

LOOKING FOR LUCY HOMISKANIS, CONFRONTING EMILY CARR:

Restorying Nature, Gender, and Belonging on the Northwest Coast

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Gilakas'la!

BEFORE THE CREATION OF this settler city, before these buildings, before this concrete, lək'wəḡən families governed these landscapes through careful cultivation since time immemorial. Willow-lined creeks and berry-rich meadows surrounded the harbour of what is now Victoria, British Columbia, contoured by pathways formed over generations of harvesting bark, cultivating crops, and going about daily life.¹ Down the way, in what is now the Inner Harbour, wide tidal mudflats were used by lək'wəḡən families to cultivate rich clam beds that now lie buried under the Empress Hotel. Although, today, Indigenous relationships to this land are popularly called stewardship or caretaking, we know the intimate relationships of management, governance, and decision-making to be much more active than that. The lands and waters beneath this city are alive with the names, stories, ancestors, and relations that comprise lək'wəḡən governance. It is from this place that I share the story of two women: one I can't find, the other I can't get away from.

Historically, if my Kwakwaka'wakw relatives were visiting here, they would conduct protocol in their canoes, asking permission to come ashore. They would line up the canoes some distance from the beach and address the lineage of the people of this village – recognizable through

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¹ Today, bronze spindle whorls can be found throughout downtown Victoria, marking culturally significant sites that carry these and other stories. Find out more at <https://www.songheesnation.ca/community/l-k-ng-n-traditional-territory>.

the words of reception, songs, and cultural markers such as petroglyphs, houseposts, and housefronts that greeted them as they approached. My Kwakwaka'wakw relatives would introduce themselves, their origin and ancestry, and their intentions, and then ask for permission to bring their canoes into lək'wəḡən waters and lands.

My name is Sarah Hunt or Tʔalilila'ogwa. Although I would like to introduce myself in my ancestral language, I am not yet a Kwak'wala speaker – a result of colonial suppression of Indigenous languages. My grandparents on my father's side were Chief Henry Hunt (Kwagu'ł from Tsax̄is or what's now known as Fort Rupert) and Helen Nelson (adopted daughter of Chief Mungo Martin of Tsax̄is, who, as I've recently found, was Dzawada'enuxw from Gwa'yi or Kingcome Inlet). My grandparents on my mother's side were Betty Sahaydak (of English settler ancestry) and Jack Sahaydak (of Ukrainian settler ancestry), who raised my mom in the Fraser Canyon, Nlaka'pamux territories. I am of mixed settler and Kwakwaka'wakw ancestry, as well as Tlingit from what is now known as Alaska through my great-great-great-grandmother Anislaga or Mary Ebbetts.² I have the privilege of being a Canada Research Chair and professor at the University of Victoria in the School of Environmental Studies, on the territories of the lək'wəḡən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples. I was born here in lək'wəḡən territories and am grateful to have been raised as a guest, a neighbour, and a relative on the Songhees reserve.

I introduce myself in this way not just as a formality, but in order to activate the deeper orders of law and relationship that connect me as Kwakwaka'wakw to the lək'wəḡən waters and lands where I first shared these words as a talk³ – waters and lands whose spirit I spoke to in my opening in order to uphold the sacredness of relations in which this work is situated. Presenting this talk in the Legacy Art Gallery Downtown was significant, as the gallery, now owned by the University of Victoria, is one of many public art galleries, museums, and other cultural spaces that continue to play a role in forming the identity of this settler-colonial city.

As Kwagu'ł, I recognize this urban landscape as imposed on territories that are subject to the laws of our lək'wəḡən hosts, as our relationship to these shores and the governing Peoples of these territories has long been one based on genealogically interrelated governance practices.

² Anislaga's legacy has been well documented and continues to be a site of reclamation, restoration, and repatriation among her many relatives. This includes the creation of a commemorative totem pole (see <https://vimeo.com/70460990>), the return of her regalia and Chilkat blankets into community cultural centres, and more.

³ "Shoreline Knowledges: Practices for Unsettling the City" was presented 17 February 2022, as part of the City Talks lecture series, <https://citytalks.geog.uvic.ca/section/february-17-shoreline-knowledges-practices-unsettling-city>.

To contravene these consensual relations had consequences that differed from nation to nation along the coast, as determined by the laws of the local Peoples.

Within these sets of relations, I speak and write not as a university professor or then as a guest of the gallery, but in the spirit of my name – ʔlaliʔlilaʔogwa, which I have come to understand through two different meanings. One is “someone who goes around inviting people” – a role of travelling between neighbouring nations, inviting people to gather, as we have always done within our feast culture. Another meaning is “through her the whale blows in the house” – a role which I understand to involve orienting myself toward our relatives living deep within the ocean, bringing their voice forward into sites of decision-making, governance, and reverence. I have come to understand my name as a sacred responsibility to make observations about the state of our ancestral relations and our rights and obligations toward the aspects of coastal life that are normally out of view – deep within the waters, neighbours we don’t see very often, or relations we have forgotten or neglected.

For the Kwakwakaʔwakw, as with many other Indigenous Peoples, our laws, histories, and genealogies have long been documented orally, shared and affirmed publicly in the feast system. Rather than shaping our histories to neatly meet the conventions of the written word, our people have sustained practices of knowledge governance within an oral culture. This includes training speakers who are paid to publicly represent families at feasts, as well as paying witnesses to remember what is publicly shared.⁴ Here, I choose to retain the oral form of this talk as it best aligns with the restoration of women’s knowledge and of our voices and legacies within settler-colonial institutions and social spaces, which continue to be shaped by heteropatriarchy. Rather than structuring this article as a standard paper with its thesis question, and then seeking to prove my point with evidence, I invite you to come along as I story my way through daily life on the northwest coast as a contemporary descendent of Lucy Homiskanis⁵ and George Hunt – key figures in

⁴ For more on witnessing as a Kwakwakaʔwakw methodology used in research on contemporary social issues, see Sarah Hunt, “Researching within Relations of Violence: Witnessing as Methodology,” in *Indigenous Research Theories, Practices, and Relationships*, edited by Deborah McGregor, Jean-Paul Restoule, and Rochelle Johnston, 282–95 (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2018).

⁵ A growing body of literature and media focuses on the legacies of Indigenous women and the efforts of their descendants to understand their complex family histories, including *Women in the Shadows* (Christine Welsh, 1991); *Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita* (Jennifer Nez Dentdale, 2007); and *Standing Up with Gaʔaxstaʔalas: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (Leslie A. Robertson and the Kwaguʔl Gix̱sam Clan, 2014).

the making of the anthropological idea of the “Northwest Coast” as constructed via Euro-western and settler imaginaries today. This talk was written with an audience of Indigenous women and gender-diverse people in mind and, although I am not speaking directly to settlers or other non-Indigenous readers, it is my hope that they might also learn from my re-storying of the coast.

And so here I will share stories from my travels navigating daily life in cultural and social spaces between *lək'wəŋən* and *Kwakwaka'wakw* territories – from the south Island to the north Island. In this everyday movement, I pay attention to the gendered and racialized subjectivities being formed through identification with nature in the curation, promotion, and public celebration of northwest coast arts and culture. I speak as a witness, a relative, a neighbour, and a practitioner of coastal laws, to contribute to a renewed understanding of where we are situated and how contemporary identities of place are formed. Following Jasindra Jawanda’s public lecture on racial and gender justice in planning (Jawanda 2022), I continue in the tradition of *disrupting and troubling* settler-colonial norms through acting as a witness, bringing voice to stories normally pushed out of view. Because, as Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million (2009) reminds us, the felt theories of Indigenous women and gender-diverse relations – affective knowledge created from within the everyday structures of feeling that shape our lives – have the power to “rock the boat and perhaps the world. They are dangerous” (54–55).

As we begin to rock the boat, let us get back into our canoes, head out on the choppy coastal waters, and navigate our way north to the beach at Cluxewe.

LOOKING FOR LUCY

In November 2021, I spent time in an old village site where my Kwagu’ł ancestors gathered in the summer months. I stayed at Cluxewe, an RV park and campground owned and managed by the band. I looked for moments between the winter winds and rain when I could take walks along the shore, saying hello to the eagles, the swans and ducks, noticing the clam shells poking out from the sand, the different types of crabs, the seaweed on the beach, and the plants closer to the treeline. For the first few days, I walked along the shore until I reached a bend in the beach, unsure how far the Cluxewe campground extended. When I got to a marker that seemed to indicate the start of forestry activity, I turned around and went back to my cabin. After a few days, I realized no one

else was around and walked a bit farther, past the forestry marker and around the bend. Some brown minks were shrieking and arguing, rolling around in a furry little ball; then they scampered up onto fallen logs and ran into the forest. I had just read a story featuring Mink, and here they were in the very place where those stories originated. I walked toward where the minks had been running and came across a flat sandstone formation that seemed to be marked with part of a petroglyph – I was struck by the fact that my ancestors’ hands had shaped this rock, marking their governance relationship with this place – an expression of what we might today call “rights and title.”⁶

In the previous days, I hadn’t felt free to walk this far for fear of getting in trouble – crossing some invisible property marker of which I was unaware. Although no one told me not to go past a certain point, I worried about being surveilled, about being watched, about men working in industry, forestry, or at the mill down the beach somehow seeing me. And then what? It took a few days for the usual fear I feel walking alone to fall away and for me to feel brave enough to go where I would be out of sight and beyond hearing range of the people at the campground. But, I realized, my relatives *could* see me, they could hear me. Because this beach where I was walking was entirely comprised of the territories of my ancestors – lands and waters that remain unceded, still actively cared for, cultivated, and nourished by my relatives – including the minks, the eagles, whales, humans, and ancestors of the spirit world. Yet, even in the absence of any clear sources of surveillance, I have been so socialized to be afraid of the repercussions of feeling free within my own homelands.

This feeling of having our mobility restricted, of an underlying sense of fear or uncertainty, of being watched and constrained is something familiar to Indigenous people, particularly gender-diverse relatives, women, girls, and youth, people who are racialized or who are criminalized or stigmatized through a variety of imposed social norms and values that make you feel like you don’t belong – or violently push you out of belonging. I have a great deal of relative social power as someone who doesn’t face day-to-day racism because of my lighter skin, my accent and way of speaking, as someone who is now a professor, who has a university degree, who is able bodied, whose work and daily life aren’t criminalized. Still, colonialism has violently contoured my life and continues to shape my safety and mobility, even on the sunniest days here at the shore.

⁶ Dzawada’enuxw artist Marianne Nicolson describes Kwakwaka’wakw cultural forms as legal documents akin to rights and title. See Marianne Nicholson, “Marianne Nicholson’s Artist’s Talk, March 25, 2017,” Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 25 March 2017, YouTube video, 34:18, at <https://youtu.be/p2NJCmmIwZQ>.

I was struck with a deep sense of grief at realizing the extent to which I have internalized my own erasure from my ancestral landscapes. I had just been reading an article about my great-great-grandparents, Lucy Homiskanis of Tsax̱is and George Hunt, a Tlingit-English ethnologist or consultant who worked with German-American anthropologist Franz Boas – frequently referred to as the “father of American anthropology” (Jonaitis 2020). The Hunt-Boas relationship is one that I have always known about, as these men are widely talked about in books on Northwest Coast art, in museums, and in anthropology classes like the ones I took in my early days at university. Yet, as Rande Cook shared with 'Naa-mehl (Marcia Dawson), “There’s nothing about women when you are reading or researching, from Boas or others, of the roles they played within the potlatch. Everything I know is because of the oral history through my grandmother” (’Naa-mehl 2019, 130). I did not have the chance to learn these oral histories from my own grandmother, Helen Hunt (Nelson), as she passed away a few years before I was born. Along with many other relatives, I am descended from Lucy Homiskanis and George Hunt on both sides of my paternal lineage – Lucy was Henry Hunt’s grandmother and Helen Nelson’s great-grandmother. Beyond the anthropological and historical record, their vast legacy lives on in the cultural and social fabric of the northwest coast today, including the everyday lives of myself and many other descendants.⁷

Despite this legacy, women like my great-great-grandmother Lucy are treated as a footnote (if that) in the story of the Northwest Coast, again as constructed via Euro-western and settler imaginaries today. The diminishment of women’s contribution in the colonial record has been identified as a global strategy of settler colonialism (Johnston 2005, Smith 1999), with some scholars arguing that anthropological representations of Indigenous life were skewed via imposed notions of race and gender, as inheritance of rights through women was seen as an earlier stage of evolutionary development (Bruchac 2014). Ethnoecologists observe that historical, ethnographic, and archaeological scholarship tends to overlook land management systems because “plant knowledge and management fall into the realm of women’s work and most of the culturally significant species in British Columbia were not of economic importance to the new capitalist economy” (Turner, Spalding, and Deur

⁷ The Boas-Hunt collaboration has been at the centre of numerous exhibitions, gatherings, and films led or co-led by other descendants and relatives. See, for example, *The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt, and the Making of Anthropology* exhibition (Bard Graduate Center Gallery, New York, 14 February to 7 July 2019), <https://www.bgc.bard.edu/exhibitions/exhibitions/88/the-story-box>.

2020, 9). As noted by Kwikwasut'inuxw Elder Agnes Alfred, "women are far from having equal representation in the overall record of Native North American oral literature ... When it comes to oral literature, we are faced with a dearth of material about Kwakwaka'wakw women" (Alfred 2004, 3). From Agnes Alfred's perspective, the exclusion of women's knowledge may also have been due to actively choosing not to share knowledge with the likes of Hunt and Boas – whether women were reluctant to speak due to impropriety or in protection of their families' knowledge, Alfred states that women were exercising their agency as was their right (Alfred 2004).

As a high-ranking, politically important woman, Lucy had access to specific social, cultural, political, legal, and linguistic knowledge and, just like our cultural symbols, these were not available to be shared with anyone, but were carefully governed as "knowledge is highly localized and often private property" (Alfred 2004, xxvi). As Haida museologist Lucy Bell (2006) and others have written, Kwakwaka'wakw women exercised right of control over many forms of tangible and intangible property, including lands, houses, canoes, crests, names, and songs associated with the particular places over which they had authority. These realms of authority have become circulated as the intellectual property of "experts," or as a shared public history that anyone can access in the colonial or scholarly record. In the process, women like my great-great-grandmother continue to be pushed out of their place of governance over these cultural landscapes and over the very places that are today sites of settler scholarship, recreation, ecotourism, and identification with nature.

As I walk the beach at Cluxewe, I reflect on the fact that the shorelines where I walk, the island across from me, the glacial mountain in the distance, the ocean in between – all that is within my view was under the care and authority of Kwakwaka'wakw ancestors like Lucy and her family. Yet, as her knowledge of the language, the land, and the culture were gathered and transformed into the western imaginary, she herself was pushed out of the frame – beyond the constructed view of these beaches and tree-lined shores was the labour and expertise of women like Lucy. While Lucy Homiskanis died in 1908, her legacy lives on, mediated through generations of anthropologists and historians who stand on her knowledge to build their expertise. How exactly did she become separated from the authority, knowledge, and lands that belonged to her?

Returning to my cabin, I search through some of the Hunt-Boas archives available online and books I've read before, looking for traces of

Lucy. I find and hold these glimpses of her. Scholars have documented the circuitous ways in which Lucy's wealth came to form the basis of Franz Boas's journey to the Northwest Coast. A mask, obtained by explorer Johan Adrian Jacobsen, and sent to the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin, was assigned to Boas to catalogue in 1885. At the time of its removal from our territories, the mask was in active use in the feast system, by the family of its owner, Lucy Homiskanis (Green 2019). It was the assignment of this mask that led Franz Boas to the coast, to Kwakwaka'wakw territories, and to his collaborative relationship with George Hunt. In other words, it was Lucy's wealth that first compelled Boas to the coast – her mask, removed by her own husband from the feast system – compelled by the western impulse to collect cultural materials from so-called “vanishing cultures” occurring, not insignificantly, in the days preceding the criminalization of the potlatch.⁸

Reading along in the archives, I come across Lucy's Kwak'wala name, T'łaliłi'lakw, so similar to my own. A pang of connection is suddenly revealed, searching as I am within online archives while situated on the shorelines of our shared ancestry. I find this connection by combing through the reams of material centred on her husband, George Hunt – Lucy is barely mentioned within these pages, yet she is central to the discipline their collaboration brought to life.

Lucy's legacy, like those of other women in my family, has to be pieced together by reading between the lines or looking for a rare, gendered analysis in the scholarship on Franz Boas and George Hunt. Women's legacies, labour, and power are everywhere and nowhere at the same time, relegated as they are to marginalia in the central history of important men. The anthropology texts speak of who George Hunt's mother, father, wives, and children were – but another story is revealed when understood through the lens of Kwakwaka'wakw laws and authority.

Anislaga or Mary Ebbets, a high-ranking woman from a chiefly Tlingit family from Tongass and a prolific Chilkat weaver, beader, maker of regalia, and authority over important cultural wealth, was George Hunt's mother. She married Robert Hunt, an English Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employee and, together, they raised their son in Fort Rupert, among Anislaga's Tlingit relatives. Although Boas frequently represented George Hunt as Kwakwaka'wakw and as having Kwak'wala as his first language, this was not accurate. George Hunt did not see himself as Kwakwaka'wakw but viewed himself and was viewed by

⁸ Canadian law banned the potlatch from 1885 to 1951 through section 149 of the *Indian Act*.

Kwakwaka'wakw people as Tlingit, associated with his Tlingit relatives in Fort Rupert, including his mother (Berman 1996).

As the son of a HBC representative and high-status Tlingit mother, Hunt held a distinguished position in the community, gaining access to social and cultural spaces reserved for representatives of high-ranking families. At the young age of thirteen, he was present at chiefs' feasts, a rare privilege that evidences the distinct position he held (Berman 1994). Lucy Homiskanis's family sought out George Hunt as a suitable husband (Berman 1994) and, importantly, it was through his mother, Anislaga, that he held the kind of economic and political currency suitable to partner with a woman of Lucy's position. The rights, status, and authority of Lucy and Anislaga, then, came to shape the future of our family. Yet, it is George Hunt, not his wife and mother, whose name has come to circulate in the creation of the idea of the Northwest Coast.

The reframing of women's wealth as sites of men's authority began early in the letters, notes, and manuscripts shared between Boas and Hunt. For example, George Hunt wrote to Boas that it was through him that the warring between the Tlingit and Kwagu'ł was stopped – but, in reality, it was through the linking of his Tlingit mother's family with Lucy's family that these relations were formed. Over time, George Hunt's perspective has come to circulate as truth, even within our family. This is certainly the story I heard as a young person interested in our family history – yet, it is only now, seeking out feminist historians and anthropologists, and Kwakwaka'wakw women's knowledge of governance, that Lucy's significant role has come into view.

Lucy married George in 1872, when she was sixteen and he was eighteen, and it was the marriage that “brought him fully into the social world of the Kwakwaka'wakw” (Berman 1994, 486). Lucy “occupied a genealogical position of strategic importance in Fort Rupert society” (486), as her children became the heirs of several chiefly seats in her grandparent's generation. She passed on numerous chiefly positions and the associated rights to her children – it was through Lucy that this wealth and status was transferred genealogically. Their eldest son, David Hunt, was given a significant potlatch seat, and it was in their son's name that George Hunt then came to host the potlatches that provided new sources of knowledge for texts he sent to Boas and other anthropologists.

Descriptions of George and Lucy's marriage ceremony, as well as the succession of their sons to chief's seats, were documented in Boas's texts on the Kwagu'ł (Boas 1921 and 1966). Yet, as noted by Berman (1996), neither Lucy Homiskanis nor George Hunt are named in these accounts

other than Hunt's description as "a narrator," thus obscuring the way these intimate details became available to Boas. I feel heartbroken at learning the extent to which George Hunt used the familial space of his marriage to Lucy as a source of documentation for Boas, even going so far as to account for the medicines being used to treat Lucy's illness prior to her death (Berman 1996). My breath shallows at the reality that her deathbed was his research site. My recursive process of seeking out Lucy's legacy in the archive, along with the mechanisms of her removal from the spaces where this knowledge now circulates, clarifies my understanding of epistemic violence. I realize the colonial archive is a powerful site of dispossession. Not only dispossession of our material wealth as it was stolen into museums and collections around the world, but dispossession of our knowledge of ourselves – knowledge of language, land, culture, ceremony, and the places of authority from which our grandmothers acted in relation to colonial figures and institutions. Lucy's life – her lived experiences of marriage, of feasting, of exercising her rights and authority, of transferring names and wealth – have come to circulate as disembodied cultural attributes owned by Franz Boas and *his* reams of scholarly descendants – now my colleagues.

Case in point, George Hunt wrote two complementary texts on the Kwakwaka'wakw for Boas – a 1909 volume, *The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island*, dealing mostly with what is considered the realms of men, and a 1921 volume, *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl*, focused on knowledge under the authority of women, with emphasis on the everyday life of the community, including food harvesting and preparation (Berman 1996, Newell 2015). Lucy provided much of the information in this significant second volume, and Hunt found it difficult to continue this work after her death (Berman 1994).⁹ The volume contains ecological, linguistic, economic, and cultural knowledge that continues to be used as a key source in revitalizing our strength as Kwakwaka'wakw, including in community-centred processes of reclamation (Lyll et al. 2019).

Looking to my extended relations in the academy, I reach for Dian Million's teaching that Indigeneity is an ethos founded upon the belief that everything is living – everything.¹⁰ Our names, stories, actions, and cultural wealth are alive, despite being found in a disembodied text on

⁹ Lucy died in 1908 and her eldest son died in 1925, leading to George Hunt taking a significant hiatus from his work with Boas.

¹⁰ For more on this teaching, listen to Dian Million, "Indigenous Perspectives on the Environment: Dr. Dian Million (Tanana Athabaskan)," University of Washington Program on the Environment, August 2021, YouTube video, 59:23, at <https://www.youtube.com/live/YsyGJ1RQZlI?feature=share>.

a website. Although the ancestral and spiritual knowledge of the land that Lucy shared with her husband and with Boas travelled around the globe, it always remained connected to the lands and waters where it originated. Her knowledge travelled through the papers and lectures and books of “experts” of European ancestry, yet these lands and waters called it home. Stepping back into our canoe that is becoming full with the gifts of new and recovered knowledge, I close my eyes and imagine those stories fractured and dislocated across the globe, being called back to these shorelines through the genealogy of names associated with Lucy Homiskanis.

Although I am not a Kwak’wala speaker, I am held by these shorelines that still speak the language of our people, calling to our beloved ancestral treasures.

Come home. Come home. Come home.

CONFRONTING EMILY CARR

I am still reflecting on these ideas a few days later, when I decide to make a day trip to Courtenay, home of my K’ómoks relatives. I thought I’d see if I could find any books about the history of the northwest coast that might provide remnants of my great-great-grandmother’s story. I find books on Northwest Coast art featuring well-known male artists (Martens 2018, Neel 2020, Hawker 2016). I find books on west coast ecology (Rustad 2018, Penn 2020) and books by settlers about violence against Indigenous women in British Columbia (McDiarmid 2020). But nothing about Lucy.

My eyes then land on a book *not* featuring the legacies of Kwakwaka’wakw women but celebrating the 150th birthday of Emily Carr – the painter of British settler descent whose work and life are ubiquitous in Victoria, Vancouver, and across Canada. Emily’s unmistakable swirling green trees catch my eye and I quickly brush past, as if trying to walk by someone I know but am trying to avoid. But I needn’t worry. Emily Carr won’t see me.

As an Indigenous person, I reside beyond the periphery of Emily Carr’s celebrated treescapes, just out of view of the majestic swaths of nature she is so famous for. Her art is everywhere here on the west coast, as is her persona – we have a mural, an exhibition or three going on at any given time in west coast galleries and museums, a house you can tour, an art school named after her. And let’s not forget Barbara Paterson’s bronze Carr statue in the Inner Harbour, yes, the one with the monkey

on her shoulder. Every year, it seems another book is published on her legacy, another calendar of her images. Boardwalks in nearby towns like Ucluelet (Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ territories) have mounted placards that recount her historic depictions of their town.

Emily Carr was born in ləkʷəŋən territories (Victoria) in 1871, the same year that the Colony of British Columbia joined Confederation, and one year before the marriage of Lucy Homiskanis and George Hunt on the north Island in Kwakwaka'wakw territories. Lucy and Emily, then, were alive within these coastal landscapes at the same time, living out their differing relationships to shared waters, forests, and shorelines. Yet, as Carr traversed the coast painting the beauty around her, I imagine her asking women like Lucy to step aside so she could get a better view of the trees behind. Pushed beyond the edge of the frame, Indigenous women's absence became naturalized in depictions of these landscapes such that myths about an unoccupied wilderness could flourish.

I wonder what it is about Emily Carr that settlers like so much, as they create new ways to honour her legacy, decade after decade. I'm guessing most people don't have the same gut-wrenching nausea as I do when they look at her artwork. This feeling has developed over a lifetime of being made to confront the mechanisms of my own erasure, not only in historic policies or museum collections but in the everyday movement of life on the northwest coast.

I imagine Emily's paintings appeal to modern-day nature lovers because they allow them to picture themselves walking, as she did, into what was perceived as a frontier zone – untouched wilderness, surrounded by the vast beauty of the west coast. People see themselves reflected in her reverence of the natural world. Hers is a romantic story of bravely walking, as a lone woman, into unknown lands in order to be overcome by their immense beauty. She lived more than a hundred years ago and yet her pioneer spirit lives on in the prevalent desire to connect with nature. Or so it would seem, based on the never-ending tributes to her legacy.

The vision of nature being celebrated today via Carr's legacy is, of course, a nature *without us*. The people who carved the totem poles she painted into her landscapes. The aunties and grandmas who served her fish for dinner and taught her where to find the big trees for her fancy paintings. The families who lived in the longhouses along the shorelines she painted as empty.

What is the relationship between this continual celebration of Emily Carr's legacy and the accompanying erasure of Lucy Homiskanis, I

wondered? Why is it nearly impossible to find information about Lucy in her own homelands, or in the colonial archive, yet every time I turn around, there seems to be another book, exhibition, statue, tour, or mural celebrating Emily Carr? And what does this tell us about the gendered identification with nature in settler-colonial place-making today?

I am not so much interested in Carr's use of Indigenous imagery nor her salvage paradigm (Cole 2000) portrayal of Indigenous people as a vanishing race, as Tsimshian-Haida scholar and curator Marcia Crosby (2002) and others have critiqued. Rather, I am interested in the present-day settler identification with her legacy as part of the cultural and social life of settler spaces and settler identities. I am interested in the selective and purposeful deployment of Carr by people who shape Canadian social and cultural life – museum and gallery curators, artists, authors and publishers, as well as cultural consumers and participants – in ways that further liberal, reconciliatory identification with nature, Indigeneity, and feminism – structures of feeling that underpin the material realities of settler colonialism.

To find answers to some of these questions, I invite Indigenous relations into our canoe in order to circle back along the coast to *lək'wəŋən* territories, bringing our treasured knowledge with us as we go. Having asked *lək'wəŋən* relations at the beach to come ashore, we walk up the hill here to the University of Victoria's Legacy Art Gallery where I first gave this talk. It turns out this is a fitting site to consider the *legacy* of Emily Carr, as British settler painter Katharine Maltwood, one of the gallery's founding donors, was Carr's patron.¹¹

Even if you've never been to Victoria, chances are you've heard of Emily Carr and her male contemporaries – the Canadian Group of Seven whose landscape paintings are widely celebrated as initiating global recognition of Canadian art in the 1920s. Or you may have seen any number of collections featuring her work at the Victoria Art Gallery, the Royal BC Museum (RBCM), or over in Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories, at the Vancouver Art Gallery or the school of art that bears in her name. Down the road from Victoria's Legacy Art Gallery, the house where Carr was born is a national historic site whose website states that the themes of her life were “art, writing, nature and the environment, indigenous peoples, feminism, animal rights, emerging creativity and mentorship.”¹²

¹¹ See more on the Legacy Art Gallery Downtown at <https://www.uvic.ca/legacygalleries/about-us/history/index.php>.

¹² See more on Emily Carr House at <https://carrhouse.ca/about-carr-house>.

Settler identity, particularly white settler identity, in Victoria and on the west coast more broadly, continues to be asserted via these combined themes epitomized by Emily Carr. Settler Canadians celebrate Carr as “a Canadian icon,” and “one of Canada’s most beloved artists, famed for her depictions of First Nations villages and monumental art, and the forests and landscapes of British Columbia” according to the RBCM archives which house more than a hundred of her paintings and a thousand of her sketches, diaries, notebooks, and letters. Even Anishinaabe people may have encountered her in their homelands, as five years ago, a local artist who re-enacts Carr’s life travelled to Ottawa to speak on the floor of the House of Commons. Gaining a voice in Parliament is no small feat as, indeed, Indigenous people have resorted to holding a hunger strike on the lawns of Parliament to get the ear of Parliamentarians.¹³ But such acts of public defiance are not necessary for settlers like Emily Carr to gain access to Parliament Hill – or even her impersonators.

Carr’s early paintings actually do depict Indigenous villages, with portrayals of the people of those villages going about their daily life. A quote from her journal *Growing Pains* (1947) states: “My mind was made up. I was going to picture the totem poles in their own village settings, and complete a collection of them as I could” (211). She painted ɫəkʷəŋən landscapes such as Meegan (Beacon Hill) and travelled by steamship to ʼYáɫis (Alert Bay), Haida Gwaii, and along the Skeena River – her mobility as a woman fostered via her Whiteness and social standing, with the support of settler patrons like Maltwood. She later bought a caravan that she used to go camping in Goldstream Park and Esquimalt Lagoon – early forms of settler leisure and recreation within these sacred ɫəkʷəŋən lands. Most often with a view from the water toward the shore, her paintings of Indigenous villages from these various excursions into what was perceived as an unknown wilderness were meant to document the vibrant community life that she felt was in danger.

Yet, settlers rarely choose *these* paintings today when they celebrate Carr’s status as a Canadian icon. Instead, they largely choose the paintings that reflect a reverence and awe for nature, as we saw in the celebration of her 150th birthday. Images of monumentally scaled trees, absent actual Indigenous people but sometimes depicting decaying totems

¹³ In 2012, Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence began a hunger strike as an effort to convey the urgent need for a meeting with the Canadian prime minister and governor general regarding recent legislation that diminished the authority of Indigenous nations. For more on this history and the associated Idle No More movement, see The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2014).

or other carvings, circulate widely, implicitly linking today's green, environmentally focused settler identity with Carr's pioneering presence. It is important to point out that the choice of these images from her vast catalogue is purposeful, undertaken within the spirit of celebrating nature, feminism, environmentalism, and Indigenous Peoples.

Yet, the celebration of nature constructed through Carr's legacy is premised not only on the expected demise of Indigenous Peoples as many have documented (Cole 2000, Crosby 2002), but on representing us as always already gone. Combing through her archives, the choice of images of west coast natural beauty actively pushes Indigenous people like my ancestors, like Lucy Homiskanis, out of the frame – perpetuating a view of a vast wilderness void of people. These depictions feed into a story of settler belonging facilitated by good feelings about the natural world and a sense of empathy for disappearing Indigenous inhabitants and their culture. This was evident in a quote from Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) director John Buper, in a 2020 news story about the recent acquisition of Carr's painting of Finlayson Point south of Beacon Hill (or rightly called Meegan). Buper said "we all live in that landscape – it's ours, it's us. Whether you've been here three days or all your life, it's for all of us" (Grossman 2020, np).

It's ours. It's for all of us, he says.

Telling a story of settler belonging through identification with Carr's 1930s painting of an empty shoreline, the violent reality of settlement is, of course, neutralized – an example of what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) aptly describe as "settler moves to innocence." Settler identification with nature is furthered via a nativist story – it is women like Carr who become identified with the landscapes being celebrated, not the *lək'wəḡən* families who actively governed life at Meegan. This, despite the reality that Carr herself attended a feast at the nearby Esquimalt community in 1931 and celebrated the vibrancy of this experience in her journals – a critical insight into the living nature of Indigenous Peoples and cultures that settler society chooses to overlook in celebrations of her writing and art today (Cole 2000).

Looking more closely at Carr's painting of Meegan in the AGGV catalogue, I notice what appear to be small houses along the shore – one of the villages of *lək'wəḡən* families who have governed these territories since time immemorial. "Meegan" means "warmed by the sun"¹⁴ or a

¹⁴ The Songhees Nation describes the meaning of numerous place names in their territories at <https://www.songheesnation.ca/community/l-k-ng-n-traditional-territory>.

“place to warm your belly”¹⁵ and is known to have been the site of a village, dating back more than a thousand years, that was important for food harvesting, reef-net fishing, and playing games during summer gatherings. While Carr herself seems to have represented Indigenous presence in this coastal shoreline, any sign of a village is transformed into a landscape feature as settlers re-story her paintings as depictions of a wilderness which is “ours” to claim.

Three years ago, a book was published about Carr’s relationship with her monkey, Woo, in which the author Grant Hayter-Menzies states that as a little girl, Carr “loved wildness in every facet” (Crescenzi 2019, np). The last painting Carr made before she died was of her monkey, which Hayter-Menzies depicts as a representation of finally “accepting the wildness that was in herself” (np). The ubiquity of these narratives and visual legacies today signal the ongoing practices being taken up in the formation of not only a regional but a national identity, as settlers seek ways to identify themselves with nature *without* needing to confront the violence of Indigenous dispossession underpinning their mobility across these landscapes.

As I write, both the Vancouver Art Gallery and Art Gallery of Greater Victoria have exhibitions centred on Carr’s work – *seeing and being seen* here at the AGGV and *From the Earth* over at the VAG. Only a few years ago, the VAG held an exhibition that brought Carr’s work into dialogue with that of Sophie Frank, a Squamish artist and contemporary of Carr, to recognize differing perspectives on west coast nature and culture. Despite this, the current exhibition echoes the ever-present impulse to brush past any recognition that Carr’s legacy is superimposed over those of Indigenous Peoples. Drawing on widespread identification of the west coast and Canadian identity with nature, the curators celebrate “her mature expression of the forest landscape”¹⁶ – no specific lands, not lands belonging to or part of the cultural space of an Indigenous nation, but a forest with which the settler public can identify. The collection is celebrated for her sophisticated use of materials that guest curators Jennifer M. Volland and Jay Stewart and senior curator Bruce Grenville depict as sharing “a fluidity, translucency and sense of movement that closely matched her experiences in the forest” – a

¹⁵ Hear Cheryl Bryce share her “colonial reality tour” of Meegan at <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/unreserved-visits-victoria-can-a-city-rooted-in-colonial-history-be-a-progressive-site-for-reconciliation-1.4663453/colonial-reality-tour-brings-indigenous-land-and-history-into-focus-1.4669191>.

¹⁶ The curators’ description of the exhibition can be read on the VAG website at <https://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/exhibitions/edith-heath-and-emily-carr-from-the-earth>.

seemingly transcendent or spiritual experience. Indeed, Carr is seen as having such an intimate relationship with the forest as to “produce a work that took on the character and form of the forest itself,” creating images “at a scale and with a sense of spontaneity that mirrored that of forest life itself.” Here, the forest being celebrated is one with which settler belonging is intertwined. Affirming settler women’s ability to morph to the form and character of the forest, the pre-existing cultural, social, and political relationships with these landscapes simply disappear. It’s like the spiritual identification with the nature of the forests affirms settler belonging through a type of selective amnesia, allowing the knowledge of Indigenous existence to suddenly fall away because of the good feelings that come from being one with the land.

Whew. I take a breath. Because it is our own, *my own*, erasure we’re talking about here, the affirmation of my own lack of belonging – not just historically but in the everyday choices and perspectives of settler individuals shaping the cultural life of the west coast. Distancing myself from the frame, I think back to the time period in which Carr stood at various places along the coastline here, spanning from these lək’wəŋən shores to those up at Cluxewe, Haida Gwaii, and beyond.

PADDLING HOME

While the shorelines in Carr’s paintings are now celebrated for their vibrantly embodied wilderness, we know that these landscapes were not wild at all, but carefully cultivated through many generations of Indigenous families, often under the authority of women. As a guest here, I have been lucky to learn about the role of lək’wəŋən women and families in managing plants, particularly *kʷetlal* or camas, chocolate lily, and many others. Rather than thinking of this as a revitalized practice, I have come to understand it as a *continued* practice through which knowledge is passed down within specific families from one generation to the next. Despite the way that the shorelines were reshaped by urban development, including the creation of parks for recreation, lək’wəŋən governance practices are very much alive here through intimate, everyday work enacted by lək’wəŋən women and families within the specific harvesting sites under their authority. This work is often out of view of and unrecognizable by settlers, out of the public eye, away from spaces of commerce, of municipal governance, of development – yet the everyday, intimate quality of this work is key to its survival.

To deepen our understanding of this cultivation, we paddle back up toward Kwakwaka'wakw territories, visiting with relatives along the way. I learn that women were (are) the holders of “property,” in positions of authority over key relationships with our waters and lands (Hunt 2023). I have been learning, from oral history as well as the work of anthropologists and ethno-ecologists that women along the west coast managed root vegetables such as camas and springbank clover, marine algae, Pacific crabapples, and thimbleberry shoots, as well as eelgrass meadows, seaweed-harvesting sites, edible root meadows, and berry patches (Turner, Spalding, and Deur 2020; Turner and Turner 2008). Until now, I have never considered the role women in my family played in managing the harvesting of cedar for making canoes or houses – cultural work now commonly attributed to men. I learn about the significant role of these plants, and the storied lands associated with them, in the economic and political systems of our communities.

Out for a walk one day, I bump into some relatives who mention that my grandmother Helen Hunt was originally Helen Nelson – from Kingcome Inlet. Dzawada'enuxw, I ask? How have I never heard about this? The story of my family is heavily documented, but largely through the men – carvers, chiefs, and figures like George Hunt who are significant within the archive of knowledge upon which western society is formed. No one ever told me my grandmother was from Kingcome, a gap that lives deep in my chest as I consider the obligations I have to her lands, waters, and relatives. Listening to the soothing waves that carry me, I acknowledge the new aspect to my journey of better understanding the shorelines where my name originates.

Landing back at Cluxewe, I spend some time in my cabin listening to the rain on the tin roof, the waves coming in, as I read over historic documents from the McKenna-McBride Commission – part of a project I've been undertaking with a collective of folks concerned with the contemporary impacts of the reserve creation process. Reading along in the files, I can hear the voices of my relatives trying to come through, mediated as they are through the male chiefs who were invited to speak to the all-male commissioners.

The testimonies reveal the significance of women's property relations for the Dzawada'enuxw. Speaking in 1914, Chief Cesaholis talks about lands at the mouth of the river leading into Kingcome Inlet, which are places “where women used to take the roots out of the ground ... they put down stakes to mark the boundary lines for each one ... each woman had a wooden spade and a basket ... to take up the roots and to carry

the roots” (as cited in Turner and Turner 2008, 104). Cesaholis brings forward the authority of Dzawada’enuxw women over these clearly marked garden plots, as well as crabapples, which were tended to over countless generations such that they could flourish in the tidal flats.

Because native plants are now often studied separately from broader Kwakwaka’wakw cultural landscapes, it might appear that women’s management was confined to plants – but in fact this work was connected to broader seascapes involving the cultivation of clams and molluscs along the beaches, fishing practices, crabbing, harvesting sea urchins, hunting and preparing seal, oolichan fishing and grease making – each specialized activity associated with particular people, families, and places across our landscapes. But this place here, at the mouth of the river at Gwa’yi, was an important management site where women from my grandmother’s community would work seasonally to pass down knowledge intergenerationally. Here was my grandmother Helen Hunt (Nelson)’s genealogical legacy alive in the archive of the McKenna-McBride Commission – a public archive available for all, yet that had been out of sight for me for all these years because of the way colonial systems of value have taught us to devalue Kwakwaka’wakw women’s legacies.

Reading further in these archives, I began to develop a better picture of the social conditions in which Emily Carr traversed these coastlines to paint her forest landscapes, and Franz Boas and other collectors traversed in order to gather materials to line the halls of far-off museums, galleries, archives, and libraries. At the McKenna-McBride hearings, Chief Cesaholis brought forward evidence of settler strategies being used to actively disconnect Dzawada’enuxw women from their places of belonging, rights, and title – their property, their authority. By burning down gardens, building fences to restrict access, building houses for settlers in places of importance to women, or harassing women when they tried to access their places of cultivation and sacred work, the testimonies show how Kwakwaka’wakw women began to be denied authority over their lands. This removal by settlers seeking, individually and collectively, to clear Indigenous lands to claim them for themselves, set the stage for Indigenous women’s more systematic exclusion via the *Indian Act*, which we still live with today.¹⁷

The dispossession of these relatives from their lands was facilitated by the Colony of British Columbia joining Confederation in 1871 – the

¹⁷ The *Indian Act* included provisions that removed power from women, such as through a gendered statutory definition of Indian status, loss of status through marriage, and gendered conditions of transferring status to the next generation, as well as prohibiting women from the chief and council system (see Barker 2008).

same year Emily Carr was born.¹⁸ Indigenous Peoples became the realm of the federal government via the Department of Indian Affairs. When Emily Carr was born, the coast was reeling from a smallpox epidemic and, when she was two, the North West Mounted Police was formed. A few years later, land grants were made to the federal government under the *Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway Act, 1875*, facilitating the removal of lək'wəḡən people from lands deemed desirable for railway. That same year, land was made available to settlers free of charge. And it was in 1886, when Carr was fifteen, that anthropologist Franz Boas began focusing on the northwest coast, leading to his relationship with my great-great-grandfather George Hunt and, through him, extracting knowledge into the realms of history and anthropology via the cultural and political position of women like Lucy.

Despite their marginalization in the Boasian scholarship and cultural portrayals of the Northwest Coast, Indigenous women played a key role in Boas's early days on the coast. Due to Indigenous men being busy working in the salmon canneries, Boas was left with women to talk to during his early days in Alert Bay (Newell 2015). Annie Spencer (Hunt), George Hunt's sister, was a key source for Boas during his time here (Newell 2015). He also worked directly with Lucy Homiskanis, as acknowledged in the preface to the 1921 *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl*: "Each section contains a wealth of women's traditional knowledge, specifically referring to what it is that women do, and how and when in their territories they do it, and how all this meshes with the roles of menfolk" (Newell 2015, 7). Lucy, Annie, Anislaga, and many other Indigenous women were active in navigating the complex relationships between their communities and white settlers, explorers, and adventurers.

As Emily Carr was travelling around to our communities by steamship, so were many other settlers – missionaries establishing missions, surveyors preparing and planning to build the Canadian Pacific Railway, marking geological structures, evaluating mineral resources, assessing the agricultural potential of land, all to clear the land via reserves so settler geographies could expand, residential schools established, national parks created, cities and towns built. All of this was happening behind the scenes of these great landscape paintings celebrated as Emily Carr's legacy, her identification with and embeddedness in "the wild" of the west coast.

¹⁸ Historical information provided in this paragraph can be found in the immensely useful historical timeline created by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs at <https://www.ubcic.bc.ca/timeline>.

It turns out that what is being depicted in Carr's paintings is not nature or wilderness at all, then, but a carefully constructed display of settler violence.

Confronted with this violence, I pause. A breath of self-recognition.

In a recent conversation about women's property at Gwa'yi, a relative told me that the rights to these shoreline gardens were passed on genealogically – that they could never be bought or sold. She tells me that my grandmother would have the right to wear a clover on her button blanket, signalling her rights and title to these shores. And that this would have been passed on to me, as one of her many granddaughters – the right to harvest, to wear the clover, to hold the responsibilities of ensuring these shorelines are cared for.

Walking along the shore at Cluxewe, I look out toward the glacier that feeds into the waters at Gwa'yi and pause to orient myself toward the expanse of ocean between these two beaches. I realize that what I've been doing as I've combed through the historical archives, looking for the lifeforce, the stories and history of the women in my family, is confronting the very mechanisms of my, of our, shared dispossession.

This word, "dispossession," sits heavy in my throat as I welcome the wind to cleanse it away.

Pushed beyond the edges of the frames of history, the knowledge of who *I am* within this part of my genealogy has been obscured, just as the governance, power, and authority of coastal families, women, and gender-diverse relations are pushed, over and over again, out of spaces of belonging.

Now that I am looking for Lucy, her presence seems everywhere in the hidden spaces at the edges of northwest coast and colonial histories. One of the more nauseating spaces is the racist realms of public consumption of "the Indian" in the growth of museums, galleries, and other cultural realms of white settler society. Learning about the complexities of our family's role in this violent legacy, I grew up knowing that George Hunt had collected or taken hundreds of cultural materials and arranged for more than a dozen people from the coast, including several from Tsaxis, to be "on display" at the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition as "living exhibits" or "living displays" (Jonaitis 2006) – a welcome opportunity, perhaps, to publicly affirm collective spiritual and cultural wealth in the midst of church and government suppression of the feast system (Raibmon 2005). Despite this, I was unaware that Lucy travelled to the Chicago World's Fair – it took a recent lunch with a scholar of the Boas-Hunt legacy to learn this in a casual comment. After hearing

about this, I searched through scholarly works discussing Hunt's role in the Chicago World's Fair. Yet, I found no mention of Lucy. As historian Paige Raibmon notes, public promotion of the Kwakwaka'wakw display did not mention the "live exhibits" by name, and most participants, other than George Hunt, of course, have had to be pieced together from disparate sources (Raibmon 2005). Searching the faces of Kwakwaka'wakw performers in archival photos of the Chicago World's Fair, I struggle to recognize my great-great-grandmother whose presence was so rarely treated as anything other than "wife."

Looking again at the forests and shorelines in Emily Carr's painting, all of this is visible to me now, just beyond the edges of the frame. Beyond and before the constructed wilderness, the spirit of the forest that facilitates settler belonging, are the labouring bodies of my relatives – working the land, singing to their relations, telling origin stories of Mink and Dzunuk'wa (Woman of the Woods), weaving cedar headdresses, and making button blankets with crests that are their land title. Women are also central in the political landscape, actively making decisions about with whom it is and is not safe to share cultural knowledge, which families make good strategic partnerships, and who should take up certain names or spiritual and cultural positions in the community, as well as collectively making decisions about management of land, water, cultivation, trade, and broad sustenance of the nation. This is the work of governance.

Turning around with our back to the forest, we are located in the place where the worlds meet within Kwakwaka'wakw cosmology – the undersea world, the sky world, the ancestral world, and this mortal world, where we tend to our estuarine gardens. We can see entire worlds that come alive across these shorelines, some out of view in the depths of the ocean, as our whale relatives are, yet closely connected within our cultural practice. This new view provides insights into the material effects of these two gendered legacies of colonialism – the hypervisibility of Emily Carr and the invisibility of Lucy Homiskanis and many other women and gender-diverse relatives.

In contemporary conversations about climate change, environmentalism, or sustainability, there is often a focus on large-scale structures like global financing for resource extraction, with the love of nature or embracing a wild existence being seen as a necessary link to taking local action in what is a global crisis. But the erasure of breathing, living, labouring Indigenous bodies is foundational to both regimes because

they each uphold the imperialist view of the land as *terra nullius*, as lands void of any legitimate claimants.

Our canoes are getting heavy, our bentwood boxes overflowing. This is a lot to carry.

Paddling our way back here to lək'wəŋən homelands, the journey isn't laborious, because we have filled our canoe with relatives who can paddle, sing, pull, move collectively back to these shores together. As we've journeyed from shore to shore and in between, I have modelled practices that reject the frames of knowledge offered by those who celebrate Emily Carr – activating unsettling practices that, I hope, reveal the necessity of looking beyond, beneath, and before what at first seems obvious in popular representations of nature. Because what is obvious is a settler-colonial way of seeing. It requires work to bring what is under the surface into view. This is work Indigenous people are constantly having to do, even in our own minds and bodies, as we are repeatedly socialized to limit our own sense of freedom.

In order to shift away from settler structures of feeling, a redistribution of resources is needed. To recalibrate relations of belonging, we must confront systems of value within our social and cultural institutions. Emily Carr's painting *The Crooked Staircase* sold for \$3.3 million in 2013 to University of Victoria patron Michael Audain a few years back – one of twenty of Carr pieces in his collection. Yet, we have no funds to support traditional knowledge holders to sit at decision-making tables in the lands represented *in* her paintings. We need to unsettle relations of power within settler-colonial capitalist institutions, including galleries, museums, and universities – imagine a big feast where accumulated wealth can be properly redistributed to those families whose landscapes people are paying to purchase, view, or visit.

These unsettling practices also open up possibilities for strengthening relations among Indigenous Peoples and people of colour, Black folks, trans, queer, and nonbinary folks, people with disabilities, people who are also made not to belong. Because these waters and lands are alive with ways of belonging that are not premised on settler norms, but relations formed at and across shorelines of difference – places where water and land meet, where Peoples meet, where worlds meet, where we already have governing practices in place for forming consensual relationships across difference.

Reorienting ourselves away from settler structures of feeling and seeing, I've long wanted to install portraits of coastal relatives near or on the Carr monuments around town – a coastal woman standing guard

beside her statue or some relatives cultivating crops in the mural on the side of the art supply store in downtown Victoria. To finally make visible what she painted out, exposing the violence inherent in the continual Carr celebration in which this settler society seems so invested. But I think it may be time for another move.

In the legal systems of island nations, there are mechanisms for dampening the power of particular cultural items – covering them in cloth, for example, or turning them around. It is time to put Emily Carr to rest for awhile, to let her and her displaced forests have a break, and to open up that space to the cultural work of coastal women and gender-diverse relatives. Imagine: what would need to change for us to feel safe walking alone in our own homelands, to feel that galleries like these are our places to guard and to treasure? The only way to answer this question is to invite Indigenous women and gender-diverse relatives to take the floor, bringing our voices, our images, and our legacies into a place of authority once again. Singing, weaving, cultivating ourselves back into belonging in our own homelands.

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