 23 of the 36 artists and I have a connection outside of this art show through community art or community work. There was more art than there was room for in the art show, and there were even artists who contacted me who wanted to submit their art, but due to the timing around the show, they did not have the capacity to do so.

Artwork Delivery and Pick Up

Many of the artists and culture keepers in this study and art show, have other jobs and responsibilities outside of creating art, and therefore I also knew I had to be flexible in the ways I collected art for the art show. The Nepantla Gallery is only open Thursday to Sunday from 12 PM to 6 PM which did not work for many of the working artists in this study, so I found myself contacting each of the 36 artists individually to arrange for pick up or drop off and their convenience. While, as an artist who also works full time, this was complicated for me to

arrange, I also feel like this was a way to honor their time and their participation in this study. I also found that because I was able to do this, it was a way I could help ease any burden on their participation. In addition, there were artists who live out of state, and I was able to purchase shipping labels for them to mail their art work to Seattle, again, to keep cost minimal for participation since shipping art can be expensive and a barrier.

Planning and Cultural Protocol

As the art show was going to open, I wanted to create a space that would be warm, welcoming, honored the Land and place, and felt like an open community gathering. One of the ways we honor guests and connections in my family is to serve food to guests. I ordered Oaxacan tamales en hoja de tamal de mole (tamales that are wrapped in banana leaves instead of corn husks) and tamales de rajas from one of my favorite local Oaxacan restaurants, Casa Mixteca. I also made agua de jamaica, horchata and cocadas. All of these foods and drinks I served were special to me because they were my mom's and my grandmother's favorite foods and since they have passed away, they could not physically join us at the opening. I also wanted to play songs that are an embodiment of joy, so I created a playlist on spotify for the opening and asked friends to add songs to the collaborative playlist. I also invited local Indigenous leaders and healers, Ixtlixochitl Salinas White Hawk (Nahuatlaca-Tenochca (Mexica) / Otomi / Tarasco) and Mark Colson (Chehalis) to open the show and our space with prayer. Ixtli's words and prayer were especially meaningful to me, since I consider her an Otomi elder, and her light has helped me feel care and warmth during my time in Seattle. As I was planning for the opening and as I was gathering the artwork for the show, I kept thinking about my ancestors and inviting them to be there with me, and to walk alongside this process. Often in art spaces, especially in Seattle, there does not seem to be room for my community or I to exist in our languages or in our ways of

being. At this opening, it felt important to center the community and to create space for us to show up as ourselves. At the opening, Ixtli and I also created an offering of food and words for our relatives, and our ancestors.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND THEMATIC FINDINGS

Data collection in my study gathered data in three different ways: data collected from artists and culture keepers who submitted their artwork answering the question of decolonized/liberatory education, artists and culture keepers also submitted a narrative about their pieces, and community members/visitors to the gallery and show opening also submitted their responses to the show, to the art and their own reflections about decolonized/liberatory education. The gallery show was up for one month.

Community Members

During the art show opening and during the duration of the art show, 22 community members and visitors to the gallery submitted surveys capturing their response to the art show, to the opening and their reflections on decolonized education. The demographics of the community members who answered the survey were: 42% Indigenous, American Indian, or Alaska Native, 37%Hispanic or Latino, 9% South Asian (Ex: Filipino, Nepali, Indian, Vietnamese, etc), 9% East Asian (Ex: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc), 9% White (Eg: German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc).

Six major themes were present in the surveys: community members reflected that the art had so much passion and feeling, art made them feel emotion, the space and artwork made them feel at home, the space and artwork helped create opportunity to be in relationship with each other and the community, the artwork helped community members reflect the importance of knowing the past to create change, and community members expressed their hopes and dreams for education. The six themes can be organized as two meta-themes: 1. embodied connection to art and community and 2. emotional connection to space and place.

Embodied Connection to Art, Community and Place

Community members noted feeling so moved and so much emotion in their own bodies from experiencing the art pieces and they noticed how much passion and feeling the artists poured into the art pieces.

The majority of the community members who submitted the survey attended the opening of the art show, and reflected how they loved being in community and in relationship with so many community members. They also commented how they felt at home, relaxed and in a familiar place, something they don't always feel in art spaces or in spaces in Seattle. Others also commented that the music and food made them feel connected to the space and each other. Jenny commented "I really loved the use of this space; it felt familiar re: family with how food & music & decor were present in a way that I don't feel at many other gallery showcases. Especially felt this in relation to the pieces on display - discussing importance family & culture and also the grand erasure of these things". Jenny's insight helps us see how important it is to feel welcomed, and also that our stories are reflected both in the environment, but also through art. Karama noted, "Walked right into some community leaders I hella respect sharing good thoughts and prayers to the art, the artists and the community. It was a room made for community and story. The people [in the show] told their stories in their art and the communities they brought with them all mixed with food and music and stories and ideas. Just real good heart & spirit medicine right there.". Karama's reflection of this being a place where community members being in relationship also feels important. It feels important that this was a meeting place for Indigenous community members.

Past, Present and Futurity

Other visitors commented how important it felt to them that the art reflected stories and histories and how it felt important for that connection of knowing story/histories in order to create change. Meg shared "I found this art show to be incredibly raw and transparent in what it means to explore the impacts of colonialism in our reality. Mixing the voices of community members and artists through visual aid was powerful and profound, and I am grateful to have experienced the show with a good friend". Meg's insight and use of the word "raw" feels important. This was visible in other words from other community members who shared that it felt important how this art space and artworks made space for the true ways in which we exist and the impacts of colonialism while also making space for joy and connection.

Many of the community members also expressed how much hope they feel for the future of education. Natalie said in her survey, "I believe that learning should and can be collective and that everyone is a teacher and has knowledge to contribute to the greater collective. Using the example of the art show, collective knowledge was demonstrated in many forms from the artist sharing their talent to the world and their interpretation of what learning should look and feel like to the art show attendees sharing their time and their interpretation of the art pieces.". In Natalie's reflection, it is clear that in the education she imagines, learning is done by everyone involved, especially in the collective way. When reimagining what it means to learn, Kenny, for example, shared "We would focus much more on culture than white-centric political history of the US.". Kenny's reflection indicated what many other community members indicated too, that to serve the needs of our communities and fulfill our longings to feel seen, education would focus more on our stories. Mona shared, "The atmosphere and opening in a good way was fantastic. The time taken to acknowledge our ancestors and other relations creates an

environment rich for learning. It creates space for our hearts & minds to be open and ready to receive. That is what education reimagined means to be, to begin in a good way, to take the time to build community and acknowledge our ancestors, winged, two-legged and all our relatives.". Mona's reflection also resonates because it was an experience that many people experienced, the appreciation for the acknowledging of our ancestors and relations, and the ways this created openings for learning in our hearts and minds. Meg shared, "Education would look like: encouraging mistakes, and replacing grading/measurement systems with reflections of growth and change. Moving away from white-supremacy structures that gatekeep academia and learning". Meg's reflections, again, share the visions for the future of education, and the ways that moving away from white supremacy is a way for academia to grow and change.

Artists and Culture Keepers

37 artists and culture keepers submitted artwork to show at the Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery during the month of January. Many of the artists and culture keepers who presented artwork in the show identified with more than one identity and the demographics were as follows: 35% Indigenous, American Indian, or Alaska Native, 60% Hispanic or Latino, 25% Black or African American (Eg: African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalian, etc), 10% East Asian (Ex: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc), 10% Arab or Middle Eastern (Ex: Lebanese, Iranian, Syrian, etc), 35% White (Eg: German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc). Most of the artists were Seattle based artists, and a few of the artists mailed in artwork from other states including Maryland and California.

The major themes that were salient in the artwork submitted by artists and culture keepers were seen through a couple different ways: in the ways their imagery conveyed messages, in the ways colors are indicative of messages and emotions, and in the statements some of the artists

submitted with their artwork. The major colors present in the artwork were browns, black and white, blues, greens, golds/yellows, red and soft oranges and soft purples.

Messages through Imagery: Embodied, Ancestral, Transformative, Relational

Through image analysis, I found there were 8 themes in the artwork submitted by artists and culture keepers and most of these themes also had one or more subthemes. The themes are: Wisdom through Knowledges, Connection to Land, Place and Healing, Representation of Self or of Ourselves, Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge, Wisdom through Positionality, Connection to Community, Connection through Hope, and Connection through Educational Experiences.

Wisdom through Knowledges

All of the art pieces demonstrated a message and connection to various forms of knowledge and sources of wisdom. Most artists connected knowledge and their ways of knowing to Indigenous wisdom.

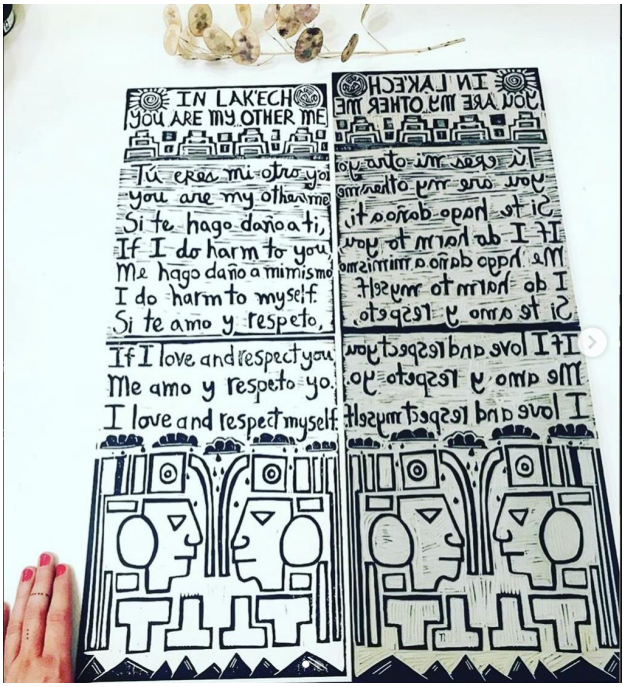


Figure 5. In Lak'Ech (Elizabeth Marie Ortega., 2023)

For example, in Figure 5, Elizabeth's piece was a visual representation of the Mayan poem, In Lak'Ech (you are my other me), and Indigenous imagery that reflects the words in the poem. Indigenous knowledge was a common theme, and can also be seen in isaura's piece that depicts learnings about Land and liberation from Zapatista Comandanta Ramona. Other artists depicted the importance of wisdom learned from and through words, and many artists depicted wisdom through words in another language, including Indigenous languages. Aleyda's poem to her father demonstrates the learning she has had about longing and liberation through love, grief and loss. Jéhan's piece not only depicts Land, but also includes an articulation of their own ways of knowing and healing through words.

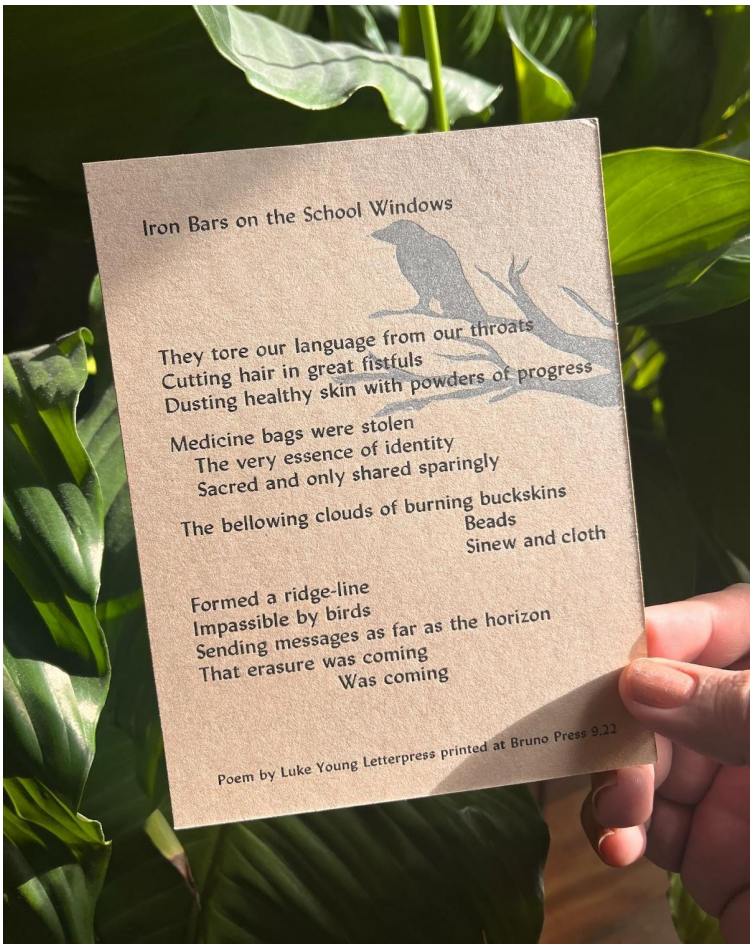


Figure 6. Iron Bars on the School Windows (Luke Young., 2022)

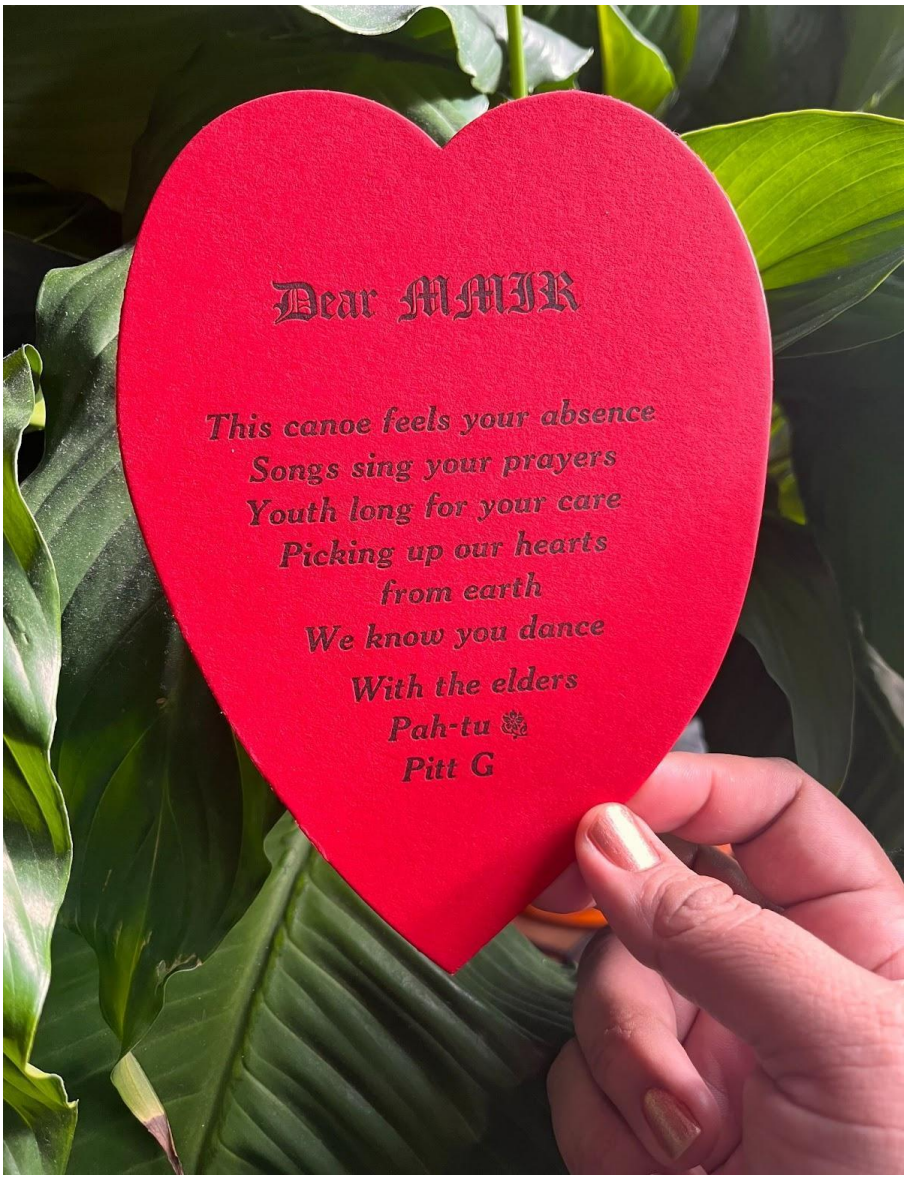


Figure 7. Dear MMIR (Pah-tu, 2022)

As seen in Figures 6 and 7, both Luke and Pah-tu wrote poems that spoke about painful Indigenous histories and realities using letterpress. Luke's focuses on the experiences of Indigenous children at the boarding schools, and Pah-tu's is a love poem to missing and murdered Indigenous relatives (MMIRs). Pah-tu's piece is shaped like a heart even, to show how close to their heart-work this is.

Maribel's piece uses bold statements and fonts to demonstrate the emphasis of truths like "BROWN IS BEAUTIFUL!!" or "Chicano Power!" alongside depictions of books that have informed her ways of knowing like "Massacre of the Dreamers", "Chicana Feminist Thought", or "Occupied America: 100 years of Chicano History". This specific piece by Maribel also shows how some artists also reflected knowledge and learning through history and lessons through artwork since she also included images of the California Farmworker's campaigns and strikes. Both of Xitlalic's pieces were odes to knowledges from her elders and included teachings for healing and words she learned from her grandmother, and she created these pieces to honor her grandmother and her teachings. Xitlalic chose to also put very personal plant medicines in her pieces. She even demonstrated care to this knowledge by getting her pieces professionally framed. In her piece, Iris focuses on how her ways of knowing and feeling are guided for the ways she creates art. In her piece, she arranged spray can bottle tops in a way that it reassembled the flow of water and indicates how this way she approaches art and her passion for it flows in and out of her.

Connection to Land, Place and Healing

All of the art pieces also demonstrated a deep connection to growth and life. Many artists demonstrated this importance with images of greenery, trees, leaves, flowers, sky, plant medicine, big medicine, animal relatives, and various forms of life. For example, in both of Che's pieces, there are images of women, and they are surrounded, and also covered completely with flowers. All six of Erica's pieces depict big medicine, big trees, forests, sky, light and growth as teachers. Figure 8 demonstrates how Erica's photograph for example, captures the big medicine of cedar and could represent lines in generations with the placement of the trees.

Figure 8. Plantcestors (Érica González Jones, 2022)

Eila's piece, Figure 9, embodies joy and healing as their piece is a scene with their grandmother but around them, they are surrounded by blooming strawberries. This piece depicts the connection to the Land, in joy and in youth.

Figure 9. Untitled with Grandma (Eila Woolsey Strand, 2022)

Some of the artists also depicted animal relatives in their pieces. For example, all three of Carlos' pieces depict life and growth through birds, flowers, a caterpillar and a heart. Andrea's piece embodies resilience and she uses words but also an imagery of a bee and their delicate wings. Guadalupe's pieces depict animal relatives, and the ways we learn from them too since he depicted a Siberian husky and a monarch butterfly, both who have significant meanings and importance to Indigenous communities.

Figure 10. SIVALIK (T'leeuh Antone, 2022).

About 49% of the artists centered plant medicine in their pieces. For example, in their piece depicted in Figure 9, T'leeuh depicts plant medicine and uses words in their language to

name the different pieces of the image and medicine. Xitlalic, in both of her pieces, also breaks down healing into three elements and centers the importance of plant medicine and also labels them in Spanish. AvionaCreatrix, Sara, MC, Leslie and Elisa for example, all included elements of plants and blooms to hold or surround the individuals at the center of their pieces. At the center of Ammara's piece is plant medicine, and the reconnection to self through plant medicine.

Figure 11. Horno de Mi Abue (Natalie Arreola, 2022).

There were also artists (27%) that centered Land and Place in their art pieces. For example, in her pieces Natalie centered her family's ancestral Lands, and the ways that elders and her family practices and passes down their ways of knowing. In Figure 10, Natalie's photograph shows her grandmother's stone oven. Ammara's piece demonstrates her and her grandmother, resting on the land and it almost feels as if they are planted in the Land.

Representation of Self or of Ourselves

Most (95%) of the art pieces demonstrated a representation of self or ourselves through imagery. For example, artists like Ammara, Angelina, AvionaCreatrix, Carlos, Elisa all had representations of themselves in their art.

Figure 12. Which half of you is Puerto Rican? (Elisa Dore, 2020).

In Figure 11, Elisa's "Which half of you is Puerto Rican?", Elisa, depicts herself as the central piece in her art, split in half with imagery of her different cultures to depict her message

of belonging, understanding, and being seen as her most authentic self. The linocut shows Elisa, holding hands with parts of each side.

Others, such as Nikki, Natalie, Maribel or MC did not necessarily use self-portraits but used imagery of beings that represented themselves in the context of their homes, their homelands, their families, communities.

Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge

Most (89%) of the art pieces demonstrated a representation of embodied strength as well as embodied softness. For example, artists like T'leeuh, Pah-tu, and Leslie, chose images that exuded an energy of strength, again grounded in story and community. Jo for example, in their piece, centers the strength of standing in your power and conviction in a photograph that shows two women presenting bodies kissing in front of a government building. In his "Ancestors got my back" piece, Jake shows two Indigenous individuals holding hands in a pose known as a solidarity and strength pose. The facial expressions of the individuals also demonstrates strength and them standing in their power. Erica's photographs demonstrate the strength and softness of big medicine in nature.

Most (81%) of the art pieces also demonstrated a representation of emotions, feelings and emotional charge in their imagery. Many of the pieces depicted different emotions and feelings like joy, love, anger, sadness, grief, death, feelings of being disjointed, or uncertainty. For example, Anne's pieces exude feelings of grief and longing through depictions of violence, fire and individuals that seem to be stretching beyond her pieces with their hands or bodies.

Figure 13. Con la Cabeza (Elisa Dore, 2020).

Elisa's piece, in Figure 12, shows an individual with a sword and a beheading of a colonizer, demonstrates anger towards colonization in a violent way, much like the ways this kind of violence was enacted on Indigenous peoples, especially in her homelands of Puerto Rico. Vanessa's piece demonstrates an individual who is angry and sad, being held back by a dark

road/rope from Indigeneity. Vanessa's piece also has imagery that resembles tears. Similar to Vanessa's piece, Maia's piece is clearly a piece that carries and incredible amount of emotion as well. Maia depicts a head, with an emotion filled expression, centered and split open, bursting with roses.

Wisdom through Positionality

Most (65%) of the art pieces centered individuals with different family and community positionality as sources of learning, knowledge, connection and grounding. The pieces articulated this by centering representations of elders, ancestors, matriarchs/women, and youth.

Figure 14. Cellular Memory (Ammara Touch, 2022).

Ammara's piece in Firgure 13, for example, centers an image of herself and her grandmother, surrounded by plants, and they, together, are holding plant medicine. Ammara's piece demonstrates the importance of elders in holding and passing knowledge onto us and with us. Ammara's piece centers ancestral and matriarchal knowledge. Elia, Natalie, Saiyare also center elders and matriarchs in their pieces as important to developing and supporting their ways of learning and knowing. Specifically, Natalie and Saiyare also have an element of not only feeling cared for but also learning to cook from the elders and matriarchs in their lives. T'leeuh created a jacket with the quote from the television show Reservation Dogs, "This is the POWER we carry when you really PRAY, they're all around you, all the TIME". This quote and it being on their jacket feels important as it feels as if it is a reminder to T'leeuh and to others who witness them wearing it, that a connection with our ancestors is strong and possible at all times, since they are with us all the time. Finally, Cleopatra and Maribel both centered youth in their pieces as learners, but also as people who we are responsible for in our communities. In Cleopatra's piece for example, the youth is at the edge of the water, learning from the tide-pools and water.

Connection to Community

Most (54%) of the art pieces also demonstrated a centering of community through community care, connections to each other, movements, advocacy, and love. Isaura's two pieces center teachings of community care as she depicts individuals who were transformative in their work and in their lives, Comandanta Ramona and James Baldwin. In her piece Sara writes, "the future is female" and depicts women as leaders in the community and of our future. Maribel's piece, Figure 16, centers the strikes and farmworker's rights in the imagery also centers the message of community care, since many of the farmworkers were not treated fairly or justly.

Figure 15. We Who Create Ourselves (Maribel Galvan, 2019).

MC quotes Audre Lorde in their piece “Caring for myself is not self-indulgent. It is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare”. This centering of self-care may feel like it does not match this theme, but this centering of self-care as political warfare means that by caring for our own bodies, we will be able to continue the work of community care and community liberation.

Connection through Hope

Many of the artists (46%) also centered hope, longing for a different world, healing and light in their art pieces. Even though Erica, in her six pieces, centered plants as ancestors, she also centered light and hope of the teaching of plants guiding our futures.

Figure 16. For the Long Haul (Andrea Marcos, 2022).

Andrea's words "for the long haul" in her peace in Figure 14 demonstrate the commitment to a vision of a solidarity into the future. Jake's Indigenous graduates demonstrate hope with the imagery of connection through a glowing heart. Like Jake, many artists centered rays/swirls of light in their pieces to demonstrate hope. In my own pieces, I centered hope, and the desire for education to be experienced differently and for our communities to experience formal education differently.

Connection through Educational Experiences

A couple of the artists (1%) centered formal educational experience accomplishments in their art pieces, specifically in their representation of graduations. Jake and Maribel, however, centered student cultural and familial identities in the ways they represented the graduates.

Figure 17. La Graduada (Maribel Galvan, 2022).

For example, in Maribel's piece as shown in Figure 15, shows that the individual graduating is a person of color, they are wearing serape material on their graduation robe, and the books and decorations center around Latine and chicana experiences. Maribel painted books that center Latine characters, histories and Spanish words: "Chicana Feminist Thought", "House on Mango

Street", "Mija", and "Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mother's Warned Us About". The graduates in Jake's piece are Indigenous and Jake depicts traditional Aztec symbols on their robes and faces as well.

Colors and Themes

The major colors present in the art pieces were browns, black and white, blues, greens, golds/yellows, red and soft oranges and soft purples. The colors emoted and supported the 8 themes found in the artwork. For example with the black and white and red colors, the artists were conveying strength, emotional charge (anger and sadness) and this supported the themes of Representation of Self or of Ourselves as well as Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge. The browns were present in almost every piece, and this also supported the importance of the Land and brown skin in the artwork, and therefore supported the themes of Wisdom through Knowledges, Connection to Land, Place and Healing, Representation of Self or of Ourselves. The blues, the white, the soft colors and the greens all were used to demonstrate and emphasize the life that exists in nature, plant medicine and the Land, and also supported the theme of Connection to Land, Place and Healing. Finally, the colors of gold and yellow were used to represent light and hope in many of the art pieces and these represented healing, connection and wisdom and therefore supported the themes of Connection to Community and Connection through Hope.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Current literature, as well as findings in this study, demonstrate the shift that can happen in the current educational system through Indigenous pedagogy and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Countering Settler Colonialism in Learning

As discussed earlier, Deloria and Wildcat (2001) discuss this and how important relationships and connections are in education. The findings in this study support this thought, and I found that Indigenous ways of knowing can shift settler colonial educational structures and lead to healing. For example, the themes that focus on wisdom through various forms of knowledge, wisdom through positionality, connection to community and embodied strength and emotional charge all support this idea that Indigenous ways of knowing heal. The aforementioned themes all focus on how we learn and who and what we learn from, outside of the settler colonial paradigm. My research questions asked “How does settler colonialism oppress education and learning? How does it create an illusion of the severing of emotional connection to place?”. These questions were answered in my study by the following themes in artist/culture keeper artwork: Connection to Land, Place and Healing and Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge. This research question was also answered by the community members who visited to the gallery as one of the themes in that data demonstrated that the artwork in the show helped community members reflect the importance of knowing the past to create change. Again, community members reflected how important it felt to them that the art reflected stories and histories and specifically the ways that settler colonialism oppresses learning and our realities. Other community members reflected how different the space felt than other white spaces and

how connected they felt to each other and to this place because of how welcoming and open the show felt.

In Connection to Land, Place and Healing, through their artwork and words, artists/culture keepers shared that knowledge, education and a reimagining of those meant a deep connection to the Land, and to this Place. Their interpretation of knowledge and reimagining of education in this way is almost the opposite of the ways they can and have existed in formal education today. Again, many artists demonstrated this importance with images of greenery, trees, leaves, flowers, sky, plant medicine, big medicine, animal relatives, and various forms of life.

In Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge, many artists/culture keepers spoke to the anger or emotions they feel about the ways settler colonialism has impacted us and our relationship with learning and education and in many ways our relationship to ourselves. In some cases, demonstrating that anger through the visual representation of the beheading of a colonizer with their own sword/weapon or demonstrating sadness through visual representations of themselves crying.

Reimaging Educational Relationships

My second research question, “Who defines for whom the meaning of education and the relationship to place?”, was present and answered in the data in a way that I did not fully expect. Both the community member visitors and the artists/culture keepers either explicitly or implied that settler colonialism has created a system that excludes their ways of knowing from formal education and does not value their knowledges. Beyond this starting point, it seemed more important to both groups to spend more time with the ideas of who defines the meaning of education, knowledge and relationship to place for themselves in their own lives, outside of

formal education. The way this manifested itself in themes for community members was through their articulation of their hopes and dreams for education, this articulation, however, was only possible in this space because they witnessed passion and emotional, historical, joyful and hopeful messages through the artwork that the artist/culture keepers embodied in their art.

Artists/culture keepers answered this research question in their artwork and words also moved beyond the meaning of education in the settler colonial context and focused on education and knowledge in the context of traditional knowledge. Specifically, the themes Wisdom through Knowledges and Connection to Land, Place and Healing encompass the messages and themes in the artwork and embodies "who defines for whom the meaning of education and relationship to place" question. Again, all of the art pieces demonstrated a message and connection to various forms of knowledge and sources of wisdom. Most artists connected knowledge and their ways of knowing to Indigenous wisdom, and therefore reflecting that this is who defines the meaning of education and relationship to place for them. Some artists created artwork as an ode to the elders in their lives who taught them healing practices especially practices that involve plant medicine and big medicine, others represented the Indigenous teachings they learned from artists or community leaders, and others represented learning from history and from political movements and activism.

The question of how we begin to heal and bring back the connection to place was salient in the themes in my data and is discussed in the literature as well. Again, Archibald (2008) focuses on how storytelling educates and heals the mind, body and spirit. The themes in this study feel especially helpful when thinking about the principles that Indigenous peoples use to guide their ways of knowing and healing.

Reconciliation in Education

My next three research questions were answered in my data with all of salient themes present in both the survey responses by community member visitors to the art show and the artist/culture keeper artwork. My research questions were, “How do we reimagine what it means to learn?”, “How do we put emotion back into learning and education?”, and “What is reconciliation in the context of knowledge, education and learning?”. Community member visitors had the richest answers to these questions. They reflected that the art show created a space for love, warmth, relationship building and connecting with others and many shared that this is what they wish education was like. Many visitors shared that it was important for their stories to be reflected in what is taught in schools. Other visitors noted how much hope they feel for the future of education, and how they hope that education can shift to include these kinds of stories and experiences. With these answers, it was clear that visitors believe that in order to put emotion back into learning and formal education, there needs to be a shift in the ways people experience it, similar to what was present in the art show: emotional art that carried community stories, an environment that makes them feel at home, and space for relationship building.

The data from the artists/culture keepers answered the three questions in a robust way as well. Their artwork demonstrated that in order to bring emotion back into education, in order to reimagine education and learning and in order to create space for reconciliation in the context of knowledge, education and learning, it is essential for learning and education to look and feel different. The seven themes embody these messages well: Wisdom through Knowledges , Connection to Land, Place and Healing, Representation of Self or of Ourselves, Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge, Wisdom Through Positionality, Connection to Community, Connection through Hope, Connection through Educational Experiences.

In Wisdom through Knowledges, for example, artists/culture keepers demonstrated a message and connection to various forms of knowledge and sources of wisdom, and this is what formal education reimagined would look like: education as a place where our varying ways of knowing and the sources of wisdom in our community are not only honored, but also included and centered. This centering of wisdom and elder knowledge and wisdom must also be centered and honored in varying languages, including Indigenous languages. Artists also depicted and centered how our ways of knowing are grounded in what history has taught us, from boarding schools, to missing and murdered Indigenous relatives, through protest like farmworker rights movements. In many ways, healing stems from feeling and acknowledging emotions, past traumas, realities and hope. Therefore, It is important for this historical wisdom to exist in the curriculum in formal education in order for education to be transformational and for true reconciliation to happen.

All of the art pieces also demonstrated a deep connection to growth and life. Many artists centered this importance with images of greenery, trees, leaves, flowers, sky, plant medicine, big medicine, animal relatives, and various forms of life. Again, there is literature that explores these findings too and specifically the concepts of Land and our relationship to Land and remembering and healing. Solís (2017) for example, writes, “Land is where we come from, the places we inhabit, it is the ground we walk on, the waters that engulf us, and all the life in it. I consider Land to be the flesh of our mothers and our grandmothers, their labor, their impermanence, their permeability, and their presence. Land is where learning and remembering how to suture and heal are practices that teach us how to thrive, respect, and tend to our relations and our long and deep wounds (p. 199). She makes the connection from Land to our mothers, grandmothers and to our bodies. She also discusses how healing happens in the remembering since schooling has

caused erasure. Land is how we remember, and how we cultivate “our mother’s and grandmother’s insurgent praxis”. This quote from Solis, along with the messages from artist/culture keeper artwork make the message clear: nurturing our connection to the Land and to Place is imperative to heal and to learn. Formal education must provide space for us to nurture connection to Land and Place across all disciplines.

In order for formal education to be transformed and reimagined, artists shared that it is important that we can see ourselves represented, our stories represented and our matriarchs and elders represented. Furthermore, beyond representation, it is important that there is a centering of ourselves and our communities in formal education and a decentering of whiteness. It is also important that we are upheld as experts in our ways of knowing and being, in particular in the classroom and in curriculum. The artists/culture keepers created pieces that demonstrated this and can be seen in the themes of Representation of Self or of Ourselves and Wisdom through Positionality. Most artists included self portraits, or representations of themselves in other bodies or other beings, matriarchs, elders, and representations of their families/histories as well. Many times, in education, we are asked to leave the personal, leave ourselves and leave our emotions outside of academia. This theme, especially in relation to my research questions, demonstrates that it is important that shifts in order to move towards reconciliation and liberation. Reconciliation in education, in this context, would mean that there would be centering of these wisdoms and ways of knowing, and beyond teaching that represent us, include actual teachings from our own bodies, and our matriarchs and our elders. In many ways, this kind of representation, space and centering, counteracts the erasure of our bodies and our histories from education. These kinds of Indigenous teachings and learning methods can begin to counteract settler colonial violence that has been integral in the building of our formal educational systems.

In the Embodied Strength and Emotional Charge themes in the artwork, it was clear that the messages the artists were sharing were that we are emotional beings, we stand in our power and in our emotions and that is how we navigate the world. Our emotions teach us and ground us, much like what Dr. Audre Lorde meant when she said, "...our real power comes from the personal; our real insights from living come from the deep knowledge within us that arises from our feelings. Our thoughts are shaped by our tutoring. As black people, we have not been tutored for our benefit, but more often than not for our detriment. We were tutored to function in a structure that already existed but that does not function for our good. Our feelings are our most genuine paths to knowledge. They are chaotic, sometimes painful, sometimes contradictory, but they come from deep within us. And we must key into those feelings and begin to extrapolate from them, examine them for new ways of understanding our experiences. This is how new visions begin, how we begin to posit a new future nourished by the past. This is what I mean by matter following energy, and energy following feeling. Our visions begin with our desires" (Tate, 1983). Like Dr. Davis says, our feelings are our teachers, and we not only have to give our feelings and their teachings guide us, but also we must create a system that allows for those feelings and their teachers in “formal education”. In their art pieces and words, artist/culture keepers shared this, they stand in their power, in their emotions and feelings and their visions for education are full of emotion as well.

Artists and culture keepers, as well as community member visitors to the art show, also shared how important community care and hope are as they navigate towards liberation and how they nurture their visions for transformed educational systems. The themes Connection through Hope and Connection to Community demonstrate these visions and these desires because they speak to how a reconciliation in education and a reimagining of educational systems means that

we can take care of each other and ourselves. There is deeply seeded joy in community care, in advocating for our communities and in many ways that is why many of us pursue higher education and why we serve our communities after we finish. This piece about graduating was also present in the artwork. A couple of artists represented brown, Indigenous students graduating and connecting to their knowledges, to each other and to their communities.

Overall, the transformation of educational systems lies in their decolonization, beyond the mainstream ways decolonization is thought about. Tuck and Wang (2012) describe this when they share that decolonization must offer a different perspective that unsettles and that decolonization does not compliment existing systems, offers a new system. The decolonization and the prioritization of Indigenous knowledge is not complimentary to white settler futurity, instead it offers the hope for a different future.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In my culture, my family and my community, we know what it means to take care of each other, to contribute to our journeys towards liberation, to contribute what we can and to contribute to create joy. I often think about family or community gatherings, where we made something beautiful out of nothing and by nothing I mean nothing that capitalism and settler colonialism values. We weren't rich, and in fact, we more than struggled to make ends meet, yet I often think about how beautiful family and community gatherings are when we all bring our most authentic selves, and the thing we know how to do and contribute. I remember gatherings where my aunts brought their special dishes and their booming laughter, my grandmother brought her matriarchal energy and opened her home, my mother, a gifted storyteller, brought her stories and oratory gifts of word, and the children brought our joy, laughter and play. In my chaotic childhood, these were the moments my body rested, these were the moments I learned the most about my family, about love and about life. I think about how beautiful the opening of the Nuestros Saberes Art Show was for this study. I did not have the money to pay artists what they deserved for their knowledge and skills, but I did have energy to create space for their stories, I trusted them to come through, literally. I trusted that even during such a busy, tumultuous time in the world, they would share their stories and visions for educational justice with me and the community. They trusted me to honor their stories. They trusted me to create a space that would honor their stories. The 100+ community members who visited the opening trusted that this space would be warm and would bring them joy, and I trusted them to show up with an open heart and open mind to receive these sacred teachings from the artists/culture keepers. Even when putting this event together, I was reminded of the gatherings

with my family when friends and community members offered to bring food, drinks, joy and laughter to the show opening and space.

This strikes me as a place to begin to discuss the recommendations for this study. My study helped me realize and articulate what it is that we need to do to honor our community, especially in the context of education. It helped me reflect what we should be doing with education: building a foundation of trust and nurturing relationships with each other as we continue on our journey to create spaces and experiences full of joy. In the context of educational systems, trust is absolutely essential to moving towards liberation. Students trust us (teachers, faculty, staff, administrators) to see them and create space for them in their most authentic selves, they trust us to not cause them harm and they trust us as agents in their own journeys towards liberation. We are accountable to them and responsible to not protect whiteness as settler colonialism would have us do, but instead our responsibility is to them, to their wellbeing and to their healing. I don't mean this in a white savior way, I mean this in a practical way. We are not saving them, and as agents of the institution, it is our responsibility to honor them, to honor their histories, their ways of knowing, and their ways of being. As an administrator at a community college, I also can see how important it is for our administrators to support us in this work and to trust us as we move to create these kinds of educational spaces.

Culture of Love and Care

Throughout this dissertation I have discussed the need to decenter settler colonial thought and processes, but really what that means is to approach our work in and outside the classroom with a culture of love and care for our communities and our students. What would and could happen, if I students felt like we loved them and heard from us that we loved them? Not in a conditional way, not as students, and not only if they are understanding the material in our

classrooms, not only if they are good students, but because they exist. Cultivating learning spaces and environments where students feel safe to learn, mean that they also are safe to feel, they are safe to feel grounded and connected to the materials in class.

Nurturing this kind of environment must be intentional, and can be transformational for communities. Teachers, faculty, staff, administrators should focus on the following:

- Set the tone in the space and relationship: Share this with students, explain how settler colonialism's goal is to disconnect us from each other and that in your learning space, you want to be connected to them. You will listen to them, create space for them and their experiences to exist inside the classroom. For example, in science classrooms, you frame the teaching of scientific phenomena by asking students what they know about the cold weather and their bodies. If I was a student in this classroom, I would've probably shared that my mom told me never to go out into the cold with wet hair and to cover up my neck and chest if it's windy so I wouldn't get sick. Then, it would've been really great to hear why this is, if this is how science works etc. I guarantee you, I would have forever remembered the science for this lesson because it matters to me and to my community and incorporates my family's ways of knowing and being. I would have also probably felt really excited to share what I learned with my mom and my family too.

  As an administrator, this support to faculty could look like creating or allocating funds for curriculum revisions grants and professional development funds and include part time faculty in the faculty who can access these funds. This will allow faculty to not only get paid to spend the time revising their curriculum but also allow them to get together to learn about this work together, brainstorm implementation, discuss issues that

may arise etc. If the administration prioritizes this, it creates space for faculty to also prioritize it in a world with many competing priorities.

- Get to know your students and let them get to know you: While this one feels straightforward, this one is sometimes hard to do. Especially as students, settler colonialism has us believing that we are vessels to pour knowledge into and that is the only way we can exist in classrooms. In my work in TRIO student support programs, this was how I built such strong relationships with my students and one of the reasons why my retention numbers were so strong.. Students knew I cared about them, more than just as students. For example, if I asked a student if they had a job or what their family life looked like and the student told me they were looking for a job, had an interview, or had children, I took note of that in my brain and in student notes. While on the surface, this has almost nothing to do with them picking classes for next quarter, I would still ask them the next time I saw them, how their interview went or how their children were doing. This knowledge then helped me help them pick classes that worked for their schedule and the students knew I cared about them and their lives. Often I'd have students come to my office and share accomplishments that they hadn't even shared with their friends or family yet. Often students would ask me about my artwork and about what upcoming projects I want to do. We built strong relationships because I saw them more than numbers, more than just as a student, and they saw me too, more than just their advisor or counselor or teacher.

As an administrator, it is also important to create the time and space for real connection to happen. Often we feel the need to stick to "professional" roles and forget that what we are doing is building connection and journeying together towards liberation,

and that journey includes robust connections and relationships with everyone involved. For example, I invited the faculty at the college I work at to the opening of the Nuestros Saberes show for this study. Many faculty came, and it was so beautiful to be seen in this way by them, for them to see the work I was doing outside of my job/role and to meet my family and friends.

- Create space for emotions and feelings in your classroom: This one is hard because everything settler colonialism has us believing goes against this belief. Remember, the goal of settler colonial systems is to create sterile, objective and neutral spaces. We don't exist in a neutral way, and so it is important that in your classroom and in your educational systems you find ways for emotions and feelings to exist. This can be about what you're teaching/learning, about what is happening in the world, what is happening in the lives of your students, in their communities or in your classroom. You are not a therapist, so you do not have to therapize students, but you can show them love and care as they are processing and sitting with their emotions and feelings. One of the ways I have done this in my classroom as a faculty member is, I ask students to share what is one word or image that they want to spend more time with from their weekly readings. I ask students what color is that word or image in their mind? If that word or image could be a feeling, what would it be? Where does that word or feeling sit in their body? As a printmaker, I also taught students linocut, and I am having them create an image or artwork every week to process their readings.

    As an administrator, it is also important to create space for emotions and feelings in your meetings, and in your interactions with faculty. If you are upset, angry, sad about policies that continue to cause harm at the institution, share that! Remember that our

responsibility is not to protect whiteness or settler colonialist structures, our responsibility is to reconciliation and healing of our communities.

Connection to Land, Place and Healing

Throughout this dissertation I have also discussed the importance of Land and Place to healing and to learning. Even though settler colonial thought would like us to believe so, learning does not happen in a vacuum absent of Land and Place. Often, especially in science, math, technology, engineering (STEM) courses or curriculum, it can feel hard to incorporate and center Indigenous ways of knowing and being, in particular Land and Place. In my work with educators, I often hear that it feels hard to to think about Land and Place in the classroom. This is where I remember Vine and Deloria's (2001) work on Power and Place where they outline the differences between western, settler colonial education and traditional knowledge. Again, the goal of western education is to become an expert in your field, whereas traditional education is to bring what you know and learn to your communities. I found this to be true in my work with students. Every time I asked them what they wanted to do after college, they shared that they wanted to take their skills and work in their communities. Sometimes students would share for example that their families had a health condition and they wanted to learn how to help support them, or others who shared that their towns back home did not have electricity and they wanted to become an engineer to work back home. This is how and why Land and Place is important. Recently, in my work as an educator, I shared an example on how engineering principles or physics principles could be more meaningful to students in the context of what they know and what they want to know. For example, building a bridge would look very different in Mexico City than it would here in the US, or here in Seattle and in the classroom it could be important to discuss why; the discussion of why would need to include not only climate, altitude and logistic

kinds of differences, but also perhaps and inclusion of why Mexico has access to specific materials, how US intervention has created that kind of system and access, etc.

Nurturing an environment of learning grounded in Land and Place must also be intentional, and can also be transformational for communities. Teachers, faculty, staff, administrators should focus on the following:

- Discuss the people and traditional stewards of the Land you are on
- Center your teaching based on the Land you are on
- Discuss your responsibilities to the community and the Land as guests of the Land and Place you are learning and working from
- Discuss how what you are learning relates to (and doesn't relate to) the teachings of the traditional people of the Land you are on
- Select course materials that reflect these teachings, that reflect the Place you are learning from, and reflect the Place(s) where students want to work in. While you do this, it is also important to share that since these are not your teachings, you are also not an expert in these teachings, you are merely creating space for these ways of knowing in the classroom
- Ask students to reflect what these teachings mean to them
- Ask students what it means to them to be guests on this Land and Place
- Instead of only reading a Land acknowledgement in meetings, share why Indigenous sovereignty is important. Ask people in attendance what they will do today that will prioritize Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous sovereignty.

Create Space for Ways of Knowing

Settler colonial systems do not allow for an authentic and safe way of sharing and learning together. It is important that students can see themselves, their stories, the stories of their friends, and their communities reflected in the curriculum. This reflection in the curriculum, however, should not exist as an alternative curriculum. Often I hear how this can be done as a single unit, or as a lens, but it is important that traditional ways of knowing and community teachings transcend one unit and they are centered throughout the class. Teachers, faculty, staff, administrators should focus on the following:

- Center course content that reflects the histories, ways of knowing, knowledges of your students, of the community you live in and are serving and of the people furthest from educational justice. If you feel like you cannot do this because of the subject area you teach, for example math or science, talk about why the scientists or mathematicians you talk about are not like people in their communities. In math for example, you could talk about why we think of Mexico or Latin American countries as second class, when really, the Mayans invented the concept of 0.
- Reflect and shift grading norms or assignment norms to create space to share their knowledge in ways that makes sense to them and that helps them articulate their messages. For example, my own ability to create and process information and knowledge was not something I realized I could do in academia until I started this doctoral program. As I have metabolized the concepts I've explored in this program over the last three years, I have realized that I have never felt more confident in my abilities to understand and take with me the knowledge I am learning from the content, from my professors and from my cohort-mates. The only way I was able to do this is because my faculty and this

program created space for my artwork and therefore my wholeness in my assignments, presentations, and this dissertation.

- Shift the ways settler colonialism has us thinking about "academic excellence". What is the purpose of what you are doing in your classroom? Who taught you what this purpose is? What kind of relationship do you want with your students? What do you hope students leave your classroom with? What do you hope they feel about themselves? Why do you want that for them? How will that help them connect with their communities and honor the Land? How will that help them honor and serve the Indigenous peoples whose Land they occupy?

Conclusion

"Trauma is like a rock that is thrown into the water. It spreads itself out and can travel and get stuck in the land, trees, water, insects, leaves, rocks, and animals – all these things… Historical trauma has been defined as cumulative and collective trauma that produces psychological and emotional suffering in individuals and communities. Historical unresolved grief can emerge in the wake of historical trauma due to multiple, rapid community losses through genocide, land theft, and cultural erasure. The inability to mourn and manage grief in culturally and spiritually appropriate ways due to the suppression of Indigenous practices can intensify the sense of unresolved grief" (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Due to the historical trauma that settler colonialism has caused to our communities, it is imperative that we create spaces for healing and reconciliation, especially in formal education.

This study created space for understanding about our responsibility in teaching, learning and education for our community and students. This research helped us see how, through art, we can find connection to our emotional experiences, our communities and the futures we imagine.

By creating pathways to healing our brains and our bodies, we can begin to heal, and begin to resolve the generations of trauma embedded into our bodies and our experiences. As educational leaders and as community leaders, it is our responsibility to advocate fiercely for that kind of healing for our communities, and that begins by reimagining how our communities experience education and learning. I created the following image (Figure 6) as a commissioned piece for the University of California , Santa Barbara Counseling Center, and it also feels like the perfect piece to end this study with. In the image you see brown, wrinkled hands, full of love, and wisdom, holding a blooming *savila* (aloe) plant. There is a radiating light, emanating from the hands and from the blooming *savila*, and at the top, a bright *colibri* (hummingbird). This image is what I picture when I think about what education at our schools could look like: loving hands, holding our ways of knowing/medicines, holding our communities as they thrive in community with other beings.

Figure 18. Savila (Eileen Jimenez, 2023).

Appendix A
Artwork Submitted

Aleyda Cervantes

Pa

After Erika L. Sanchez

Pa if I could glue us back together in a fictional story
it would be a new continent emerging Pa, your birthday is during

el mes patrio celebrating a flag from a country neither of us is from
we never learn how to stay faithful to that motherland or family

how naive of you to think only men leave
as you gifted me the world in the pages of Gabriel Garcia Marquez

I, too remember that evening when you and I
conocimos el hielo the same day we learned to name the pain of being

apart, both hiding away, making our versions of pecesitos de oro
swimming their way from a luminescent bay in the Coast Salish sea

to a port in Mazatlán Pa, I think of you
walking the streets of yellow and orange houses looking for sunset

the same colors as my name no one is there to hold my hand
asking what to read next what trip am I making out of life

Pa, how I wish Culiacan could've been our place
how I wanted to tell you it was never as beautiful as Guadalajara

it never had the memory of us our bench is still in the same place,
outside the same bookstore. Stories tend to repeat themselves realizing we

had never been giving a second choice porque las estirpes condenadas a cien años de
'edad...

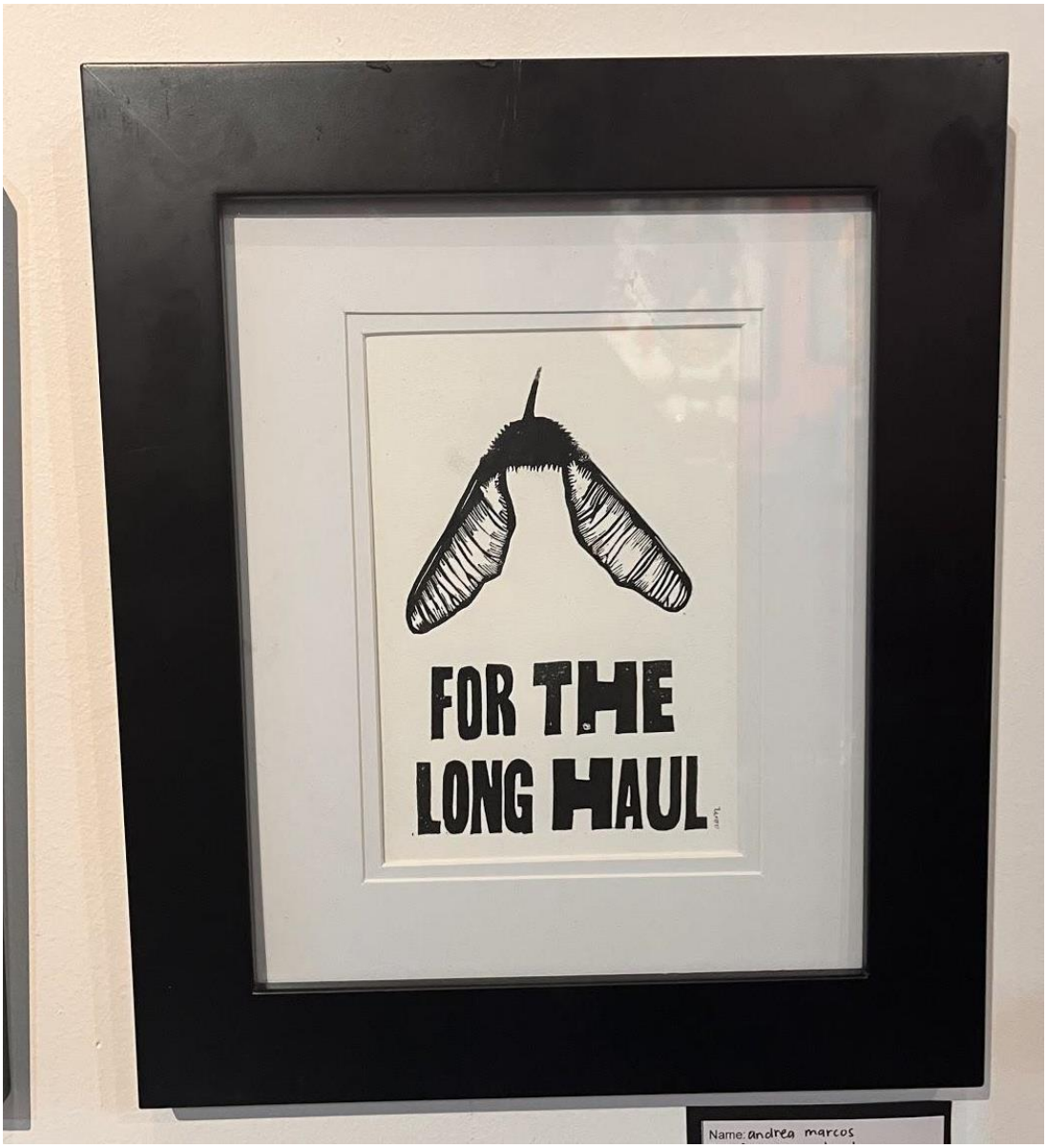
Pa, I look at the mural of our town, the history I'm walking
giving us a third choice of something new nuestra estirpe is an unfinished

poem migrating from story to story giving us another hundred years of revolution.

"Pa"
The line *Porque las estirpes condenadas a cien años de soledad* was taken from Gabriel García Márquez "Cien Años de Soledad"

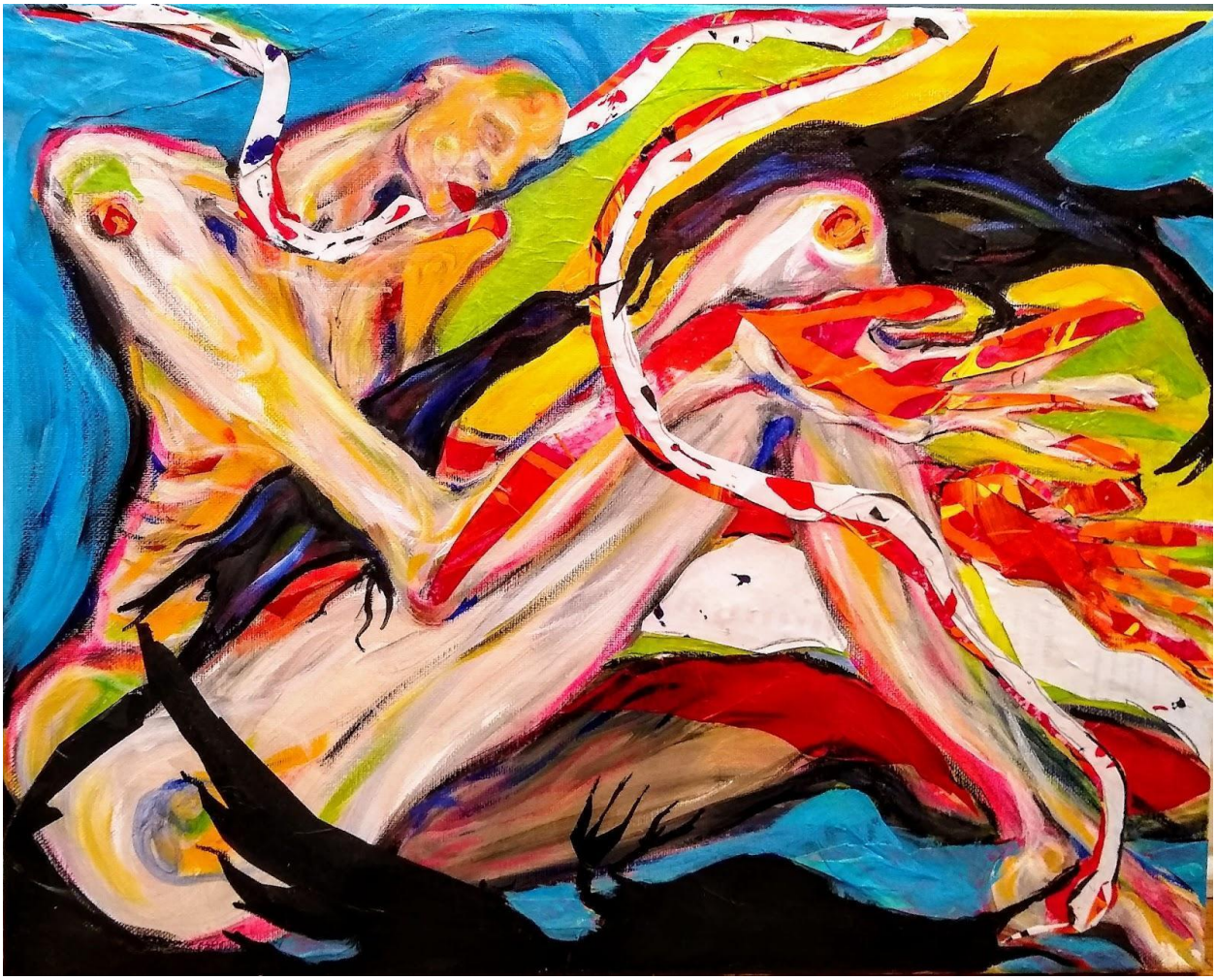
Ammara Touch

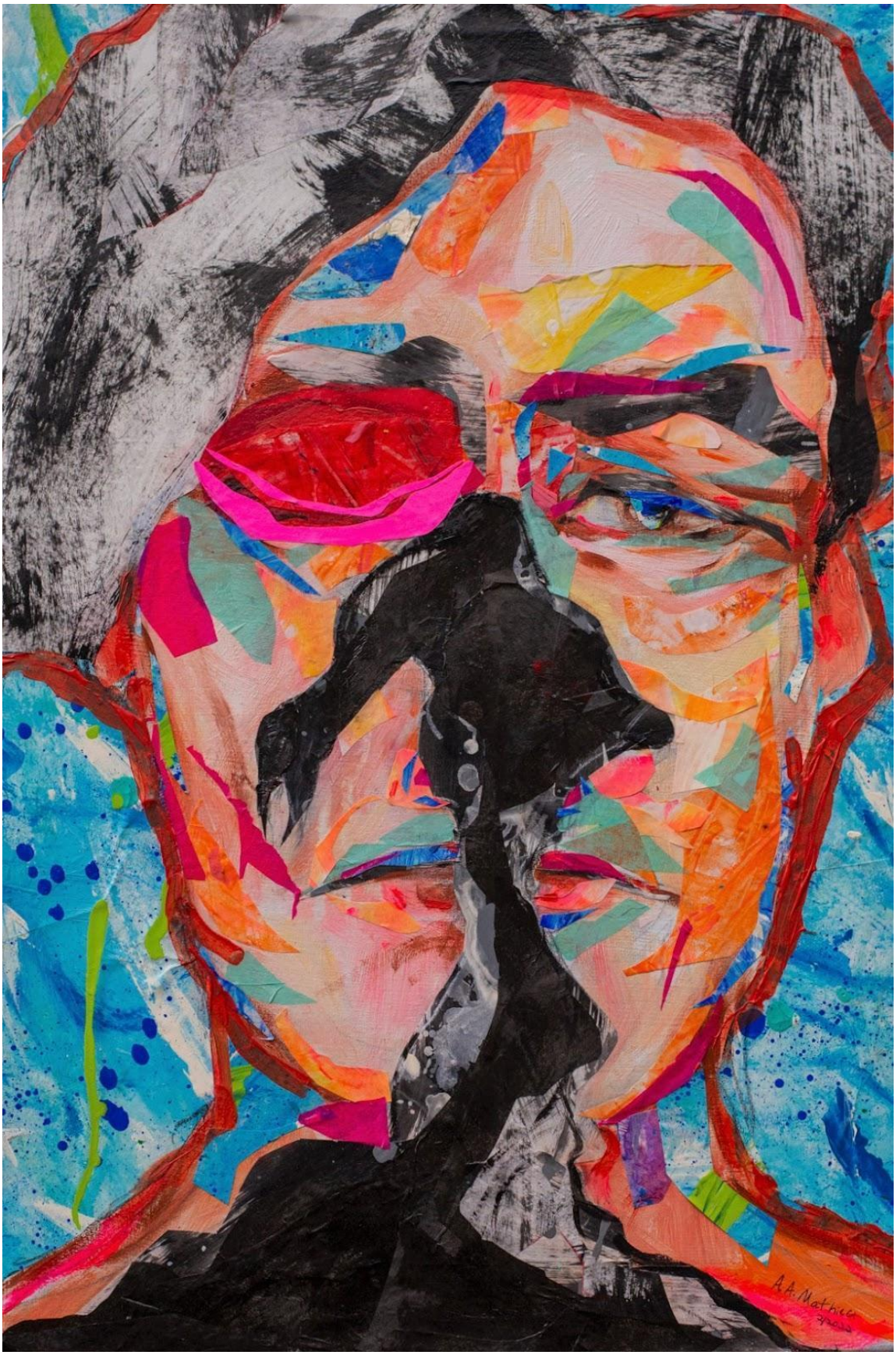
Andrea Marcos

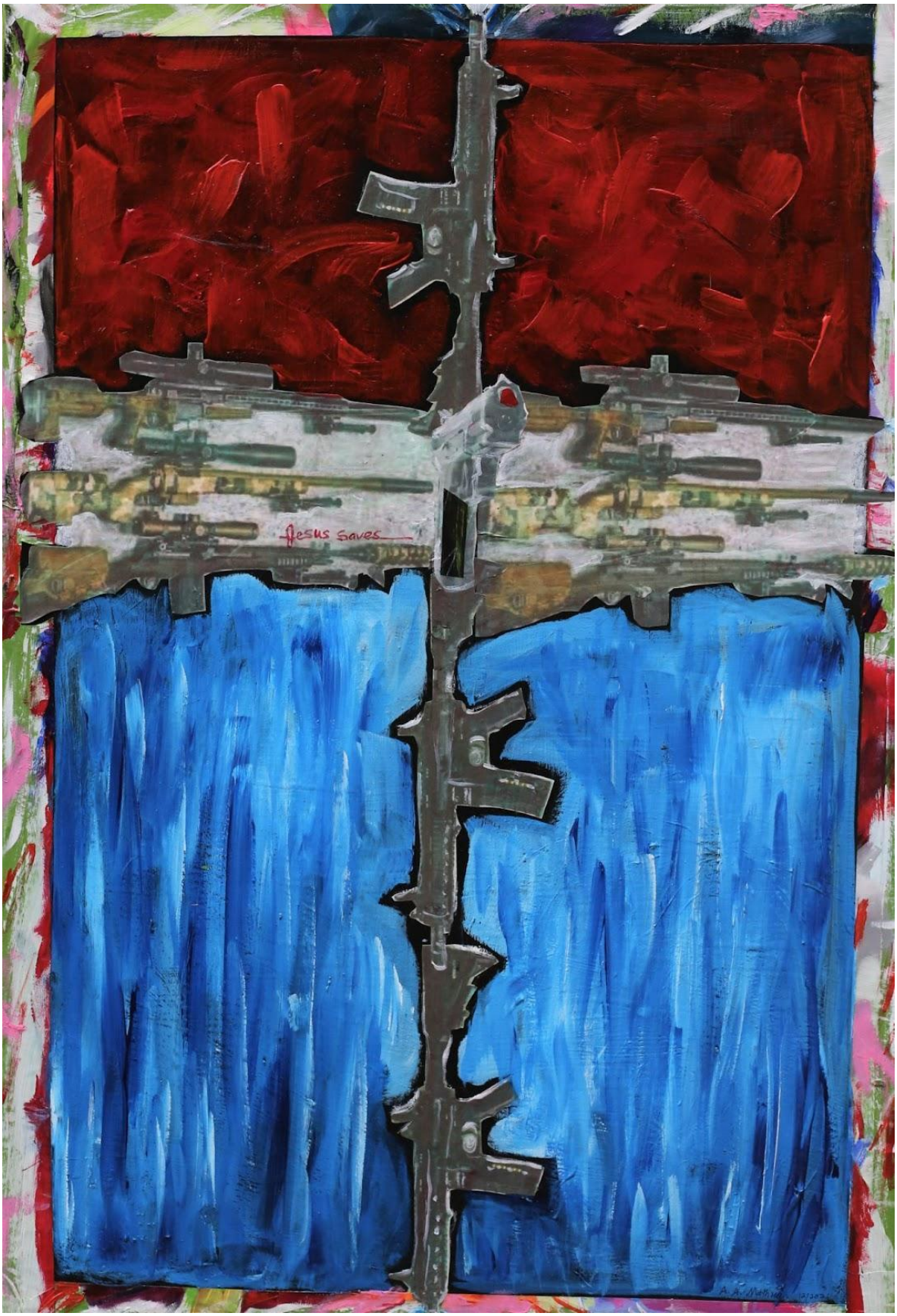


Angelina Villalobos

Anne Mathieu






Jesus Saves

AvionaCreatrix

Carlos Martinez

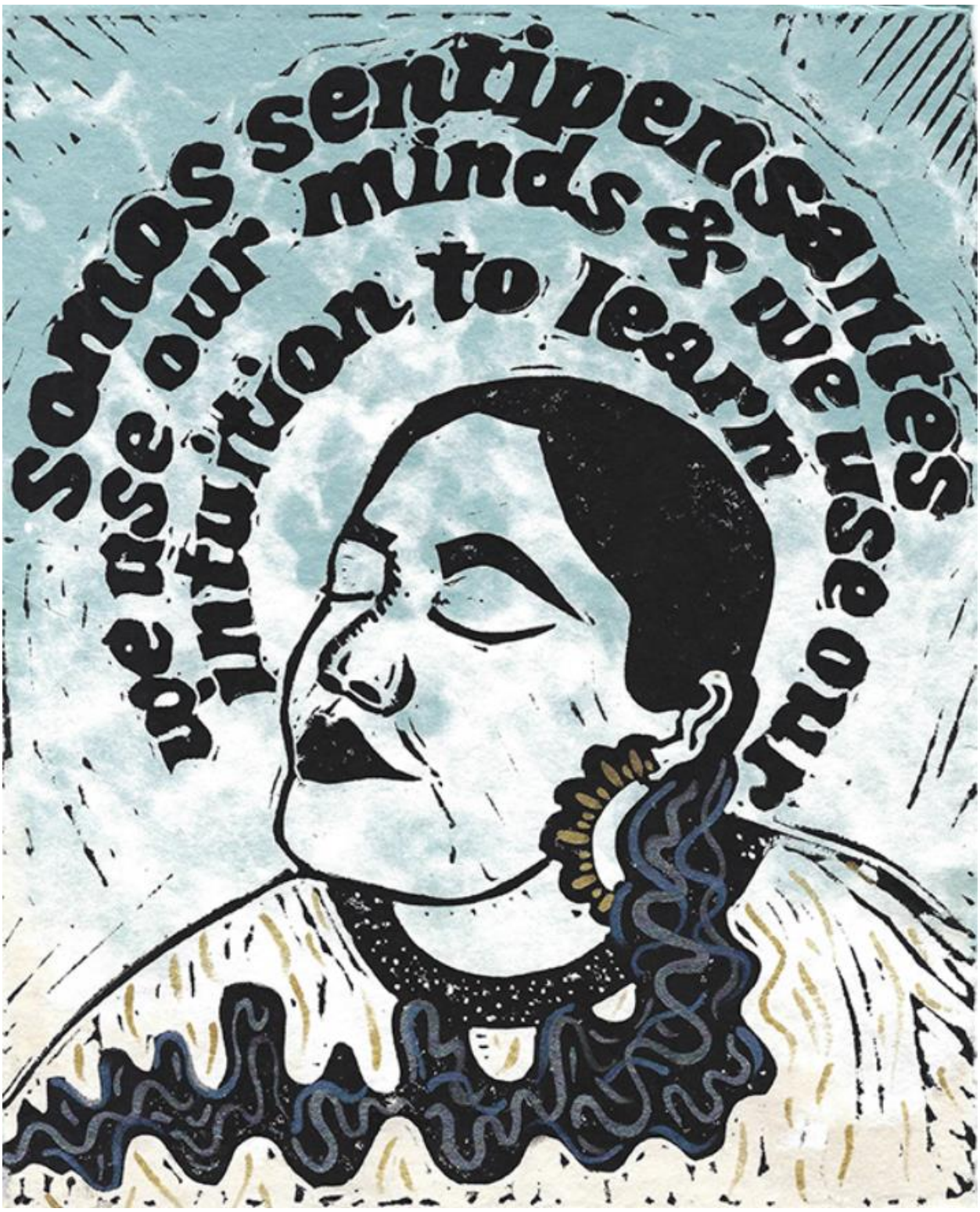

Martinez '21


Martinez 20

Che Lopez

Cleopatra Cutler

Eileen Jimenez

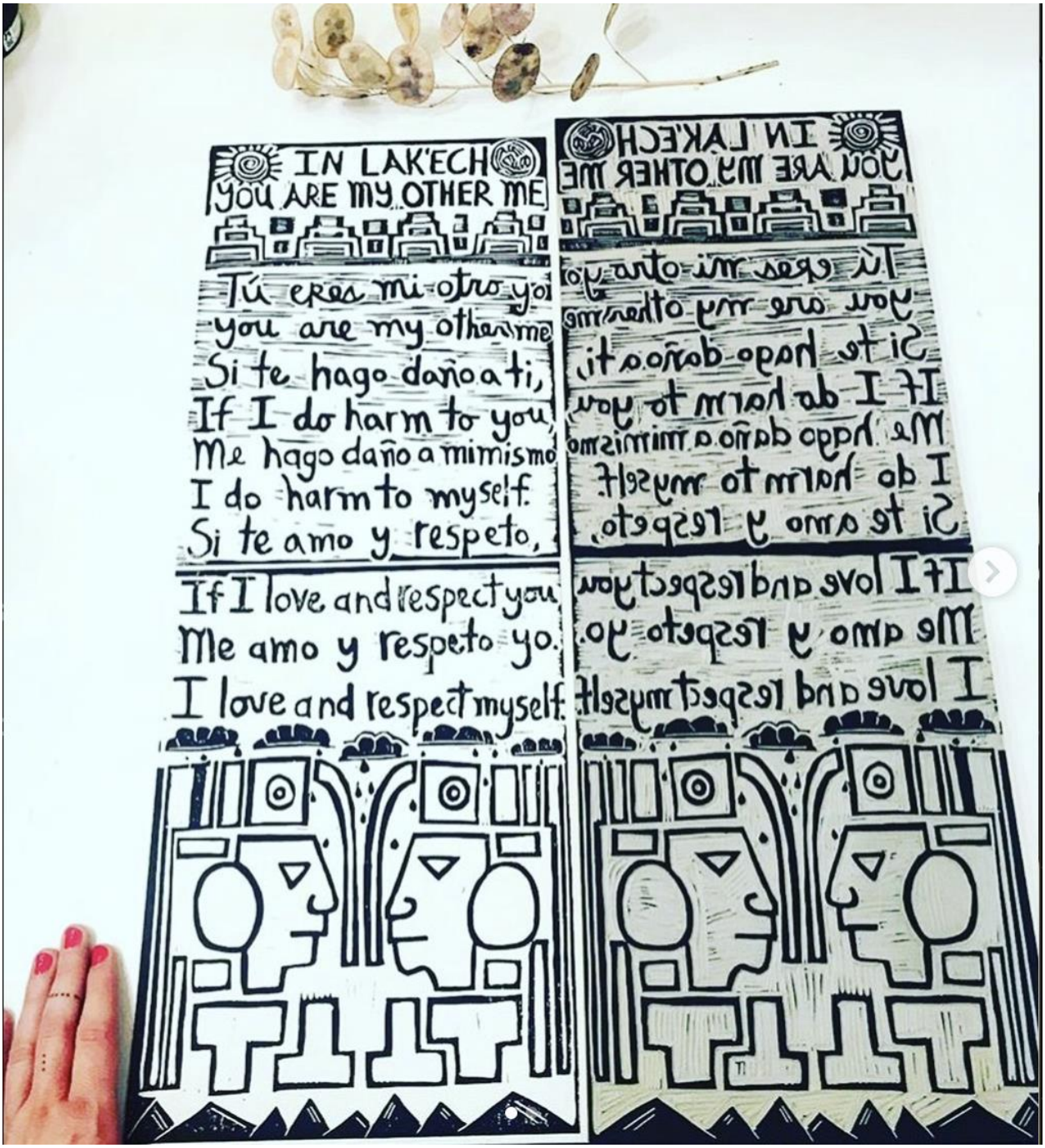



OUR
BODIES
ARE WOVEN
WITH KNOWLEDGE

Eila Woolsey Strand

Elisa Dore

Elizabeth Maria Ortega

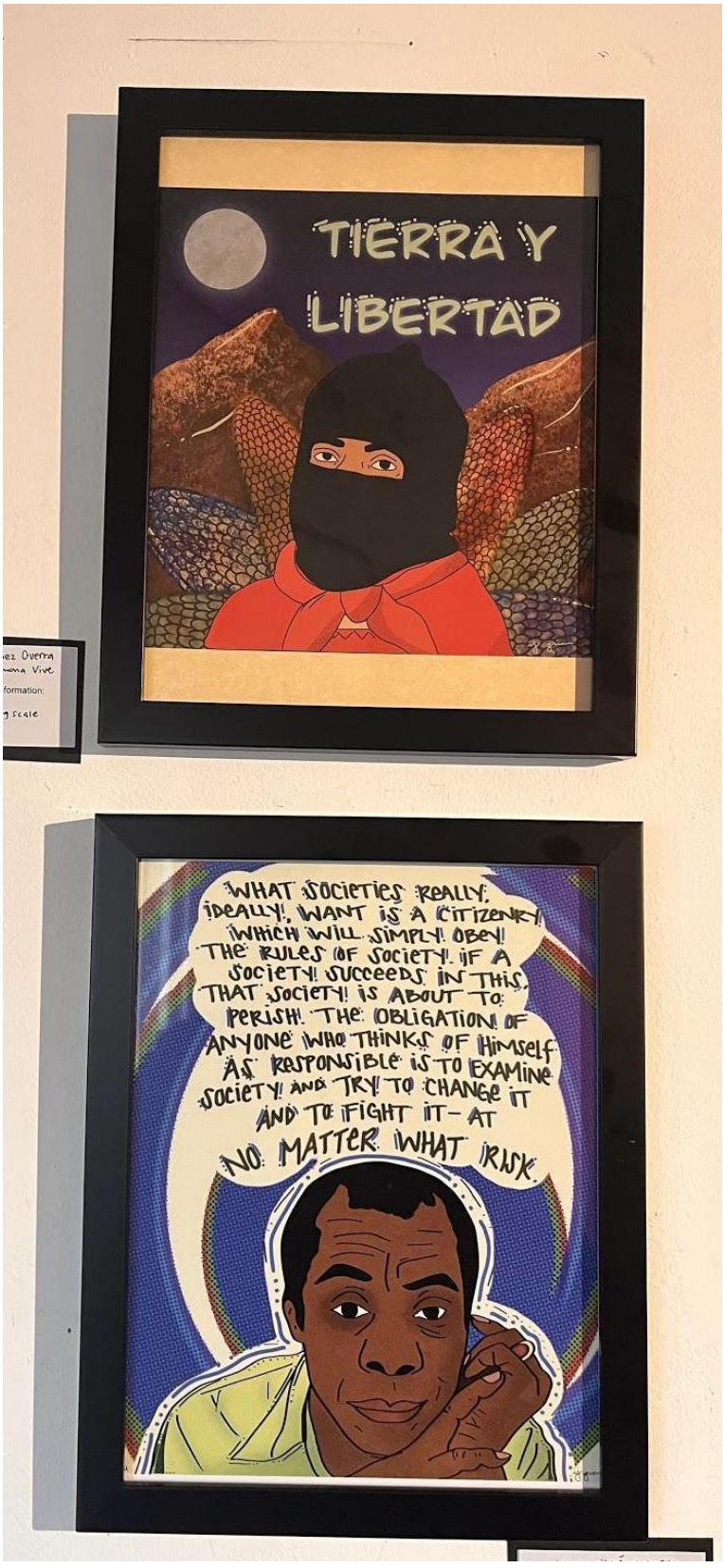


Érica González Jones

Guadalupe Garcia

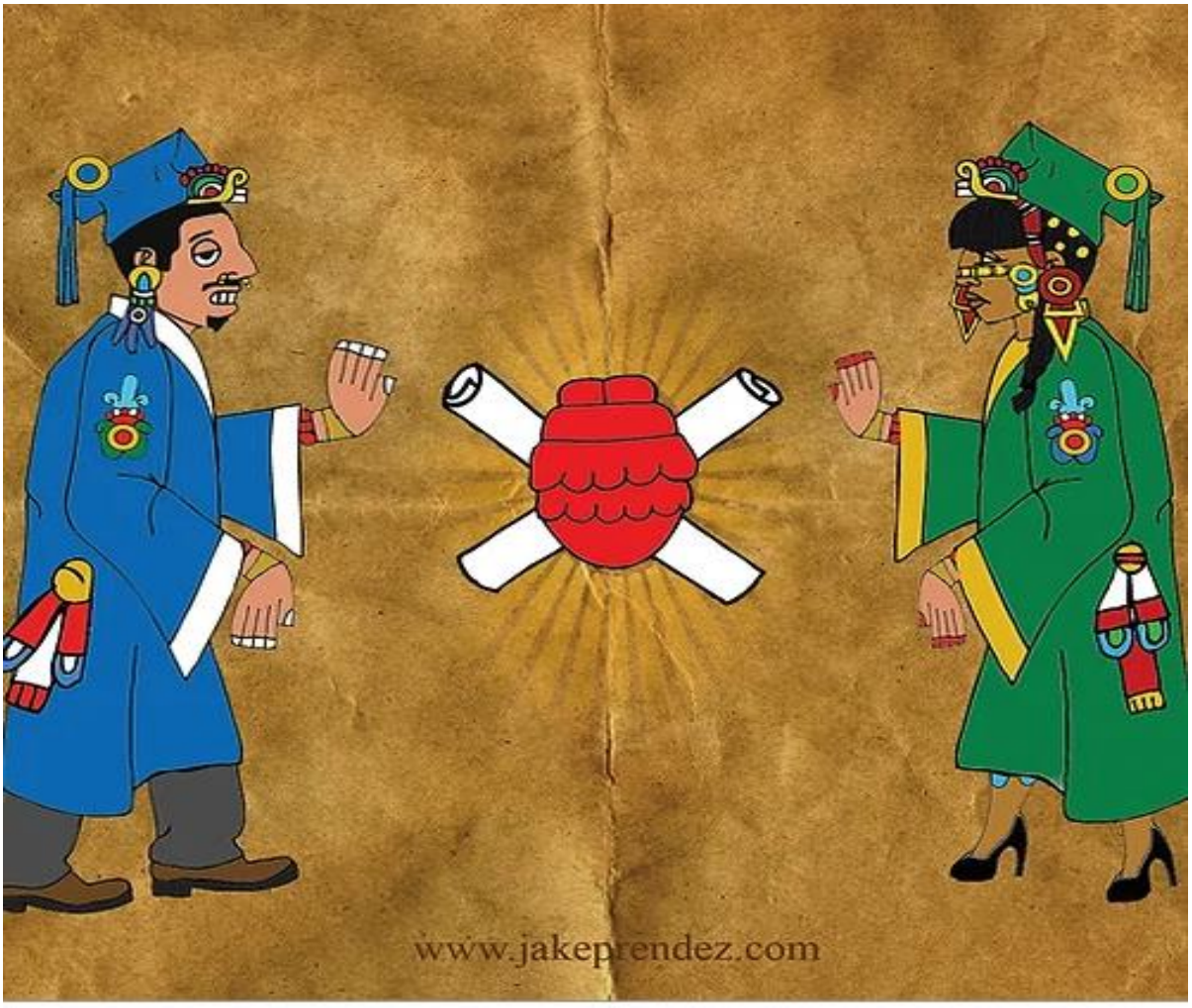
Iris Sanchez

isaura jiménez guerra



Jéhan Òsanyìn

Jake Prendez



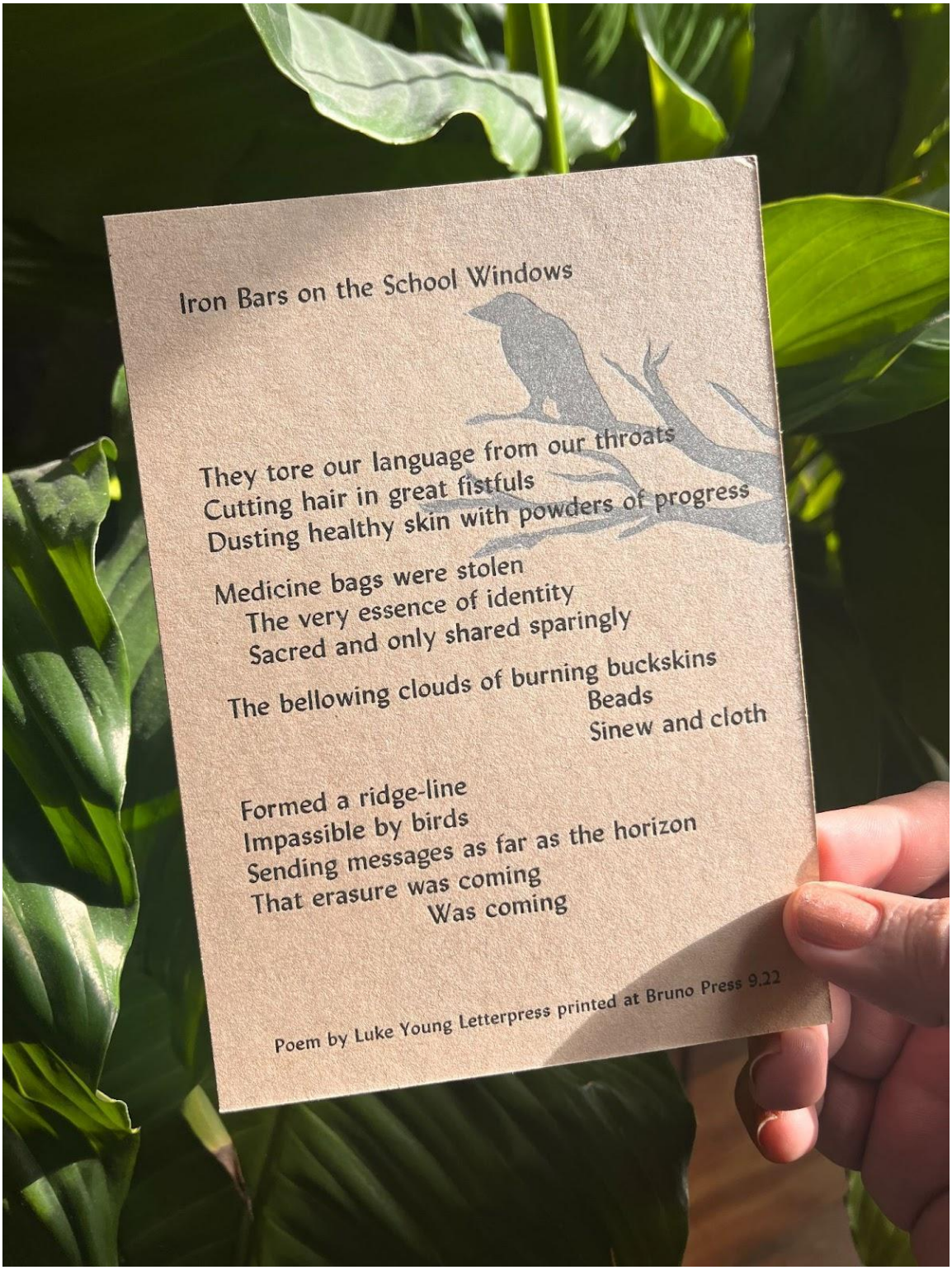
Jo Cosme

Kalli Arte


LOS HIJOS DEL NOPAL
SON UNA MIGRACION FORZADA
QUE BUSCA DESESPERADAMENTE
UN LUGAR AL CUAL PERTENECER.
PARA AMAR Y CUIDAR A NUESTRAS FAMILIAS
HEMOS REALIZADO SACRIFICIOS EXTRAORDINARIOS
EN BUSCA DE ESTOS LUGARES.
CARGAMOS A NUESTROS NOPALES
COMO UNA FUERZA IMPARABLE
QUE NOS DIRIGE A UN LUGAR DE AMOR
QUE NUNCA SE ROMPERA.

Leslie Jimenez

Luke Young


Iron Bars on the School Windows
They tore our language from our throats
Cutting hair in great fistfuls
Dusting healthy skin with powders of progress
Medicine bags were stolen
The very essence of identity
Sacred and only shared sparingly
The bellowing clouds of burning buckskins
Beads
Sinew and cloth
Formed a ridge-line
Impassible by birds
Sending messages as far as the horizon
That erasure was coming
Was coming
Poem by Luke Young Letterpress printed at Bruno Press 9.22

Maia Blackford

Maribel Galvan


CHICANO POWER!!
BROWN IS BEAUTIFUL!!
HUELGA
MASSACRE OF THE DREAMERS
CHICANA FEMINIST THOUGHT
OCCUPIED AMERICA
100 YEARS OF CHICANO HISTORY
THE FIGHT IN THE
VIVA LA RAZA
WAR!!

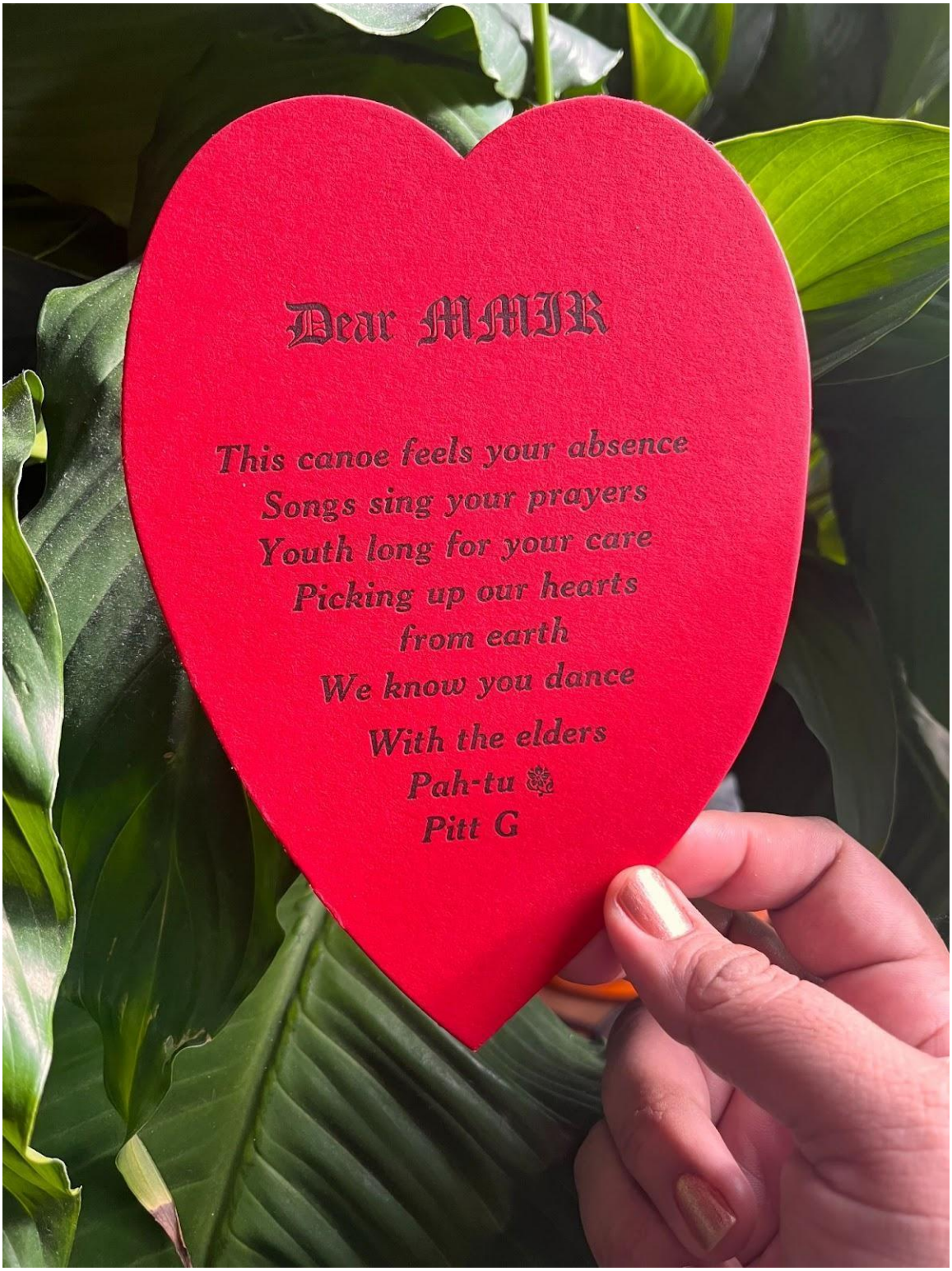
MC Carey


Caring for myself is
not self-indulgence.
It is
self-preservation
and that is an act of
political warfare.
-Audre Lorde
THEY
EM
DYKE
MC

Natalie Arreola

Nikki Jabbora-Barber

Pah-tu Pitt G


Dear MMIR
This canoe feels your absence
Songs sing your prayers
Youth long for your care
Picking up our hearts
from earth
We know you dance
With the elders
Pah-tu
Pitt G

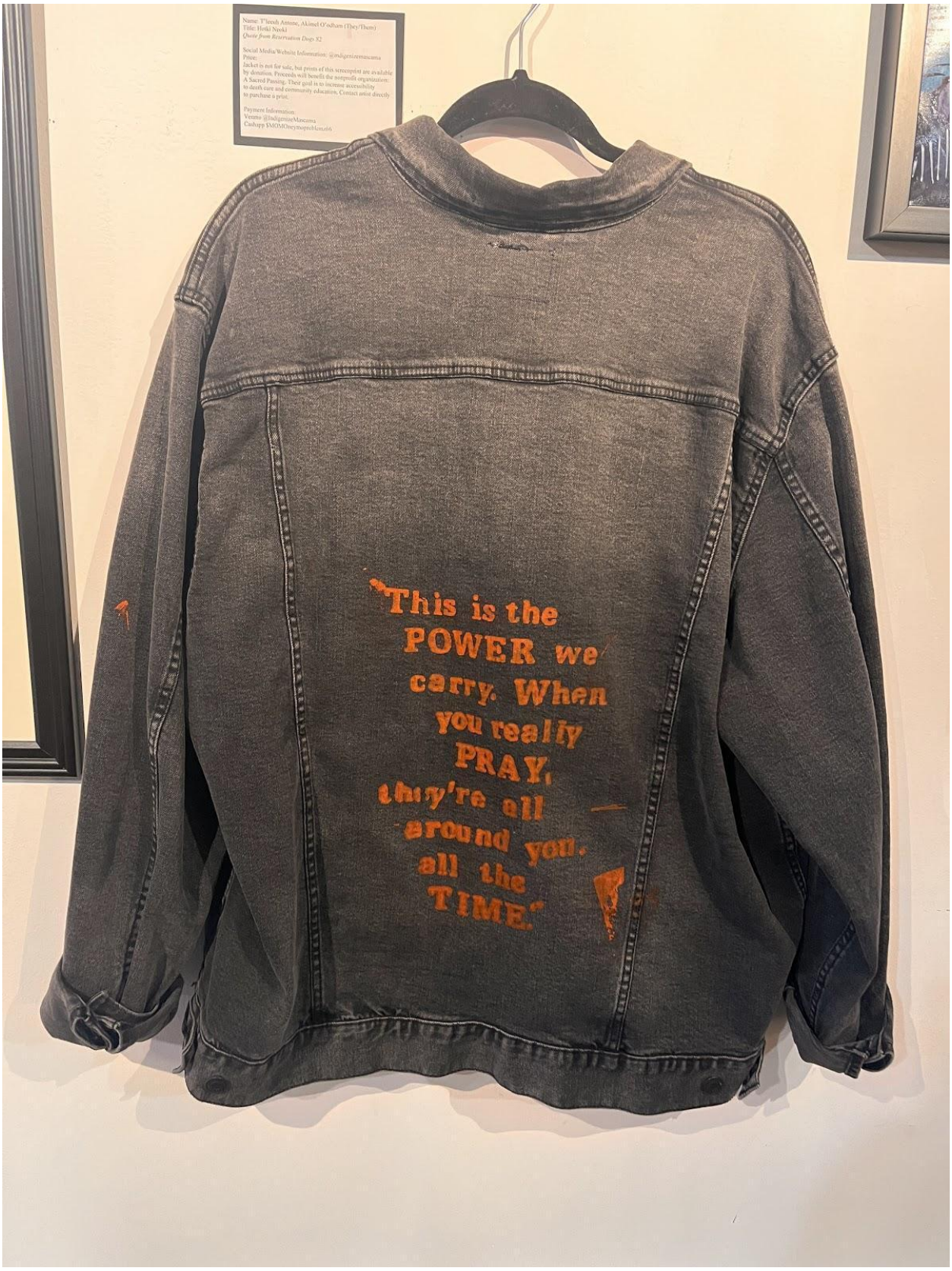
Saiyare Refaei

Anonymous

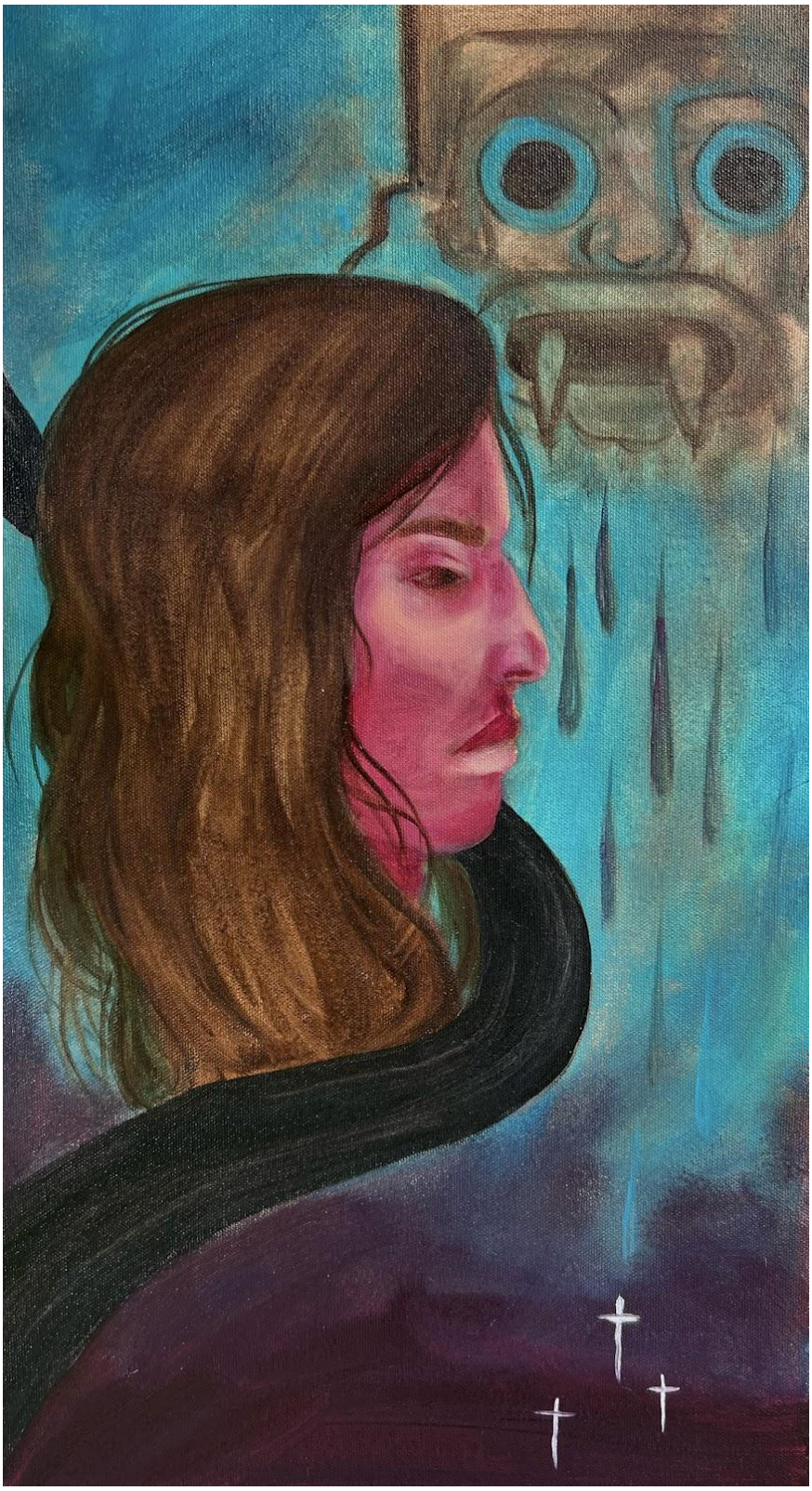
Sara Vasquez


The Future
is
Female

T’leeuh Antone


Name: T'leesh Antone, Akimel O'odham (They/Them)
Title: Heiki Nieki
Quote from Reservation Dogs S2
Social Media/Website Information: @indigenizemascarra
Price:
Jacket is not for sale, but prints of this screenprint are available by donation. Proceeds will benefit the nonprofit organization: A Sacred Passing. Their goal is to increase accessibility to death care and community education. Contact artist directly to purchase a print.
Payment Information:
Venmo @IndigenizeMascarra
Cashapp $MOMOmcymoproblem616
"This is the POWER we carry. When you really PRAY, they're all around you, all the TIME."

Vanessa Mercedes Harriss



William Camargo

Xitlalic

Yes Segura

Appendix B
"Nuestros Saberes: a call for art, reconciliation and justice in education" Consent and Sign Up

Your consideration in participating in the national "Nuestros Saberes: a call for art, reconciliation and justice in education" art call is very much appreciated.

In the following, I ask you to read the 1st question to consent to participate and the second section you will be asked to provide some basic demographic information. After the demographic information, you will be able to submit your narrative and artwork image. Please note that this is completely voluntary and you are able to remove yourself or your words from this study at anytime.

Consent to participate. We are asking you to consent to participate in the "Nuestros Saberes: a call for art, reconciliation and justice in education" study. This study will be collecting narratives and artwork from participants. There is also an additional part of this study, where selected artwork will be displayed in one of two galleries/museums and additional narratives from visitors who visit galleries will be collected as well.

If you agree to participate your selected artwork and narratives will be considered for display at one of the two galleries/museums. By providing consent you are agreeing to participate and understand you can choose to no longer participate at any time.

Appendix C
Artist Participant Recruitment Flyer

nuestros saberes:

a call for art, reconciliation and justice in education

Participants are invited to submit artwork and a narrative that answers the following question:
What would education look and feel like if we could reimagine what it means to learn?

Submissions will be considered for display at one of two galleries/museums: Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery, in Seattle, WA or La Peña in Austin, TX.

Due to space, not all individuals or artwork submitted can be displayed.

Selected artists will be notified and asked if they would like to have their artwork displayed, and they can accept or deny the opportunity.

This is part of a study for a doctoral dissertation with the University of Washington, Tacoma and the Muckleshoot Tribal College and findings will be published in the dissertation.

Artists must be at least 18 years old to participate

Please contact Eileen Jimenez at eileenj@uw.edu with questions or concerns.

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