

Tecumseh, A Portrait

Dismantling the Myth, as an Agent of Change

By

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(Noodgmowiin – “The Healer”)

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Abstract

Tecumseh, A Portrait
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By Philip Cote, Master of Fine Arts In
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This research project offers insights into the history of European visual representations of Indigenous peoples, Tecumseh in particular, and the larger issues of colonialism and bias with its cross generational and damaging consequences. The investigation examines how visual representations of Tecumseh came into being and remained in circulation across time and to what degree were recorded archival depictions of the leader still raise questions of veracity and intent. Indigenous theorists, Vine Deloria, Jr., Marie Baptiste, James (Sake) Youngblood Henderson provided insights into Indigenous identity, sovereignty and decolonization theories; Stephanie Pratt's examinations offered analysis of the representation of Indigenous leaders through British portraiture; Elders Edward Benton Benai and Floyd Looks For Buffalo Hand, are drawn on for their cultural knowledge.

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Dedication

To my Grandmother

Ethel Jones Williams

Parents Beverley & Gerald Cote

Brother Gary Cote

Daughter Jacqueline Cote

Grandsons Keelan & Kurtis

Sisters

Jerrilynn Harper, Elaine Cote, Carolyn Cote

&

Brother-in-law Vern Harper

Nieces Carly, Cotee and Raimy

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Definitions of Terms

Aboriginal

Existing in a place since earliest times. It is a word that is used interchangeably with Indigenous, Natives, Indians, First Nations and First Peoples in this essay

First Nations

Indian peoples or their communities not including Inuit or Metis peoples

First Peoples

The Aboriginal peoples of a country, in Canada including First Nations, Inuit and the Metis peoples

Indian

Original inhabitants of the continent of America, used interchangeably with indigenous, native, First Peoples, First Nations and aboriginal in this essay

Indigenous

Existing naturally in a particular country region or environment, a word that is used in this essay interchangeably with native, Indian, aboriginal, First Nations and First Peoples

Introduction

It was in 1992, when my mother first explained to me that our family's ancestral roots traced back to Tecumseh, the renowned Shawnee leader. She gave me the book, *A Sorrow In Our Heart* by Allen W. Eckert, so that I could better understand the history of my people.¹ Though I had been aware that he was a leader of historic importance for the Indigenous peoples of North America and had figured prominently in the War of 1812, my knowledge of Tecumseh was sorely lacking in terms of the exact details of his complex role in safeguarding Upper Canada, British North America, and the creation of what would eventually become the nation of Canada.²

At that time, I made the decision to commit my artistic practice to unearthing an evidence-based understanding of Tecumseh's social, political and cultural contributions.³

This thesis seeks to investigate the history of visual representations of Tecumseh, question how the currently archived images emerged and were culturally disseminated across time and determine to what extent established depictions of Tecumseh provide an accurate representation. A core result of my

¹ Allen W. Eckert, *A Sorrow In Our Heart* (New York: Konecky and Konecky, 1992) was published January 2, 1992. 517-518.

² The War of 1812 was a conflict between the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The origins were caused by King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763, which started economic and trade tensions between the British and the Americans. Both sides used Indian allies to further their agendas. (1812-1814).

³ American historian Benjamin Drake in *Life of Tecumseh, and his Brother the Prophet- Primary Source Edition*, (1841) recounts Tecumseh's life, from his early boyhood, his growing skill as a hunter and warrior, his humanity and his rise as a leader protecting Indigenous ways of life and territories. Drake also discusses Tecumseh's frequent conflicts with the newcomers and the American Government over settlement in Shawnee territory. Additionally, he narrates days leading up and the day Tecumseh fell in Battle of the Thames fighting for the establishment of a territory to remain specifically Indian Country. Allan W. Eckert's *A Sorrow In Our Heart* is an epic story of Tecumseh Life, his early years and the many individuals and events who influenced him and made him strive to become the leader he was. Glenn Tucker's *Tecumseh A Vision of Glory* critically examines and analyzes the documented descriptions of Tecumseh and his life in both the above publications.

archival and historical research was the decision to create my own image of Tecumseh. By interpreting the colonial archive, including its written and visual evidence from an Indigenous perspective, I examined its potential to contribute to the creation of a post-colonial, empowering Indigenous visual culture.

My investigation required examining the ways of knowing and being that informed Tecumseh's understanding of his world and his place in it. As John A. Grim notes "Such an indigenous episteme, or way of knowing, articulates the organization of the world, informs conceptual thought about experience in the world, and engenders ethical behavior bringing human life into harmony with the perceived cosmos."⁴ This thesis holds that our historical discourse (First Nations history, culture and lived experience) can be more accurately represented by including the Indigenous voice in publicly embodied spaces that are communally shared.

My research and creative practice turns on the reclamation of what I view to be a lost Indigenous collective memory and the empowerment and insight born of historical knowledge. This represents the merging of history (as an investigative practice), postcolonial theory (as a tool for transformation), biography and ethnography (as a mode of inquiry into the lives and ways of individuals and groups) and theories of portraiture (tied to the obligations and challenges of representation).

⁴ John A. Grim "Cosmology and Native North American Mystical Traditions", *Théologiques*, vol. 9, n° 1, 2001, p. 116

Important forms of early Indigenous portraiture, as opposed to the forms of portraiture/representation that are typical of the colonial archive, include petroglyphs and pictographs. Michael Blackstock in his publication *Faces in the Forest* quotes Mi'Kmaq scholar Marie Baptiste on the subject of Indigenous memory and its record and transmission.

Algonquin Indians used petroglyphs, pictographs, and notched sticks to communicate information and messages to friends and relatives of one's whereabouts or of routes and directions taken or to be taken, to relate stories of the hunt, of battle or of individuals or heroes of ancient times.⁵

Appropriately the etched, symbolic images presented in my posters of Tecumseh reference this early Indigenous practice of portraiture. This said, my work in referencing the European tradition of portraiture and the transposed practices of representation that define the colonial and imperial depictions of Indigenous peoples, constitutes an intentional act of post-colonial appropriation. Here, the complex legacies of European exploration, militarism and settlement are acknowledged and translated into a restorative Indigenous aesthetic, visual and ideological language.

⁵ Blackstock, Michael, *Faces in the Forest*, (Kingston: McGill/Queen's University Press, 1961) p.10

Chapter One: Representations of Indigenous Peoples and Tecumseh in Particular and the Damaging Cross Generational Consequences of Colonialism and Bias.⁶

Misconceptions of imagined, romanticized, or pejorative representations of Indigenous people, including our leaders, continue to perpetuate a widespread lack of awareness of Indigenous reality. Despite recent attempts in educational and political systems to inform the general public of Indigenous reality and history, there remains an underlying colonial attitude in relationship to/with First Nations people.⁷

Indeed, the project of decolonization and bringing forward Indigenous insight and sensibility is increasingly supported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics and this holds the promise of shared transformation “within an agenda for identity reconstruction”.⁸ Indigenous scholars Vine Deloria Jr., Marie Battiste and James Sakej Youngblood Henderson have written powerfully on the destructive legacies of embedded bias and prejudice and their work speaks to the need – restorative, ameliorative, liberating - for a “voice of Indigenous culture”. Deloria, an insightful and compassionate voice for this

⁶ The colonial bias against Indigenous peoples involves a prejudiced distortion of information that unfairly influences perceptions of cultural representation and fosters a bigoted intolerance toward Indigenous views on matters of politics, religion and ethnicity. My use of the word bias refers to the explanation given by Bonnie Steinbock, a professor of philosophy at the University of Albany. “bias can come in many forms and is often considered to be synonymous with prejudice and bigotry”. Bonnie, Steinbock, “Speciesism and the Idea of Equality”. *Philosophy*: Volume 53 / Issue 204 / April 1978, pp 247-256.

⁷ In 2010, the Aboriginal Education Centre, (part of the Toronto District School Board) initiated the *Urban Aboriginal Pilot Program* throughout schools in the GTA. Recognizing they were failing Aboriginal students through lack of Indigenous content, they approached teachers who were willing to take a six-week course, to understand how they might better engage Aboriginal students. Another part of this highly successful program was to bring in Aboriginal artists to assist in classroom instruction. Marie Battiste, (Ed.) “Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society”, In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, (Vancouver UBC Press, 2000), 192.

⁸ Odora Hoppers, *Indigenous Knowledge and the Intersection of Knowledge Systems, Towards a conceptual methodological framework*, (Claremont, South Africa, New Africa Books, 2002)

shared project, promotes Indigenous cultural autonomy and a greater understanding of Indigenous history and philosophy. Battiste coined the term “cognitive imperialism”, which represents a critique of the education and assimilation policies forced on Indigenous peoples by the federal governments in North America.⁹ Similarly, lawyer James (Sajke) Youngblood Henderson argues that the Euro-centric and hegemonic education system born of colonialism and imperialism has been “used as a means to perpetuate damaging myths about Indigenous knowledge and heritage, languages, beliefs and ways of life.”¹⁰ In his essay, *Decolonizing Cognitive Imperialism in Education*, Youngblood Henderson emphasizes the need for an assertion of Indigenous identity by citing a provision in the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN 1994) that states:

Indigenous people have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations, their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.¹¹

The lack of positive and accurate historical imagery of First Nation leaders in mainstream popular culture and the perpetuation of pejorative and stereotypical images continues to silence Indigenous presence in Canada, with subsequent impact on a multi-generational level.

⁹ Marie Battiste, (Ed.) “Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Language, and Culture in Modern Society”, In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, (Vancouver UBC Press, 2000),198.

¹⁰ James (Sajke) Youngblood Henderson, Marie Battiste, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage, A Global Challenge*, (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Inc., 2000), 86

¹¹ Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN 1994) posted on the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.SUB.2.RES.1994.45.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.SUB.2.RES.1994.45.En?OpenDocument) Accessed Oct 5th, 2013.

If the foundation of Indigenous culture is inherently grounded through the act of remembering/renewing the original through the presence of our lived experience, how are Indigenous peoples to know themselves without a history realized through the remembering of our Indigenous leaders? Visual articulation and material culture are central to memory for the purpose of education, transformation and enlightenment across generations.

The creation of a series of posters depicting Tecumseh will be shared publically in communal spaces to further the discourse between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, challenge colonial misrepresentations and establish a more accurate political and cultural history. The creation and dissemination of this transformative image of Tecumseh speaks to my commitment to social/political activism.

Historical representations of Indigenous peoples from the colonial, imperial and national archives is significantly dominated by an academic western lens that has assumed a perspective of accuracy and authority in the global representation of Indigenous cultures. Eurocentric in character constitutes 'outside' mapping of the Indigenous experience that is and has been dissonant from the reality of our lived experience. Although capable of recording and documenting what was observable, there was an absence of nuance, of meaning and of value in the European representation of Indigenous realities. The reclamation of Indigenous culture and experience through First Nations visual

and cultural programming within Western academia is challenging extant archival documentation, including the imagery of our cultural reality.

The history of the depictions of Indigenous people remains a crucially important issue. One only has to consider the American debate on the name of the Washington D.C. football team: “The Redskins”. Supporters of the name state it evokes images of bravery and martial skill while detractors believe it perpetrates centuries-old derisive, bigoted and imperialist ideas about difference and the character of Indigenous peoples.¹² This contemporary, derogatory distortion of Indigenous peoples through the use of the term ‘redskins’ illustrates the important need for Indigenous scholars and community workers to present a counter-narrative to displace the colonial imperialist mythology imbedded in American history.¹³

As an Indigenous person, my experience is informed by knowledge passed down to me by and through my elders. This lived knowledge allows a subtle reading of signs and interpreting of symbols. Encountering images of Indigenous leaders recorded by European artists/persons, such as the institutionally archived, colonial influenced representation of Tecumseh locates the inherent challenges. Validated as accurate through its repetitive use, the single known original image of Tecumseh illustrates an unreflective authority that continues to serve the western colonial construction of our reality. In my research

¹² John Woodrow Cox, *In Minnesota, thousands of Native Americans protest Redskins' name*, The Washington Post, November 2, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/in-minnesota-native-americans-march-rally-to-protest-redskins-name/2014/11/02/fc38b8d0-6299-11e4-836c-83bc4f26eb67_story.html Retrieved February 4, 2014.

¹³ The term ‘redskin’ refers to a scalp taken from an Indigenous individual of North America.

of the Tecumseh image, it became apparent that it had been strategically assembled to project selective cultural referencing and symbolism. Elements of his regalia exhibit a cross-cultural exchange between various Indigenous Nations, that recognize adaption as a natural element within every Indigenous community, dating back to before Europeans arrived on the shores of North America. An example of this sort of exchange is illustrated by historian, B. F. H. Witherell in his publication of his reminiscences when he describes Tecumseh wearing “ a red and blue handkerchief in the neat and particular manner of the Huron or Wendat”.¹⁴

Unearthing Fragments/Reconstructing Presence – A Signature Image:

¹⁴ Witherell, Hon. B.F. H., “Reminiscences of the North-West” *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Volume III (Madison: Calkins & Webb, Printers, 1857) 301-302. Brock, Issac, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Issac Brock*, K.B. Primary Source Edition, Edited by his nephew Ferdinand Brock Tupper, Esq., (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1847) 243.



Figure 1. Benson J. Lossing's 1848 engraving adapted from Pierre Le Dru's drawing of 1808 depicted in his book *The Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812* p 283

Arguably the most reproduced image of Tecumseh is that found in an etching adapted by historian and author B. J. Lossing in his 1869 book, *Pictorial Field Book of the War Of 1812*. This publication presented an historical overview of the American role in the War of 1812.¹⁵ In it, Lossing states that he discovered sketches of Tecumseh and his brother, Tenskwatawa (The Prophet), in Montreal,

¹⁵ John Sugden's *Tecumseh A Life*, (New York: Konecky and Konecky, 1992), 211

Quebec in 1848, and attributed their source to a French trader named Pierre LeDru.¹⁶

However, only limited documentation regarding LeDru was found to exist during my research. Lossing's account, though of critical importance, reveals significant gaps within the archived representation of Tecumseh's historicized image.

As Lossing reported, he met with LeDru's son who had remained in possession of the original pencil sketches purportedly done by LeDru in 1808.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Lossing does not include information about how he came to know of the LeDru sketch. Nor is there a great deal written about Pierre LeDru himself.¹⁸ Lossing simply states that LeDru was a merchant with a trading business who may have operated out of Detroit, Illinois.

What immediately stands out is that Lossing revised the original sketch of Tecumseh wearing a buckskin shirt to one of him wearing an 1812 red Brigadier General's jacket from 49th Regiment of the British colonial army.¹⁹

In his adaptation, he states:

¹⁶ B. J. Lossing, 283. Lossing does not state where in particular he found these drawings. Sugden, *Tecumseh A Life*, Appendix: Family Portraits, 457

¹⁷ Ibid. 402

¹⁸ Ibid. 402

¹⁹ John Sugden's *Tecumseh A Life*, 403. B. J. Lossing's *Pictorial Field-Book, War of 1812*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1868) 189, 283 references the description of Tecumseh in "Reminiscences of the North-West' by Hon. B.F. H. Witherell in the Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Volume III (Madison: Calkins & Webb, Printers, 1857) 301-302. Additionally, Lossing's discovery of these drawings challenges previous assertions made by Richard Mentor Johnson written in a letter to Samuel R. Drake in 1838. Johnson, a Kentucky regiment leader who claimed he had killed Tecumseh in the Battle of the Thames during the War of 1812, states in the letter that there is no documented image of Tecumseh.

I have given only the head by LeDru. The cap was red, the band ornamented with coloured porcupines' quills, and in front was a single eagle's feather black with a white tip. The sketch of his dress and his King George III medal, in which he appears as a brigadier general of the British army, is a rough drawing which I saw in Montreal in the summer of 1858, made at Malden soon after the surrender of Detroit...²⁰ This latter sketch is not attributed to any particular person/artist.²¹

This exchange illustrates a dynamic interplay between primary evidence and secondary origins.

Additionally, Lossing suggests that there was only one place that the drawing could have been done and that was in Prophetstown, Ohio.²² His reasoning was based on his extensive research regarding Tecumseh and his brother, Tenskwatawa.²³ According to Lossing, LeDru had done separate drawings of each of the brothers.

²⁰ Lossing, 283 Appendix: Family Portraits, For his final sentence Lossing relied upon B.F. H. Witherell's "Reminiscences" Witherell remarked that Captain John Grant once saw Tecumseh and Proctor at the head of the troops, the chief attired in the uniform of a brigadier-general with a scarlet coat and cocked hat, but keeping his blue breechcloth, red leggings, and moccasins". 301-302.

²¹ Lossing, 402

²² <http://www.americasstateparks.org/article.php?id=4057>

²³ Descriptions of Tecumseh brother, Tenskwatawa were found in Sugden's, *Tecumseh A Life*, 402-403, and Allen W. Eckert's, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, (New York: Konecky and Konecky, 1992), 600.



Figure 2. Benson J. Lossing's 1858 George engraving of Tenskwatawa, of 1830. Collection of the Lossing family.



Figure 3. The Prophet *Tenskwatawa* by Catlin Pictorial Field Book of the War 1812. Oil on canvas 29 x 24 in. (73.7 x 60.9, cm) Smithsonian American Art Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Museum. Jr. 1985.66.279.

Lossing, however, was not able to verify whether both drawings were done at the same time or where, but it is likely that this might well have been in Prophetstown where LeDru, a trader, would have had the opportunity to meet both, circa 1808.

In addition to being a trading port, Prophetstown, was a meeting place Tecumseh and his brother established, created as a safe haven for invited

dignitaries of many Indigenous nations.²⁴ Indeed, it was here that Tecumseh's message for a united Indigenous front to stop the continued expansionist policies of the American government would have been heard.²⁵

Prophetstown was one hundred acres in size, with two hundred birchbark houses occupying the high ground overlooking a river. There was also a Council House and long low Medicine Lodge, as well as a substantial number of guest accommodations.²⁶



Figure 4. Model of Prophet's Town. <http://www.americasstateparks.org/article/4057/An-Afternoon-at-Prophetstown-State-Park>

In order for Lossing to adequately verify the authenticity of LeDru's sketch as being that of Tecumseh, he first referenced a painting done by American

²⁴ Sudgen, 167.

²⁵ *The Native American Ethnic Make-Up of Prophetstown, 1808-1812*. August 1, 2011, retrieved February 14th, 2014. Jessica Diemer-Eaton is a historical interpreter of Native American lifeways, and owner of Woodland Indian Educational Programs (www.woodlandindianedu.com). She provides educational programs for students, public programs for museums, Powwows, and historical events, as well as interpretive workshops for museum staff. <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-native-american-ethnic-prophetstown-8828323.html>

²⁶ Sudgen, 167

colonial painter, George Catlin. In 1832, Catlin painted a portrait of Tecumseh's brother Tenskwatawa, who's facial characteristics were distinct from Tecumseh, in that his portrait included one missing eye.²⁷

Comparing the drawing of Tecumseh done by LeDru with Catlin's image of 'Tenskwatawa, the Prophet' was considered by Lossing to provide a reasonable sense of accuracy to determine that LeDru's drawing of Tecumseh was a true likeness of Tecumseh.²⁸

In order to successfully depict a specific material and social culture: Shawnee, it was essential to reference and research through the imperial archive which remains the main source of recorded documentation of colonial times. As a counterpoint, the archive drew attention to areas of dissonance and inaccuracy that offered insight into where and when the dysfunction in relations between the Indigenous population and colonial governments emerged in North American history. These primary sources also revealed inaccuracies and assumptions such as an image attributed to one person that was truly the portraiture of an alternative figure in history.²⁹ As well, within the archives, erroneous representations of cultural icons with regard to Indigenous nations indicated a lack of knowledge and understanding of the distinctiveness of each Indigenous culture. This 'whitewashing' has led to a homogenizing and stereotyping of the 'Indian'. Such inaccurate interpretative documentation

²⁷ Sudgen, *Tecumseh A Life*, 113. The sketch of Tecumseh appears in B. J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1869), 403.

²⁸ Subsequent to the completion of this thesis, I intend to pursue further research in relation to both LeDru and this original Tecumseh sketch, which will include contacting his relations in Montreal in person.

²⁹ For example, the curator Guislaine Lemay at the McCord Museum showed me an image she claimed to be Pontiac but if fact was Tenskwatawa.

validated by the archive, presented an opportunity to challenge this one-sided view and recognize the importance of defining cultural extremes: one based in stereotyped racial misunderstanding and the other, my Indigenous reality based in a lived experience. Much of what I know has been passed on down to me through story, ceremony and ritual and it is these practices that inform my cultural identity, an identity that is distinctly different from the indigenous culture that the archive claim to represent who I am.³⁰

As an Indigenous artist, the purpose of my research is to unearth, and reveal, my cultural experience and knowledge of signs of Indigenous symbols, language and interpretation. In so doing, openings are created (both within the archive/academia and broader public) that enable these imbedded stereotypes to transform under the gaze of an Indigenous based interpreted presence and intervene in the cross generational colonial bias.

Cross-generational consequences of colonialism and bias:

The cross-generational consequences of colonialism and bias involve complex and far reaching impacts that been a driving force in my commitment to my art practice and activism. Their consequences include the Indian Act,³¹ disproportionate incarceration of Indigenous peoples in Canadian prisons, the

³⁰ My lived experience and the practice of cultural rituals and ceremonies are a daily part of my life.

³¹ The Indian Act of 1876 is federal law that governed and continues to govern matters pertaining to Indigenous peoples of Canada. Highly invasive and paternalistic, it continues to give government authorization to regulate and administer in the affairs and day-to-day lives of registered Indians and reserve communities. Ranging from overarching political control, such as imposing governing structures on Aboriginal communities (band councils) to controlling the rights of Indians to practice their culture and traditions. It also enabled the government to determine the land base (reserves), and even to define who qualifies as Indian in the form of Indian status.
<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html> Retrieved March 27, 2014.

residential school experiences and the struggle amongst many of today's Indigenous youth to feel a positive sense of cultural identity and purpose.

Incarceration of Indigenous peoples is often the result of systemic disenfranchisement occasioned by the racist colonial policies of the Indian Act.³² The *Indian Act*, promulgated in 1876, is still the governing legislation defining the relationship between the Federal government and the First Peoples of this land. This legislation was implemented by the federal government of Canada to maintain control of the Indigenous population. The fundamental rights and privileges of Indigenous peoples were ignored, their ceremonies banned and their children forced into church run residential schools that were officially sanctioned and legislatively mandated to serve as institutions of assimilation. These residential schools were often sites of physical and sexual abuse. The foreign structure that was enforced upon Indigenous peoples destroyed family cohesiveness and spiritual, cultural relationships (the traditional roles of women and elders) including loss of language and traditions.³³

This 'shaming' of one's identity, one's own worth, was often passed down to the next generation. The residential school experience taught parents to believe in the shame of 'being Native'. Colonial newcomers, settlers and immigrants, were woven into this blanket of Canadian mythology which "authorized" and "normalized" racism.

³² For more information see The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission Report, Chapter 4, <http://www.ajic.mb.ca> Accessed on December 10th, 2014.

Measures implemented as a result of the *Indian Act* also created an imposed, foreign idea about who was, and who was not an Indian through blood quantum and marriage.³⁴ This is particularly true in the case of mixed marriages.³⁵ Their cultural authenticity was “othered” not through traditional cultural understandings, but by measurement and definition established by the racist blood quantum policies of the *Indian Act*. This has and continues to play a part in who is accepted as ‘Indian’, both within the culture, as well as legislatively.

Additional impact has been apparent in my community work with Indigenous youth at Tumivut Youth Centre in Toronto, where I have witnessed the cross generational damaging effects of colonialism and bias upon their sense of identity and purpose and related issues of visibility. Their perception of representation is often reliant upon mainstream media sources that interpret Indigenous issues differently than that of Indigenous sources such as APTN and related print media.³⁶ This is significant considering that a large portion of the

³⁴ The racist policies in the Indian Act, continued the assimilation strategies of the colonial government to eradicate Indigenous language and culture. The government gave Indian Status to non-indigenous women who married status Native men, while forcibly disenfranchising (taking away the status e.g. the rights of status Native women who married non-Indigenous men). In 1985, Bill C31 restored Indian status to women who had previously been forcibly disenfranchised due to discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act.

³⁵ Mi'Mkag scholar and lawyer Pamela D. Palmater states “The injustices forced on Indigenous people by colonial and modern governments have caused the worst kind of sickness: our people are now perpetuating the same injustices imposed by governments”. She corroborates this statement by using her own family history (her Native grandmother married and non-native man) to illustrate how many individuals in her community, including chief and council use the discriminatory policies of the Indian Act to deny her and her children their inherent rights as Mi'Mkag people. *Beyond Blood, Rethinking Indigenous Identity* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Limited, 2011) 14.

³⁶ Although the globe and Mail and APTN provide coverage of the same story (protests at Elsipogtog, New Brunswick, November 2013) there is a difference in emphasis and tone in their articles. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/elsipogtog-chief-hopes--protests-peaceful> and <http://www.aptn.ca/news/2014/07/30/2-mikmaq-warriors-sentence-15/months/elsipogtog-fracking-fight/>

general public receive their 'news' from mainstream media sources and because of the lack of alternative national perspectives, accept it as truth.³⁷

One recent example was the absence of national mainstream media coverage of the Nishyayu Walkers, youth who walked 1600 km from James Bay to Parliament Hill to express their pride as Indigenous young people.³⁸ Press coverage of their extraordinary accomplishment was overshadowed that day by a mainstream media blitz featuring Prime Minister Stephen Harper welcoming a gift of panda bears from China.³⁹ By ignoring and marginalizing Indigenous issues and achievements, a colonially derived paternalistic relationship between the broader public, the state authority and Indigenous peoples remains intact. The effacement of the cultural heritage of Indigenous youth from mainstream culture contributes to a continuation of colonial bias.

When leading Native Sons and Native Daughters programming at the Ontario Correctional Institute for Men (OCI) and the Vanier Correctional Institute for Young women, both in Brampton, Ontario,⁴⁰ the majority of the young people I encountered in these programs also lacked a positive sense of their Indigenous identity. The program I presented as a cultural advisor in these three institutes informed me how the erasure of our diverse cultural Indigenous histories,

³⁷ Journalist have the duty and privilege to seek and to report the truth, encourage civic debate to build our communities, and serve the public interest. We vigorously defend the freedom of expression and freedom of the press as guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We return society's trust by practising our craft responsibility and respecting our fellow-citizens' rights. <http://www.caj.ca/principles-for-ethical-journalism/>

³⁸ CTV News <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/nisyyuu-walkers-complete-1-600-km-trek-to-ottawa-1.1209929#ixzz39SxlESgl>

³⁹ Inside the House of Commons, Green Party Leader Elizabeth May lead a standing ovation for the walkers. She called the walkers' journey "awe-inspiring." She also noted that Prime Minister Stephen Harper was not there to meet the group, as he was greeting a pair of pandas that had arrived in Toronto from China instead.

⁴⁰ Jolene Davis, *Group Promotes Traditional Knowledge Behind Bars* Windspeaker Volume 17, Issue 8, 1999. The first Native Sons program began in 1988 at the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre.

ceremonies and lived experiences had impacted upon these individuals.

Ironically, for most, prison was the first time they experienced a Prayer Pipe Ceremony or a Purification Ceremony.⁴¹

These issues motivate and inform my project's purpose to challenge the perpetuation of Indigenous stereotypes in both literary and visual representations and contribute to a new post-colonial and empowering Indigenous culture in all its manifestations.

⁴¹ The Prayer Pipe ritual begins with a circle of people, in which tobacco is offered through the pipe. The participants thoughts and prayers through smoking the tobacco in the pipe connects them to their ancestors. The circle itself is also a Medicine Wheel which contains many teachings to help people on their journey in this life. See Learning Journey on the Red Road, where Medicine Man Floyd Looks for Buffalo Hand discusses in detail the origins and meaning of this ceremony. 26-31 The Sweat Lodge is a round, domed structure about 10 feet in diameter and made with flexible willow branches. It is covered with blankets and canvas. In the center is a shallow pit for lava stones. These are heated in a fire and brought into the lodge by the helper or fire keeper. When you enter the Lodge, you will sit in a circle around the rock pit. The leader of the ceremony pours water on the heated stones, making steam. Cedar, sage, tobacco and sweet grass are burned to help focus and balance the senses. When the flap door is closed it is completely dark inside. The interior heats up, prayers are made and sacred songs are sung. The ceremony consists of four "rounds," each lasting approximately 20 minutes. The door is opened for about 10 minutes between rounds. A very sacred pipe ("Chanupa Wakan Cha" in Lakota Sioux), or tobacco rolled in a corn husk is sometimes smoked. The smoke is believed to penetrate the realms of creation, moving from the dense to the more subtle, thus carrying the prayers to the Creator. Tobacco and herbs are used in the smoking mixture and are non-hallucinogenic. Indian Tobacco (Kinnikinnik) is a mixture of Damiana, Coltsfoot, Uva Ursi, Lobelia, Osha root, and Red Willow bark. Immediately after the Sweat Lodge you will share in a simple "feast" in the Sweat Lodge area. This is a social time and the concluding element of the ceremony.

Chapter Two: Research, Analysis and the Interpretive Process

Research, Analysis:

The translation of archival research into visual information is central to the premise of my work. To create an accurate image of Tecumseh, what information would be needed? Would European images assist or hinder me in this task?

Despite being a tenuous ally and fierce adversary, Tecumseh was highly respected by the colonials and American Revolutionaries for being an excellent horseman, a formidable statesman and military leader of the Indigenous Alliance whose “rank and class” as a leader was equal to that of his colonial military counterparts.⁴² This fact provoked my interest in exploring a representation of him that could capture such a stature and in 2010 I began the first of two paintings of Tecumseh that subsequently became a flashpoint for my research of this thesis.

The composition of the first painting of Tecumseh used elements similar to Lossing’s etching, including Tecumseh clothed in the jacket of a British General jacket. But, the focal point of the painting diverged from Lossing’s

⁴² An example of Tecumseh’s horsemanship at the age of fifteen are recounted by younger brother Chikiska during a buffalo hunt in 1783 in Allan Eckert’s *A Sorrow in Our Heart* on page 265-266. “Tecumseh galloped directly towards the massive plunging animal pulling his knife from his sheath, as he did so. He angled into the thundering herd, guiding his horse on the outer edge and matching the speed of a good sized bull. Gripping his knife crossways in his teeth he crouched for an instant on his horse’s back and then leaped onto the back of the bull buffalo, grasping his great shaggy mane with both hands and instantly locking his legs on both sides of the animal. A terrified bull snorted and rolled his eyes and ran even harder, angling a bit deeper into the galloping herd. Tecumseh released his grip with one hand and, still clinging to the mane with the other, his legs straining against the animal’s sides, he snapped the knife out of his mouth and leaned far down over the great hump of the beast attempting to plunge the knife into the throat and sever the jugular. And he missed period. The bull bellowed with pain and veered suddenly to the left. Tecumseh kept going straight, losing his knife and flying head over heels into plunging throng. Fortunately he was close to the edge of the herd that only a couple of animals struck him”. Sudgen, 265-66

piece in that it presented Tecumseh mounted on a large white horse.⁴³ The background, in my effort to mirror the stature of his colonial counterparts, was deliberately appropriated from Franz Kruger's, 1837 *Alexander the First of Russia* equestrian portrait to render Tecumseh's portrait in the signature Neoclassical style preferred for paintings of European military leaders during the 1800s.⁴⁴ Supporting my argument regarding increasing expectations of under represented peoples to be accurately included in rewriting of history.⁴⁵ I then chose to digitally reproduce the image to include a gold leafed frame as an aesthetic intervention to stereotypes of the era.

⁴³ Glen Tucker, *Tecumseh: A Vision of Glory*, New York: Cosimo inc., 2005), 308. "and as Arnold (Holmes) was throwing the dirt, Tecumseh was mounting the white pony."

⁴⁴ Franz Kruger also known as (Horse-Kruger) (1797-1857) German Prussian painter and Lithographer. Best known for his Romantic Equestrian style paintings and was in high demand for his military portraits during the 1800s.

⁴⁵ Since 2001 contemporary black artist Kehinde Wiley has challenged conventional historical representations of power and identity in portraiture by embedding images of young African American men in visually contextual positions usually associated with saints, nobility and royalty. By doing so, he exposes the traditional effacement of African Americans from the history of western portraiture and highlights the broader societal issues associated with equality, privilege and identity. Melanie L. Buffington, "Developing Multicultural Intelligence through the Work of Kehinde Wiley" (2009). *VCU Art Education Publications*. Paper 2. http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/arte_pubs/2



Figure 5. *Tecumseh Equestrian Painting*, digital image on canvas (86.5cm x 60cm, 2011)

This painting of Tecumseh was to be the first in a series of paintings depicting him characterized as a military leader.⁴⁶

From a Western European perspective, ideologically, Neoclassicism embodied a return to the non-secularized, democratic, and militaristic ideals of ancient Greek and Roman cultures. Born on the eve of revolution in both France and the American colonies, those ideals were a major force behind the American colonies' declaring Independence from the British Empire (1776) and the overthrow of the French monarchy (1789).⁴⁷ Paintings of that era allegorically reflected the intellectual, social and political changes engaging Western culture,⁴⁸ concepts that Tecumseh would have been familiar with because, ironically, these values - bravery, loyalty, courage and sacrifice are embedded in Indigenous culture.⁴⁹ And, it was these values that informed the life and work of Tecumseh who organized an Alliance of Fifty Indigenous Nations as a revolutionary response to colonial infiltration and American expansionism policies of Indian lands. Choosing to represent Tecumseh in the Neoclassical style of painting strategically reflected this era in which paintings often characterized persons on horseback bearing militaristic arms while wearing flowing garments that evoked

⁴⁶ Helen Gardner's *Art through the Ages 1750 – 1850*, (Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing 1929) 766.
http://books.google.ca/books?id=beCbtH9HJXUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁴⁷ Returning to the earlier beliefs of the early Greek and Romans, many sculptures of the time portrayed gods. Interested in ideal beauty, rather than a particular individual many of their models were young athletes.

⁴⁸ An excellent example of a painting which reflects the intellectual, social and political changes of Western culture is Eugene Delacroix's, *Liberty Leading the People* 1830, (1798 – 1863).

⁴⁹ Anishnaabe culture speaks of some of these values as The Seven Grandfather Teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery/Courage, Honesty, Humility and Truth. Teachings personally shared by Lakota elder, Floyd Looks for Buffalo Hand and Cree Elder, Vern Harper speak of the same seven attributes, albeit named and practiced uniquely to and with their own traditions and nations. These teachings are meant to assist one in living (walking) a life in balance. Edward Benton-Benai, "The Seven Grandfathers and the Little Boy", *The Mishomis Book*, (Hayward, WI: Indian Country Communications, Inc. 1988) 64

classical military Greek or Roman styles.

A preeminent painter, representative of the Neoclassical style, was Jacques-Louis David, 1749-1825, who portrayed European modern-day patriots and revolutionaries allegorically through heroic portraiture. This same Neoclassical ideology was often projected onto Indigenous representations in paintings.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ The Neoclassical painting style is defined with an emphasis on formal composition: clear and sharp outlines within a rectilinear frame. In the spirit of classical revival, the subject matter is historically inspired, featuring subjects who are portrayed as polished, solid, and monumental, reminiscent of the classic Greek and Roman sculptural forms.



Figure 6. Jacques-Louis David 1801 oil on canvas 261 cm x 221 cm location Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison

The importance of Indian groups to British colonial interests “was mirrored in

graphic representations of Indian diplomatic delegations.”⁵¹ From the early to mid-18th century, Native peoples became important figures of diplomacy and negotiation for the British during the wars of the Empire. Stephanie Pratt in *American Indians in British Art-1700-1840* “traces the emergence of a new Indian persona whose presence signifies a different image than the generic ‘Indian’ associated with Theodore de Bry’s *Historic America 1590-1634*, a publication which became an essential source for images of American Indians, within the allegorical tradition.”⁵²

A striking example of this representation was the depiction of the ‘Four Indian Kings’ who visited Queen Anne’s court in London in 1710 where “the visual language of the empire attempts to bind living peoples into a structure of representation confirmable to British expectations.”⁵³ Eric Hinderaker in his book, *The Four Kings* has argued that their visit to Queen Anne’s court in London in 1710” established ‘a new visual and verbal language of empire.’⁵⁴

Here were tribal emissaries, active within the world of lived experience and subject to the pressures of diplomatic and military development. Yet, as we shall see, their political status was self-contained within the wider references inherited from the allegorical or generic traditions of representation.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Stephanie Pratt, Chapter Two – “Warfare, Diplomacy, and Visual Representation 1700-1760”, *American Indians in British Art 1700- 1840*. 30

⁵² Stephanie Pratt, *American Indians in British Art 1700- 1840*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2005) Introduction, 14

⁵³ Pratt, Footnote 10 on page 162 Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskin: A History of Indian Delegates in Washington City*, (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989) 13. Eric Hinderaker, “*The Four Kings*” and the *Imaginative Construction of the First British Empire*,” 3rd series, 53, no3 (July 1996) 488.

⁵⁴ Stephanie Pratt, *American Indians in British Art 1700- 1840*, 14

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 30

Not since initial contact of the Americas in the late 1500's were American Indians seen to be of a political stature that warranted court protocols extended to other foreign dignitaries, albeit still within the containment of the Western gaze.

Pratt argues '[a]ll of Verelst's Indian Kings are placed in the standard portrait poses conventionally used for depiction of the landed elite in the era; as high-ranking figures, they are shown standing in front of their domains, elegantly dressed, armed and accoutred.'⁵⁶ The following are two portraits of the Four Indian Kings: Mohawk leader, Tee Yee Ho Ga Row, Emperor of the Six Nations and Sa Ga Yeath Qua Pieth Tow, King of the Maquas are Pratt's comparison of the two leaders.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid. 37



Figure 7. Tee Yee Ho Ga Row Emperor of the Six Nations, a 1710 oil painting by John Verelst, Library Archives Canada, C-092415

As seen in Figure 7, Tee Yee Ho Ga Row, Emperor of the Six Nations very much embodies an acceptable presentation of the “new visual and verbal language of empire.”⁵⁸ Including the Wampum Belt which acts as a signifier of his diplomatic status. His black dress is reminiscent of the English manner:

⁵⁸ Pratt, Footnote 10 on page 162 Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskin: A History of Indian Delegates in Washington City*, (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989) 39

(polished) buckled shoes, black leggings and an overall sense of nobility in his deportment is conveyed.



Figure 8. Sa Ga Yeath Qua Pieth Tow
King of the Maquas, a 1710 oil painting by John Verelst,
Library Archives Canada C-092419s

In contrast, Sa Ga Yeath Qua Pieth Tow, King of the Maquas (Figure 8) is, despite the conventions of Neoclassical painting, still recognizable as inherently Indigenous. Engaged with his musket, he is represented wearing moccasins, his body and face tattooed and bearing articles such as a gun powder horn along with personal decorative embellishments which are distinctly identifiable as

Indigenous. His sense of presence assertively communicates a sense of autonomy distinct from the devices used by the colonial gaze (and interests) to divest him of his identity and to subjugate his value independent of colonial investment. Indicative of the Renaissance and the post-Renaissance tradition, each are poised to evoke the idealized classical Greek and Roman sculptural forms, including how their bodies are draped in cloth. Their cloth mantles, each a scarlet-in-grain cloth, edged with gold, allegorically acts as a paternalistic, colonial embrace that “attempts to bind living peoples into a structure of representation confirmable to British expectations”.⁵⁹ Rendering Indigenous leaders through this western lens had the intent of, as Pratt suggests, “making them more susceptible to European values.”⁶⁰ Thereby, in this subtle yet profound restructuring of the Indigenous, by how they were to be viewed and received by colonial courts and culture, the British maintained the visibility of their cultural dominance. As Pratt puts it, “these ‘indians’ were allies and trade partners but represented by the British according to British values”.⁶¹

Put simply, European artistic depictions of Indigenous leaders are often the only visual records in existence and that while such images constitute a record of sort, they raise questions about veracity and intent.

Interpretive Process:

⁵⁹ Pratt, Footnote 10 on page 162 Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskin: A History of Indian Delegates in Washington City*, (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989) 13.

⁶⁰ Pratt, 39

⁶¹ Ibid 39

My conceptual and material strategies are represented in my artistic compositions. I first start by creating a drawing, copy it onto an acetate sheet and then project the image onto a canvas. In my incorporation of the original Lossing drawing in this particular painting, I intuitively chose to flip the acetate, thus creating a mirrored image of the drawing. This mirroring of the adapted Lossing image metaphorically serves as an initial act of reclaiming an Indigenous perspective and voice. By choosing a reciprocal/reverse position, reflecting back the original distortions and projections of the Western colonial view in relation to First Nation's peoples, an intervention is initiated toward reclaiming our own history. The painting will be exhibited with a mirror, allowing the viewer to reflect upon, not only the perspective of the original sketch done by LeDru in 1808, adapted by Lossing, but a reflection of the precedence of colonial representations of Indigenous persons through the Western gaze to establish a visible counterpoint.

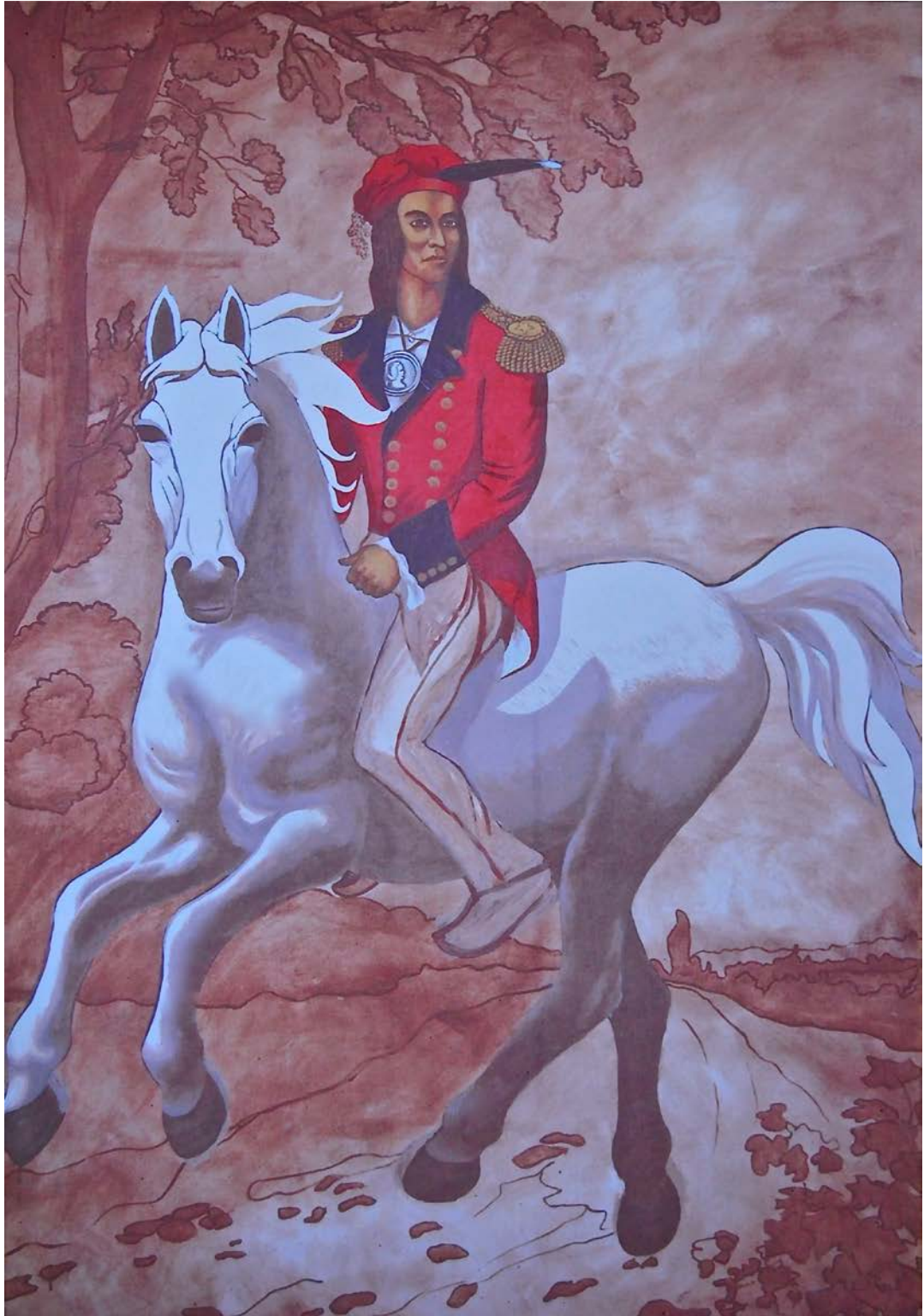


Figure 9. *White Horse*, acrylic on canvas, 153cm x 228cm, 2011

Painting One: *White Horse*

The deconstruction ‘adaptation’, and transformation of this particular painting underscores an essential investigative and iterative process necessary for the decolonization of our collective selves, Native and non-Native alike. Drawing on my awareness of my own internalized colonization in the development and evolution of this thesis and poster project, an opening, a new ground was provided on which the process of demythologizing history, externally imposed upon us began to find direction. I had an intuitive sense that “something was not right” about the painting, *White Horse*. The work was not reflecting imagery appropriate to my intent and I made the decision to stop working on this particular piece.



Figure 10. Painting Two: *Tecumseh Foresees His Ominous Future* acrylic on canvas 91cm x 122cm, 2012

Subsequently, my first design experiment originated with a second smaller painting titled *Tecumseh Foresees His Ominous Future*. In order to ensure my goal of creating a transformative image, for my work as an educator and activist, I transferred this painting into a poster.⁶² I used a contemporary graphic style, including colours specifically oriented to the printing process, when I began painting this second image of Tecumseh. Although I remained committed to the technique of painting, the process of drafting the initial image onto the canvas did evolve. I began with a preparatory line drawing incorporating elemental graphic design concepts such as figure, foreground, background, and scale.⁶³

I strategically changed the angle of Tecumseh's portrait, for the purpose of changing the colonial portrait into one fashioned to reflect a dynamic, engaged Indigenous presence. I began by creating a side view profile of Tecumseh in pencil. This was again a conscious challenge to the Neo-classical representational style of Lossing's etching, deliberately reconstructing the passive gaze of the subject into one that is active. Tecumseh moves from a reflective pose of being viewed as the 'Other', to a portrayal as a formidable figure in the foreground looking into the future and understanding his responsibility to his alliance of fifty nations.⁶⁴

⁶² A poster is typically printed on paper printed paper announcement that is displayed publically and functions as a toll for the promotion of a product, an event, or a sentiment or cause through and/or text. A poster's principal task is to be noticed: it must attract attention and influence the passerby.

⁶³ Johanna Drucker, Emily McVarish *Graphic Design History, A Critical Guide*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009), 3.

⁶⁴ Frantz Fanon in "The Fact of Blackness" *Black Skin, White Masks*, (1952) (trans. Charles Lam Markmann) (London: MacGibbon & Kee.1968), 324, describes the moment that he realizes he is the Other: walking down a street in France late 1940's is horrified when a white child cry's out to his mother in fear of him. Here he is, (Fanon) an educated man being dehumanized by a mislead child. 324



Figure 11. Three point perspective of Tecumseh (21.5cm x 61cm, 2011)

Using horizontal lines as a guiding device, the angle of his profile was changed through the techniques of point, line and plane in geometry. This method of creating contours based on a three-point perspective allows for measurements that adjust the image by extending lines as reference points that are precise and accurate.

I then realized that I was trying to incorporate a painting within the graphic style of a poster and that the painting process proved problematic especially when translated into a poster and in relation to the clarity and crispness of imagery I was seeking. The loose flowing brush strokes digitally reproduced from the original painting, combined with the graphic fonts and panels of solid colour included in the design of the poster, set up a stark contrast of dissonance between the two mediums.



Figure 12. Tecumseh Acrylic on canvas
Philip Cote, 2011.

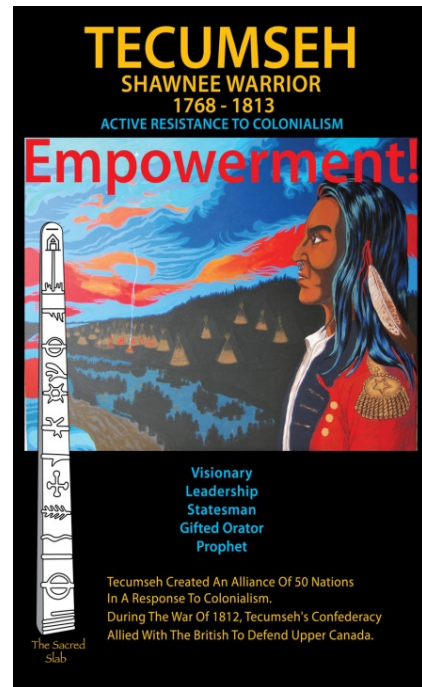


Figure 13. Empowerment, digital poster, 28 x 43 cm, 2011.

Design Experiment #2: Poster Two

It was at this point that I understood further exploration involving an alternative process/technique was required to create the graphic visual effect I was striving to achieve. Drafting Tecumseh's portrait in pen, as opposed to using the painted image, was an exploratory process to determine if the obstacle to creating the desired visual balance in the poster was in fact the painted image. As a second experiment, I believed this portrait, first drafted in pen, then placed in Illustrator, a graphic arts computer software program, would visually form the

harmonious relationship I sought.



Figure 14. Tecumseh digital drawing Philip Cote 2002 adapted from Lossing and Barritt's engraving circa 1848.



Figure 15. Original engraving Lossing and Barritt, *The pictorial Field the War of 1812*, p.s 283 adapted from Le Dru Drawing of 1808. Collection of the Lossing family

I continued incorporating the effects rendered by the tools found in the Illustrator software program, such as layering composite elements to explore potential visual accents, into my personal vocabulary of painting and design.



Figure 16. *Resistance - Tecumseh Unifying The Nations*, digital poster (61cm x 91.5cm), 2012

My visual artistic choices are never distinct from the integrated experience of living my culture. In consequence, I have consistently incorporated ceremonial and traditional understandings into my work. Hence, the decision to include the

illustration of Tecumseh's Sacred Slab into the visual mosaic contained in Poster Two.⁶⁵

As much as this specific illustration is an essential graphic and design element, it's inclusion signifies a representation of Indigenous prophecy and worldview.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ The Sacred Slab was a mnemonic device designed by Tecumseh, to deliver his message of when all the nations in the alliance needed to come together to form a united front against American expansionist policies into Indian Country. On page 507 of Allan W. Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, is an illustration describing what all the carved symbols represent. Appendix 3 worldview

⁶⁶ For the purposes of this thesis, my intention is to be aware of the history of graphic design as a means to convey graphically the reclamation of positive Indigenous representation. See Stephen J. Eskilson's, *Graphic Design, A New History*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007) 4



Figure 17. Cedar slab, (35.5cm x 2.5cm), 1810,
collected by Milford G. Chandler ⁶⁷

⁶⁷ David W. Penny, *Art of the American Indian Frontier*, (Vancouver, Toronto: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1992), 256

Tecumseh's Resistance, Unifying the Nations – Poster Two, continues to reference Lossing's image of Tecumseh in a Brigadier General's jacket with a distinction in both the choice and manipulation of its background image, Franz Kruger's Neoclassical painting of Alexander the First (1832). To frame the horizontal edges of the poster, a 15.25 cm solid band of scarlet red was placed at the top and a 15.25 cm dark smoky blue border was placed at the bottom. Each color allegorically references the military colours of the British and American uniforms of the day. Using the Illustrator software program, it quickly became clear that this same methodology of placing graphic elements and text on top of opaque bands of colour created a similar visual dissonance as in the first poster. This led me to switch from Illustrator and work with Photoshop's transparency tools, first on the red and blue colour field sections.⁶⁸ This process of instantaneous layering through computer technology, as opposed to more time consuming painting techniques, provided for different levels of depth creation throughout the design of the poster and yielded more positive and desired effects. This is particularly evident in three areas: the upper band of red where the background tree is transparently revealed to be present, the blue band at the bottom which conveys a sense of opacity while still creating a mono layer of the background image and finally, the mnemonic symbols of Tecumseh's 'sacred slab', rendered in outline form.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ I used the Layers program in Photoshop to stack the images one on top of the other and alter the image to any desired colour and opacity' specifically by using the "Opacity" and "Overlay" Tools under the "Layers" menu.

⁶⁹ I choose illustrator as it was the best tool to use for drafting out the Shawnee Sacred Slab and then created a vector file that could be used in a number of ways for printing.

In painting, colour is a fundamental design element of composition. Choosing an analogous colour palette of yellow, orange and red, highlighted with a complementary colour of blue, established a sense of cohesiveness and balance throughout the design of all four posters in the series. For example, the use of the various shades of yellow, interspersed within design elements chosen symbolically to convey Indigenous meaning, helps the viewer to focus on the visage of Tecumseh. At the top of the poster, a warm yellow defines the visual symbol of a comet while simultaneously outlining the panther image, a reference to Tecumseh's spirit name "Panther Passing Across".⁷⁰ This same yellow is used to carry the viewer's eye to the left side of the poster, highlighting the outlines of the symbols of the 'sacred slab'. Continuing to the bottom, a different hue of yellow with a hint of red defines the text, *Tecumseh Unifying the Nations* referencing his alliance of Fifty Indigenous Nations. Moving up the right hand side of the poster, a faint tonal yellow acts as a reflection of sunlight hitting the trunk of the tree in the background and leading the eye to the text *War of 1812* above Tecumseh's head. Captured in the epaulets of his jacket, as well as his shirt and finally on the band on his hat, these various hues and tones of yellow/orange form a barely perceptible spiral structure that leads to Tecumseh's face as the focal point of the poster. In order to ensure a successful outcome for the third and fourth posters, further experimentation and research into both the LeDru image and the history of graphic and poster design was required.

⁷⁰ Allen W. Eckert, *A Sorrow In Our Heart* (New York: Konecky and Konecky, 1992), 234

Experiment #4: Poster Three - *Resistance, Alliance of Fifty Nations*

The third poster, *Resistance, Alliance of Fifty Nations*, maintains a visual and graphic consistency that is carried throughout the series through the use of colour, font, composition, and preparatory pen and ink drawing but also represents a benchmark in my research and resulting creative/critical exploration of Tecumseh's image. *Resistance, Alliance of Fifty Nations* is the first image in the series portraying Tecumseh in his traditional buckskin shirt.

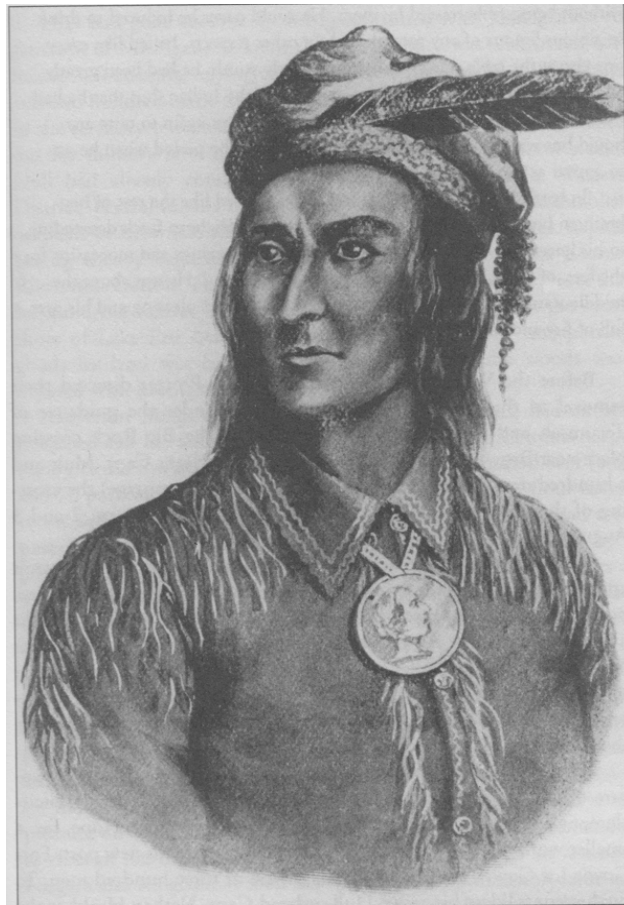


Figure 18: Original LeDru pencil sketch, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; C-319, 1886

In fact, during the course of my research, I was able to verify that the sketch with Tecumseh in a buckskin shirt was done by LeDru. Discovered during my research in the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, this portrait has gained official recognition and is “considered the most reliable portrait of Tecumseh...”⁸²

Le Dru’s initial drawing depicted Tecumseh dressed in a buckskin fringed shirt, wearing a King George III Medal, strung with wampum beads, a visual juxtaposition of British and Shawnee material culture. His hat was constructed from the hide of a bird and the hat’s brim was stitched with porcupine quills.⁷¹

Additional research led to the McCord Museum in Montreal, Quebec. On March 19, 2014, curator Guislaine Lemay allowed me to view what she thought was a portrait of Pontiac.⁷² I was familiar with the image and informed Lemay that it was in fact LeDru’s portrait of Tenskwatawa, Tecumseh’s brother, transformed into an etching by Lossing. Continuing my research on the Internet, I discovered that this same image was also erroneously attributed to another Indigenous leader Mi’kmaq, Jean Baptist Cope.⁷³

The main reason for my visit to Montreal was to examine a Tecumseh headdress that was in the collection of the McCord Museum. I wished to include

⁷¹ Wampum beads are made of white shell beads channeled whelk and the purple quahog. For more information see Lois Sherr Dubin, *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment: From Prehistory to the Present*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 170-171.

⁷² Pontiac, known only in this way, was an Odawa War Chief (1720-1769). He is noted as having created an alliance before Tecumseh. Pontiac’s rebellion – 1763 – is named after a confrontation he had with British colonial forces known as the French and Indian Wars. There is no acknowledged portrait of Pontiac.

⁷³ Jean Baptiste Cope (1698- 1758) Mi’kmaq leader who campaigned to make the first peace and friendship treaty with the British in 1752.

an image of it on my third poster. The headdress is said to have been worn by Tecumseh in battle.

Ms. Lemay stated it was acquired from the family of Thomas Verchère's de Boucherville, who was a close acquaintance of Tecumseh and participated in a number of battles before the war of 1812, a co-compatriot in the defense of Canada.⁷⁴ Canadian militia officer Thomas Vercheres de Boucherville described in his published chronicles the Shawnee chief at a dinner in 1813:

Tecumseh was seated at my left with his pistols on either side of his plate and his big hunting knife in front of him. He wore a red cloak, trousers of deerskin, and a printed calico shirt, the whole outfit a present of the English. His bearing was irreproachable for a man of the woods as he was, much better than some so-called gentlemen.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Milo Milton Quaife, *War on the Detroit: the chronicles of Thomas Verchères de Boucherville and The capitulation, by an Ohio Volunteer*, (Chicago The Lake Press R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. 1940) 141. The headdress was acquired by the McCord museum in 1889. M182

⁷⁵ Sudgen, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 98. Sudgen states this information came from the account of D. Jones two visits, find under Chief Notes in the appendix. 425.



Figure 19. Tecumseh's Headdress, deer head with antlers, eagle feathers, owl feathers, hide, porcupine quillwork. (68 cm x 38 cm). circa 1810. Collection of the McCord Museum. M182 1889

The headdress was structured as a cap with small deer antlers on top and large eagle and owl feathers attached around the brim embellished with porcupine quillwork. Numerous fifteen inch long eagle and owl feathers were added around the rim and on top of the deer head portion of the structure.



Figure 20. Detail image of serrated edges of the eagle feathers. Collection of the McCord Museum. M182 1889

I believe the top part of the deer's skull was kept intact to maintain the horns in a natural upright position. The horns were covered with red ochre. The colour red symbolically represents 'protection' in First Nations Shawnee culture.



Figure 21. Detail of the cap structure of the headdress. The whole hide from a deer's head including ears and antlers are visible. The lower section shows how the eagle feathers are tied to the overall structure. There are additional rows above the rim in which owl feathers are hung. Collection of the McCord Museum. M182 1889

Historian Carl Waldman, in *Biographical Dictionary of American Indian History to 1900*, states,

The chief of the Shawnee was the supreme leader and ultimate decision maker. As a symbol of his authority, he wore a specific outfit that distinguished him within the community. He wore a distinct headdress that was comprised of various elements. These included; animal skin particularly that of a deer with antlers, red ochre, eagle feathers and porcupine quills.⁷⁶

Although the red pigment was still very much in evidence around the

⁷⁶ Waldman, Carl. *Biographical Dictionary of American Indian History to 1900*. (New York: Checkmark, 2001), 79.

horns and around the eyes of the deer skull, there were signs of wear on the headdress. Almost all the fur was missing from the deer hide. It is noteworthy that the maker chose to put rings made of hemp and imbedded with eagle feathers around the base of the deer horns.⁷⁷



Figure 22. Detail showing the missing hair on the deer hide cap. Observe the hemp woven rings at the base of the antlers and the points at which decorated eagle feathers may have been hung. Collection of the McCord Museum. 1889, M182

Places on the deer head also showed signs of anchors for additional

⁷⁷ These soft, short, fine feathers are located just behind and below the eye. Called auriculars they are oriented to help direct sound toward the ear for more acute hearing and for protection. <http://birding.about.com/od/Bird-Glossary-A-B/g/Auriculars.htm>

ornamentation. Decorated with red and white porcupines quills, the headband also included a two pronged horn design with a sunburst medallion atop it, the traditional imagery representing the Mishipishu clan.



Figure 23. Detail of front section of headdress. Collection of the McCord Museum. 1889, M182

This two-pronged image and the patterning of the quill work are symbols used to represent the Mishipishu, the underwater panther.⁷⁸ This powerful spirit being has been officially documented as Tecumseh's clan.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Barnes, Michael. "Aboriginal Artifacts". Final Report - 1997 Archaeological Excavations La Vase Heritage Project, City of North Bay, Ontario. <http://www.city.north-bay.on.ca/living/history/lavase/97frs611.htm>. Retrieved 2013-10-05. Thor Conway, "Spirits in Stone", Sault Ste. Marie, ON: Heritage Discoveries, 2010. Johann Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860). Grace Rajnovich, Seymour, personal communication chapter four 98, ftnt 97 (1994: 98). The Mishepishu, and underwater panther is depicted as having a very long prehensile tail made of copper. Details of this creature vary from Indigenous community to Indigenous community, but in many stories, underwater panthers are described as furry with either horns or deer antlers and a sharp saw-toothed back.

⁷⁹ Sudgen, *Tecumseh a Life*, 14.

This being is depicted on a cliff wall in Agawa Canyon in Lake Superior National Park in northern Ontario. I also toured the museum's Indigenous Archives and Metals Department. This section contained gorgets, nose rings, hairpins, armbands as well as two King George III medals.⁸⁰



Figure 24. King George III Medal, silver, wampum beads, (7.8 cm in circumference), circa 1776 McCord Museum Ottawa, Canada. M5932

In descriptions and depictions of Tecumseh, he is said to have had “ three small crowns suspended from the lower cartilage of his aquiline nose”.⁸¹

These nose rings may have been stamped out of small silver coins/crowns. Lemay, pointed out that there were Indigenous silversmiths of that era who were

⁸⁰ Ibid, 300. Sudgen describes an account from Captain John B. Glegg, (General Brock's Aide) of Tecumseh wearing a King George the III medal. The image above an example of a King George the II medal strung with wampum beads. Silver gorgets, nose rings, hairpins, armbands were items traded during the Fur Trade 1760-1821.

⁸¹ Ferdinand Brock Tupper Esq., *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock*, (K, B, London Simkin, Marshall & Co. 1847), 243. Captain John B. Glegg, General Brock's aide witnessed the meeting between Brock and Tecumseh August 14th , 1812 and gives this detailed description of Tecumseh appearance.

trained by French silversmiths to create objects like silver beaver pendants, armbands and gorgets.⁸² The training of Indigenous silversmiths by the French illustrates the importance of trade and gift giving in the earlier trade and alliance agreements between the Indigenous populations, illustrating the willingness of Indigenous peoples to incorporate new ideas and traditions.⁸³



Figure 25. Nose rings made from silver 1.5 cm 1780-1810 Collection of the McCord Museum. M1900.2

⁸² The origin of Gorgets can be traced back to the Renaissance period when the crescent-shaped plates were fitted to the helmets of warriors to protect their throats. They became obsolete with the introduction of firearms but were then introduced to North America as protection against native arrows. That use declined over time but they became symbolic as a badge of military rank signifying strength and power. Their cultural significance evolved as they began to be traded as silver ornaments by Europeans and First Nations peoples, particularly in eastern and central Canada as well as the U.S.A. The early source of silver for the creation of these ornaments were British, French and Spanish coins and they were produced in North America and Europe by silversmiths of European origin from 1760 to 1821. By the mid 1800's they began to be produced in New England, Quebec and Montreal. Subsequently, silver became adopted by First Nations peoples as a sign of rank. Ornaments derived from this practice continue to this day to be produced by native silversmiths in central Canada and the U.S.A. UBC Museum of Anthropology <http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/collection-online/search?keywords=French+Quebec+Silver&row=35> Assessed March 24th, 2015

⁸³ Arthur C. Parker, *The Origin of Iroquois Silversmithing*, (American Anthropologist "New Series", Vol. 12 July-September, 1910), 350. N. Jaye Fredrickson. *The Covenant Chain: Indian Ceremonial and Trade Silver*, (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1980) 54.

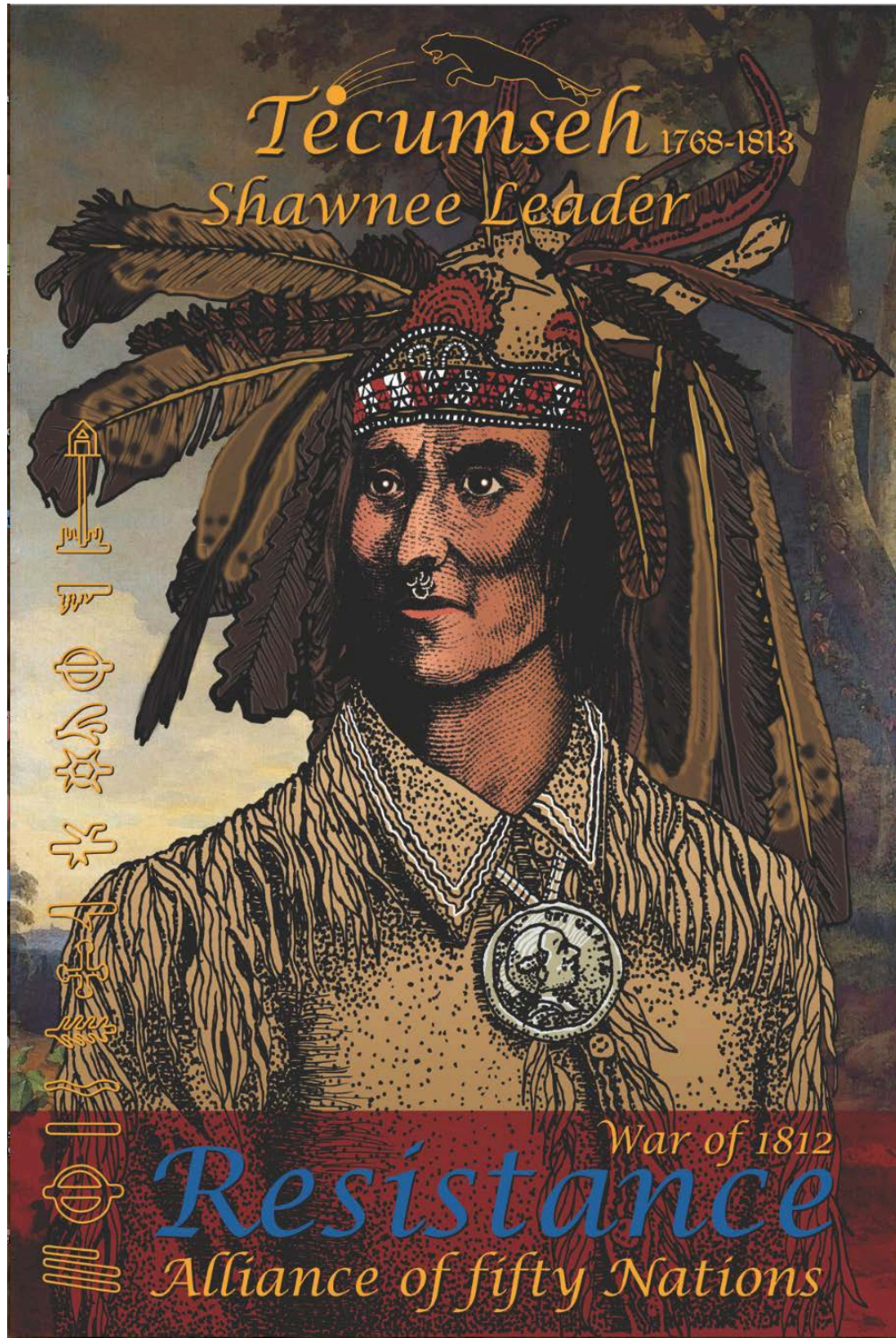


Figure 26. *Resistance, Alliance of Fifty Nations* 61cm x 91.5cm, 2013

The *Resistance, Alliance of Fifty Nations* poster was designed with the intention of creating a more concise representation of Tecumseh. The red leggings and blue breach cloth denote the traditional Indigenous regalia worn in battle and references his stature in history as a Shawnee leader on the battlefield as well as his preeminence in the eyes of his allies. The image of the headdress, discovered at the McCord Museum, along with the buckskin jacket and King George III medal foreground signature elements of Tecumseh's identity. The poster's contextual references include the Franz Kruger backdrop along with images of petroglyphs and the captions, *War of 1812* and *Resistance and Alliance of Fifty Nations*. Tecumseh's name, prominently displayed at the top of the poster with his date of birth and death establish his chronological place in history.

The wide-ranging reach of research undertaken for this thesis informed the design and content of the poster. The information learned about Shawnee culture, history and the role of the colonial archive proved critical to constructing an image that accurately embodies Tecumseh from an Indigenous perspective.

Chapter Three: The Goals of a New Indigenous Visual Language

This thesis project, in addition to my artistic practice, reflects my commitment to community activism and is about more than creating an image of a leader, it is about inviting people – citizens of all kinds – to think about history. As Tecumseh explained,

These lands are ours, and no one has the right to remove us, because we were the first land owners; the Great Spirit above has appointed this place for us on which to light fires, and here we will remain. As to the boundaries, the Great Spirit above knows no boundaries, nor will his red people know any ...
If my great father, the President of the Seventeen Fires, has anything more to say to me, he must send a man of note as his messenger ...⁸⁴

The city of Toronto is located on the territory of Indigenous peoples known as the Mississauga.⁸⁵ Formerly, this landscape of forests, ancient trails and open spaces were created by controlled burning to create community living spaces.⁸⁶ Aside from marking territory, food caches and trails in the forest, these places, these pathways, were marked by portraits of warriors etched into living trees.⁸⁷ A parallel can be drawn between this ancient Indigenous practice of etching into living trees and the contemporary practice of postering, a parallel that provided impetus for the creation and distribution of my poster series which will continue such ancient Indigenous practices of making signs in the world. My posters are a contemporary version of communication/communicating cultural art strategies.

⁸⁴ Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh And His Brother the Prophet With A Historical Sketch Of The Shawanoe Indians* (Cincinnati: E. Morgan & Company, 1841) 92-93

⁸⁵ Reverend Peter Jones, chief of the Mississauga in 1855 states the Mississauga people their arrival into the Toronto area in the 1695 -1820s. *History of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation*. (New Credit, Mississaugas of New Credit, 2004), 9.

⁸⁶ Rodney Bobiwash, *History of Toronto*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 1.

⁸⁷ Blackstock, Michael, *Faces in the Forest*, 174.

From a western historical perspective, the poster as a communication tool has been around for about 2,000 years.⁸⁸ As recorded since Roman times, posters have been used as a political device to influence voters.⁸⁹ The Modern poster that brings together text and image can be traced back to the 1600s.⁹⁰ Since then, posters have, through advances in production technologies, enabled new ideas and political and cultural ideologies to be widely disseminated. “Yet, over the years the basic cardinal rules of poster design, simplicity, balance, workmanship, and surprise have remained”.⁹¹ Replacing the public town criers, Therese Heyman states that posters "give an effective voice to culture".⁹²

In the 1890's, posters gained prominence through their use to advertise and herald plays. Many important artists of the time, including Toulouse Lautrec, Maxfield Parrish, and Aubrey Beardsley, created posters. This phenomenon led publishers of the time to offer special editions for collectors. “No longer considered “ephemera”, to be attached to walls and discarded, the poster became art work to collect Contemporary computer software such as Photoshop and Illustrator, enabled a fluid exploration of technical opportunities in the design process of my series of Tecumseh posters. The ability to reproduce multiples was vital to the project, ensuring that both visibility and impact would reach as large an audience as possible. For the purposes of this paper, this method of distribution and the display of these posters will be referred to as street art.

⁸⁸ Horn, G. F., *Posters: Designing, Making, Producing*, (Worcester, Mass.: Davis Publications, 1965), 1.

⁸⁹ Weill, Alain, *The Poster: a worldwide survey and history*, (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1985), 24.

⁹⁰ Cooper, A. *Making a Poster*, (London, England: Edmond Evans, Ltd., 1949) 189.

⁹¹ Biegdersen, J. I., *The Best Posters of 1946*, (N.Y.: Greenberg Publishers, 1947), 35.

⁹² Rossi, A. *Posters*, (London, England: Hamlin Publishing Group, Ltd., 1966), 10. Heyman, T. T., *Posters American Style*, (N.Y.: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1998), 5.

The distribution of these posters into the public domain as street art is recognized as an artistic practice as well as a medium often used by artists committed to social justice issues.⁹³

Whether such contemporary contexts of exhibition/distribution are officially or unofficially sanctioned as art, they create a dialogue that is responded to by either those who support and validate the social messages or by those who consider these interjections into public spaces as unwanted and outright vandalism. Regardless of responses, inserting these posters into publically shared spaces aesthetically activates and culturally animates a space.

⁹³ Allan Schwartzman, *Street Art*, (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 5. Schwartzman coined the term ‘Street Art’ in his 1985 publication of the same name. “Street art communicates with everyday people about socially relevant themes, “questioning the existing environment with its own language. Lyman Chaffe in his book *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries* talks about communication systems and the ways information is transmitted.

Conclusion: “Native American history is also the history of political Activism”.⁹⁴

My series of Tecumseh posters exemplify the fact of Indigenous agency and engagement in the making of social life by similarly speaking directly to the new history of Indigenous voices that is being told. These aspects of my commitment to social, cultural and artistic representation, I believe, find strong resonance at street level as well as in traditional academic environments.

Beyond traditional postering opportunities available on public ‘billboard’ style sites, the posters will be distributed to Indigenous community groups, who will be encouraged to participate in furthering appropriate public display opportunities.

Immediate sites will include community organizations that serve homeless men and women such as the Meeting Place located at the corner of Queen Street West and Bathurst Street in Toronto and Allen Gardens a cultural landmark in Toronto where Indigenous people often gather. People from all walks of life who pass by these locations on their way to work, school, to shop or to dine will be afforded the opportunity to view the posters.

The performative action of postering will be captured through photography and the contribution of comments by viewers. A QR code linked to a project web site will enable viewers to access the posted commentary.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Frederick E. Hoxie, *This Indian Country, American Indian Activists and the Place They Made*, (New York: The Penquin Press, 2012) Introduction 4.

⁹⁵ QR codes are a storage device consisting of black square dots arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by a camera.

In addition, educational institutions, public spaces such as art galleries and cultural venues, presentations at public events, outdoor art shows as well as cultural festivals will be considered and approached as sites of presentation for the Tecumseh series of posters in order to maximize community engagement and further the understanding of a post colonial Indigenous visual language.

The rationale for this process is the continuance of my personal educational and community activism initiatives, which embrace a broad variety of points of public accessibility.

My role as an Indigenous community member, recognized as a traditional cultural practitioner and professional artist, has been to share the voices of our Indigenous leaders from the past. This continued intervention reminds native persons and non-Native persons alike that we are always present and actively 'keeping present' the histories of our ancestors.



Figure 27. A candlelight march proceeds along College Street on Friday, Jan. 11, 2013, as part of the Idle No More movement in Toronto. Photo credit (CP24/Cristina Tenaglia)

Thesis Exhibition images April 15th – 20th, 2015.



Figure 28. Thesis Exhibition installation view. *Tecumseh White Horse* with mirror and personal Eagle Staff, 2015.



Figure 29. Thesis Exhibition installation view of the series of Tecumseh posters, 2015.



Figure 30. Thesis Exhibition installation view of the poster series. Joseph Brant, Blackhawk, Pontiac, Maquinna, Jean Baptiste Cope, Sahgimah and Russell Means. 2015.



Figure 31. Installation view of photographs of Tecumseh Headdress and the King George III medal. Idle No More photo and black and white drawings of the individual leaders including a family photograph of Russell Means with my sister Jerrilynn Harper.

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