

Heather Shillinglaw

March 20, 2023

Interviewee's home in Edmonton

Interviewer Winston Gereluk

Camera: Judy Lederer

Q: Tell us about your background.

HS: Can I do an introduction in [1:31]?

Q: Please do.

HS: Tansi [Smudge ceremony conducted off-camera]. What I just said to you is “Hello and welcome to my home, my studio space.” I named all the lands and where I came from, which was Daysland, Cooking Lake where I grew up, and now I live in Edmonton. I said all the languages that my ancestors spoke; part of my reconciliation journey is learning those languages very slowly. I'm pretty sure I'll never be a fluent speaker, but I'm making an effort.

Q: Describe the context in which you grew up.

HS: Growing up out by Cooking Lake, we basically learned some of the lessons of the bush from my mother, who is elder Shirley Shillinglaw. She's a member of the Cold Lake First Nations and she's also a residential school survivor. To avoid her from being taken when she grew up, which was around the '60s 'scoop' era, her parents chose not to teach her the languages. That was a choice that they made. They moved around very frequently; so there was a lot of disruption and change in her lifetime. However, the main focus that she maintained is to teach us about the Dene neh-neh, the land.

Q: Was your father an Indigenous person?

HS: My father is not. He's Scottish background, which is the Shillinglaw, and he's also mixed in his own European heritage. I always talk about that because I am essentially Appetogasan but I also refer to the indigeneity where my family is from Cold Lake First Nations. So we have a mixed culture, the Appetogas being Metis. On my grandfather's side they were very much tied to the Metis history, and as part of that ancestral line, relatives were part of the making of Metis Nation of Alberta.

Q: So, you grew up speaking English and learning English customs?

HS: Yes. When I grew up, I basically learned that. The medicines in the plant world, that kind of thing – that's what was handed down to me. When I talk about my indigeneity which I honour, my Nokomis, which is my grandmothers, and thinking about that that's why I make the paintings.

Q: At what point did you come to terms with your Indigenous background and treat it like it was important? Talk about that process.

HS: I was always very prideful on having that indigenating. The fascinating thing about my ancestry is that a lot was hidden; they hid it underneath the carpet. A lot of people were embarrassed about that, and I was always very prideful. I remember my grandfather gave my brother a vest, and it was all beaded. It was probably over 200 years old. I played in the forest,

and there's probably beads in the forest. I would play cowboys and Indians with my friends, a small group of friends, and I'd always say, I'm the Indian because I really am. Of course, I know that's not an appropriate name, but. . .

Throughout, there was a lot of racism as well by just admitting that. I was very dark-skinned and dark toned when I was little. So much so, that I went over to a friend's house (we lived out on an acreage and friends were very far and few between) and one of the kids living in the neighborhood invited me over to her home. We went over to her home and we were playing and her mother called her in and said, "Do not play with her; she's a dirty little Indian." Ever since that, I was very angry and very upset and hurt. I told my mother what had happened and she said, never play with that kid again. I was very quiet and reclusive just because I was in a very small school. I went to Ministik School.

What really saved me is that some of the teachers really saw that I was hurt, because that girl would gang up on me with the other girls. I didn't have a lot of friends. My sister and my brother and family were my good friends. The teachers said, you can stay inside at recess and draw. So I did. Essentially, I saw my mother many nights paint. She would make paintings just to get a little bit of extra income. So that maintained my fascination with art. So, it was a combination; art is what creates a sense of calm for me and always had since I was a child.

Q: Talk about the process of becoming an artist.

HS: It's really funny, because when I was in kindergarten, mom saved this little piece of paper; what do you want to be when you grow up? I wrote down on this little piece of paper: I want to be an artist. Well, I really lived that right through till now. In high school, I attended Salisbury Composite High and I went to the commercial art design figuring that if I'm going to be an artist, I have to make money. Of course, everybody's thinking about that. I went to art college, Alberta College of Art and Design, which is now called Alberta University for the Arts, and I got my Fine Arts degree. That's essentially what I went to school for, although I changed my mind. I didn't want to be a commercial artist and I didn't want to be a graphic artist; I wanted to be a drawing major. So I went into more the fine arts realm. The freedom of art is essentially what I was looking for. Mixed media is my wheelhouse, I like to play with lots of different mediums.

Q: I taught school at Salisbury Composite High School a long time ago.

HS: Oh, that's interesting. What year was that?

Q: 1971, way before your time. What years did you attend Ministik School?

HS: I was born in '71 and when I was in kindergarten, I guess that's when we started out there. So, the mid '70s.

Q: So, there was open racism appearing even then?

HS: There was, even though there was a big group of kids from Hastings Lake and all that sort of stuff. They were the cool kids in my mind. Some of the kids that lived more around the lake that I knew had indigeneity, those were mostly the boys who I played with because they were fun and they didn't judge you for the colour of your skin.

Q: Do you have any comments to make about the kind of art education you received at art college?

HS: The interesting thing with AU Arts, Alberta University for the Arts, when I was going there, at that time, there weren't a lot of people openly admitting that they were Indigenous, that they had Indigenous content and that sort of thing. Through that, I ended up curating exhibitions while I was actually going to art college; I started that kind of building community. We had kind of a little club where we'd meet, and I'd invite any Indigenous folks that were either Metis or from the different reserves, just to create community. Through that whole time, I was very well supported by my professors. They really wanted to encourage my voice; so much so that even though she didn't teach at my university, she taught at the University of Calgary, Joanne Cardinal-Schubert had helped me and kind of fronted and made a connection with me and helped me with some of my projects - the curating, just because I was trying to create community.

Many years ago, I had an exhibition called 'Faces of Family Pride.' Every year that I could, I was involved with The Works Festival and really tried to make that connection of culture in the arts and having that artistic voice and sharing that with others. That's really essentially what I wanted to do. Joanne. She's been long passed, but really instilled a lot of strength and we talked a lot about that. Other projects that I got involved with with in The Works Festival: I did a film screening with the National Film Board. Muriel Stanley Venne kind of 'took me under her wing' and said, "Why don't you make a piece of art about the series of the Daughters of the Country series, to talk about that Metis voice." So, I watched the film series and made a body of art, and we showcased that. It was wonderful, because we showcased the actual film. I talked before and then we did the show. We created this project together with the idea of talking about the filmmaker and what they did and how they brought that forward, telling the story of the Indigenous peoples and how they persevered. Essentially, it's really unique because that's the root of the artwork and where it comes from; that perseverance of their livelihood and their struggles that they had within the land, which is what fascinates. I'm in complete awe of those women and their sacrifices. I feel so honoured that, every day when I smudge, I think about those women.

Q: Is that piece of art still someplace where it's accessible?

HS: Well, you know, I don't know if she still has the piece. I'd given her some of the work. Muriel Stanley Venne has some of the pieces that I created there. I created like a mandala piece; it was a really interesting piece. I don't know if she still has it. It was called 'Land Surveyor.' It was basically the root in the story of surveying the land, looking at its historical significance to the modern day surveyor.

Q: Muriel Stanley Venne is one of the founding members of ALHI, and her interview is on the website.

HS: I'll have to check that out.

Q: I think I took a picture of that mandala, but I could be wrong. She lived in a house north of the stadium, and it was full of art.

HS: Muriel Stanley Venne - I have a wonderful story. This is also related to my artistic journey. There was kind of like a tea gathering; it was a bunch of women that got together. This was, I think, before she did the Esquao awards, quite a bit before Esquao awards. There was a lady named Rose; she was one of the elders. We were drinking and sipping tea and she says, "Hey Rose, why don't we all have some fun here and tap into our Indigenous spirits and talk about the animals and how we're connected to the land?" So she says, okay. She went around the circle and said, you're like the amisk, the beaver. You're like the eagle. Then she came all the way around to me and she says, you're like the apakosis, the mouse - I'm like, the mouse! I was so disappointed because the mouse is not as grand as a wolf or the eagle. Now, I embrace the mouse, because the mouse is so important to my work. Besides, there's the most famous mouse out there, Mickey Mouse, and it's based on art too. So that's another interesting link.

Q: Are there any other people who played significant role in your formation as an artist?

HS: I guess David Garneau was another folk. He actually told me that it was the first time he ever taught; he was a sessional instructor at AU Arts at the time. He often spoke about that, that he was very prideful in his heritage, that he investigated within his own family. The Garneau family is a very recognizable name as well. For our family on my grandfather's side, it's the Norths. So, that's Malcolm North that helped sign that. In my most recent work, the focus and main part of it is actually all about the teachings of my mom. When my mom talked about the medicines and access to the land, we talked about those maternal landscapes. I've been creating a body of work that is current, a body of work called "mâmitonêyihcikan kotâwîw", which means my mind digs in the soil like a turtle.

Q: You were talking about David Garneau, and there was another person you wanted to mention.

HS: I guess, back to David Garneau, even as I got older and older, we still maintain a conversation. He has a wonderful family and I just think it's really exciting the work that he's doing to talk about Metis culture. He's very inspiring, and when we get together at many conferences and throughout the years, there's an exchange of great minds and conversations. So, I have lots of friends that I draw upon these relationships of talking about art and exchanging information, talking about our ancestors and our journeys of the way we create. There's been so many people that I've worked with, met and have been inspired by. Rebecca Belmore is actually another person that I really have great respect for and have had exchanges with. She's another wonderful amazing artist, a performance artist and a very talented painter, and just an all round good person.

Q: What does she bring to art?

HS: Her statement throughout her performance is very powerful. I found that in conversations that we had, where we talked about performance and how much you can carry through your words and your actions in the creation of a story. She says, "You could do it too." So, I've been slowly incorporating that into my openings and that. So, I carry these words of wisdom like they're within these pockets, these constant pockets of knowledge that I carry with me. There's another phenomenal person that I really like and adore, and her name is Marilyn Dumont. My current project; we are doing this project together and I'm utilizing her poetry and stitching them

into the bodies of water like this one here, Lisette's Shining Star. This is unpublished poetry. Some of the other works that I've been using have been inspired works from her other books, 'Little Brown Girl,' 'Tongued Belonging' - and I've forgotten the others off the top of my head. But she is a wonderful writer and poet and very inspirational person. We continue our journey together throughout many years we know each other, and we continue to do projects together. Through her voice and her words and in conversations again, they strengthen the work. They strengthen the work because we're speaking about the women that traveled through these landscapes, through the vistas. Through those stories, they really think about old knowledge, when they were sitting around the teepee with oral histories, conversations, traditional teachings - all of those things carry stories for the person to live in 'miyo wahkotowin,' in a good way.

[Power Outage]

Q: Just before the power went off I said that the title, Faces of Family Pride, intrigued me. Tell me what that was all about.

HS: 'Faces of Family Pride:' I got about 20 different artists from all across Alberta. Joanne had helped me by introducing me to some of these artists. Some of these artists were very well known. Faye Heavyshield is one of them; she's an amazing Blackfoot artist. There are other artists ... my mind's blanking on me. However, it was part of The Works Festival and they were shipping off artwork to the Commonwealth Games. Although my exhibition did not travel, it still maintained a bit part in The Works Festival, bringing all these artists into Edmonton and into an unmarked building and showcasing their work. It was really an interesting way of bringing community and art together. It was really exciting because it was the same year as the International Year of the Family. That's why I call it Faces of Family Pride, thinking about the land. That's kind of the wheelhouse of a lot of the Indigenous artists that I spoke to; location and place and home is what moved with you. They moved across the land to follow the bison; they moved across the land to find their home. Their home was the land itself.

Q: What's involved in making a living as an artist?

HS: As an artist? I've graduated a lot of years ago, so I've been at it for probably 25-plus years. Do I make money at it? When you become an artist the end goal isn't to become insanely rich. Some folks are, but it's really a labour of love. When I make the work and I'm sitting in my studio, it provides a state of calm. I smudge daily to bridge that connection with the land, to do that story. Essentially when I make a piece of art it is very personal, it's a personal connection about my family and my land and the landscapes that my ancestors came from. So it really is an interesting journey.

To make money to survive as an artist, I must say that as a project-based artist, your survival is dependent on the grants that you write and the partnerships that you make to move your artwork forward. That's the essential part of making it a job. The success rate is very difficult; only a few survive. Even from my graduating class there might not be a small handful. I looked at the photograph and there were over 100 people that graduated, and just a small handful of artists that still make and create and that's their job. Some of the artists end up moving into other parts of the field of art. They become professors. I have some colleagues that have gone so far as

becoming artists working for Disney; really successful. I don't know what they make but I'm sure they make a lot more than me for sure. Then, other folks in the movie biz or other folks here that again they're like me and they move from project to project. They're public artists or they do public art. The field of art is very big. Without the practice of artists in our culture it would be a very dull place where we live. I often mention to other folks that think art is not really a job; I'm like, well do you like going to Disney and do you like going to those theme parks? Do you like to watch movies? Do you like to walk around downtown and see beautiful art? Or if you look in history, you go downtown to the museum. All these places talk about the artists themselves who carved out culture.

Q: Tell me about the project in Fort McMurray. I'll be talking to people there tomorrow.

HS: That's 'Sky Spirit Courage of Mother Bear.' I was one of seven national artists who were picked for that park. It's a great honour. Hopefully you'll see some of the folks that were part of that committee and you can say "Heather says hi." With Sky Spirit Courage of Mother Bear, I took the traditional teachings and out of each traditional teaching, I picked courage, mother bear courage. Thinking about when you look up into the sky, there's a teaching that goes with the bear. It's the momma bear chasing after the baby bear, and it's also known as big dipper. So, in the sky we see the momma bear chasing after the baby bear, and it teaches us the teachings of courage.

I won't go into that any further. We have to follow protocol because I don't know who's going to watch it at what time and frame. You can only tell traditional stories after the first snowfall and before the first thunder. So, I won't tell you those teachings, you'll have to go to your elder and wait until the traditional time to get that story. However, when you look up into a smudge bowl, and the smudge bowl was my personal one which we use today. It is an abalone shell, and it has the constellation through the shell. Then it has an eagle feather, which another friend and colleague, Dr. Troy Patenaude, he owns a business called Cross River Wilderness. He had a flight feather of the eagle that I borrowed. F & D Scene Changes had used that feather to copy it to its precision. It's a 12-foot eagle feather and I think it's about, well you'll see, around seven feet. It has the constellation. So, when you walk up to it there's a little step you can walk up and you look in and you see through the sky, so it's 'sky spirit.' So, during the day, it's activated and then at night, at dusk, the shadow that casts you can see the constellation. It's faced in the Dene *neh-neh* way. It's faced north. So, that was very important in the Dene stories, the creation story. It comes from the north. So go check it out.

Q: Just for the camera, where is it located?

HS: It's located in Fort McMurray in the Total Aboriginal Interpretive Trail. It's down by Mckay. I don't know, you'll have to Google it, I'm sorry.

Q: It's on an island.

HS: They call it Mac Island.

Q: What about the work you did on the experience of the forest?

HS: That piece is called ‘Whispers in the Forest.’ Actually, if you wanted some of these images ... I could give them to you and you can use them in your video. Like the stills, sort of thing. It might be more useful for you in that way for the video. So, Whispers in the Forest is a very interesting piece. Another person that I didn’t talk about when you asked me about important connections was Alex Janvier. Alex Janvier, who is part of the Indian Group of Seven, is a member of the Cold Lake First Nations, and he’s actually a relative. He’s my cousin on my grandmother’s side, because she was a Janvier. When we had a conversation, I went up to Cold Lake and picked a bunch of work, because I was contracted to do an exhibition for the Treks Traveling Art Program.

Sorry, this is really a longer explanation, but it kind of tells you the story. I was contracted with the Art Gallery of Alberta, and I curated this exhibition ‘Our Wilderness is Wisdom.’ While I was up there, I picked some work for Alex Janvier to be part of the exhibition. I was quite tickled to have him be a part of the exhibition; it was quite a great honour. He had allowed that exhibition contribution because he’s family, and he said that. So, I was very honoured about that. The piece that he exhibited with the exhibition was sketches that he did out in Primrose. It’s actually called, and forgive me if I say it wrong, *Atui*, which means ‘lots of fish’ in Dene. It’s called Primrose.

There’s a lot of history with Primrose and the land being taken away from the Indigenous peoples. The surrounding reserves, which is the Canoe Lake Reservation and the Heart Lake Reserve, they relied on Primrose for going to the land to harvest big game in the winter. My grandfather remembers hunting up there. During the Dirty Thirties, people may not know that a lot of people starved. But up north, the people knew how to live off the land, and they never starved. They always had full bellies because they knew the land. That land was taken away from them in the ‘50s by our government. They turned it into their own crown land, and they turned it into a bombing range. Through the bombing range, it has mutilated the landscape many times over. Then of course another aspect to not just bombing it, there’s rich oil and gas deposits up there, so that’s another part of industry. Canada has allowed them to go into that landscape and take the oil. When I was visiting with Alex, his daughter, Jill Janvier, showed me pictures of the reserve and the elders going into the land, and she showed me photos of the fish with all their cancers inside, these mutilated fish, of the guts inside the fish. It’s graphic and horrifying that they did that to the land, because that land had saved so many families.

Q: But that’s not what I see in your work, ‘Whispers in the Forest.’

HS: When Jill told me this and shared this I said, “Can you take my daughters?” - because they were little. She said, okay I’ll take the kids and they can stay here. They had puppies, so they had fun playing with her kids. I went off, equipped with my camera and I went with my husband and we drove up to Primrose and the entranceway to the bombing range. I went in there and photographed. I took pictures of the trees, I took pictures of the land, and came across this ‘50s oil can. In the centre of that piece, Whispers in the Forest, you see the connection our Whispers in the Wilderness and Whispers in the Forest – there’s a connection there. The idea behind that also is that I felt like I was reclaiming this lost land. My picture-taking of all these trees, of the ground, and then I turned it into a piece of art. The size of it is 16 feet square by 14 feet high. When you walk through the piece it’s like you’re walking through ghosts, because they are

translucent. I felt that that was really integral to the story itself, to talk about this ghost in the land.

Then I put in that '50s oil can, because that's the date when the land was taken over. Then, surprisingly, about 16 months later from the time that it was created, it actually ended up having one of the largest oil spills in the world at that time. It took almost two years to clean that up. We're talking 1.9 million litres of oil that bubbled up to the surface, because when they fracked, they went so deep that they hit a fault. As far as you can poke it into the land, something's going to happen. It actually sent out an earthquake. We've had problems with earthquakes, and it's all connected. Dene *neh-neh*, that concept: our people, our land! This is a problem. Within my lifetime, we've seen a lot of change. In my work, the more I create the more I'm thinking about the extreme change. It's very disturbing and it's hard to live in that, because it's all about reconciliation, the acute reconciliation journey of my family. It's just sad what's happening to the landscape itself.

Q: Talk a bit more about the personal relationship Indigenous peoples have to the land.

HS: What the elders have taught me is that when we talk about the land, we're talking about the animals, we're talking about the trees, we're talking about the insects and everything that relates; that we're all related. They're all our relatives. This is what is so powerful about the message. Everything is connected. When I say that, I'm not talking about what the movie world has done with the 'blue people.' I'm talking about the old, old teachings that you have to protect what's left. I think – and this is my goal and the reason why – I never thought I was political, but in the act itself of creating and making your work you become very political. Now I'm trying to stand up and protect what's left, through those canvases and what I'm creating. It's important that we share this knowledge so that we can protect what's left. I guess I'm being an activist in my own way. I'm trying to go as both quiet and as loud as I possibly can.

Q: The pathway to truth and reconciliation is not just a matter of finding some compensation, it's much more than that. There's much more that has to happen if we are to get there, no?

HS: It's taken many years for me to address truth and reconciliation. A lot of that has to do with the fact that A, my mother has admitted that she has been a residential school survivor. Through the recent stories of finding the babies that are being uncovered and through a group that I've been involved with, which is the Wahkotowin Society of Cancer and Residential School Survivors, through those women and their stories my mother started to have memories. They're not pretty, none of those stories are pretty. The realization of that is that these women and what they held on to, it's sad. It's a difficult road to journey. It makes a lot of sense in my lifetime seeing my mother's own struggles and questions that were not answered.

As an artist, I can resolve some of that hurt and pain within my own art. But others can't. It's a difficult road that we all have to travel together. When you talk about the land itself, this is within our own lifetime that we have to conserve it. We're already having so many problems. They're killing off trees, they're killing off our marshland. With the amount of marshland and how much they can actually affect the ozone layer, they can help filter out all the bad air. We're just killing it off. At what sacrifice do we have for the loss of digging into our land through

colonization to what is now? There's a huge journey with the red lines that you see in my work that talk a lot about that. Those are bloodlines, those are maternal sources of energy within the landscapes. There's loss, there's pride, there's culture itself all hidden within the work.

Q: I want to focus the camera on the art while you repeat that. [Camera on art during interview]

HS: In the work here, these here are what I refer to as bloodlines, but they're actually old Indian trails. Those are trails that my ancestors traveled through for many generations. I pick specific landscapes that our ancestors lived in and traveled through as they journeyed from place to place. The women in my family were known as medicine women. They traveled these trails, they knew multiple languages, and they were actually very interesting because they also became translators for Hudson Bay. I worked with a wonderful lady named Ruth McConnell. She's a former ethnographer with the Royal Alberta Museum. As part of that, we examined many forms of archival research through the oral teachings and the oral conversations with my mother all the way to examining old maps.

The resolve is this. So that's the old Indian trails. [pointing to trails] I felt powerful to use red because, when I was a kid, my favourite colour was Indian red; so that's the connection. This piece itself also talks about the land and the reconciliation within the land in that this is Amiskwaciy, so this land here is the Beaver Hill. The white that we see in the land is also a ghost. This is a body of water which is the Beaver Hill Lake. It's being changed because it's trying to recover, but it was a very large footprint for lots of birds. That disruption has moved the birds around to other ponds and lakes, but it's turned them toxic and there's lots of reasons for that as well. The poetry in these landscapes is Marilyn Dumont's poetry. They serve as a cue, and that's an interesting aspect of the work. She's also done other work, if you can videotape this one here. These are all part of a series of work. They showed previously as Miyotamon Nananis, which means it is a good road.

This one here [pointing to another art piece] Jill, who is the curator at the Alberta Craft Council that showed it first and nominated this piece for the Eldon & Anne Foote Award, I'm very honoured about that. I'm long listed; I don't know if I've been accepted. It doesn't matter if I win the award or not. I feel like I've won already just by her nominating it. This is Kistapawataw Sakawiyan [52:08], so this is Cooking Lake. The poem that I have here is called Memory. The poem itself is Marilyn Dumont's poem and I thought it was interesting because the whiteness is the loss of the land. Cooking Lake, the landscape itself, the lake is just past an ankle deep now. The water is disappearing in our lifetime. I used to swim in that lake when I was little, so it's quite sad. The reconciliation journey is like all these x's in here in the land; that's also part of ancestors that settled there and lived there. It was Cooking Lake for the reason that they actually cooked from the lake, because there's actually pitch that's been found in it. We're talking old, old knowledge.

Q: What about this big piece of art behind you? [filming another art piece]

HS: This piece here, this one's called Buffalo Girl. It was a bit of an interesting story. Do we need to move that chair? . . . So this piece here is called Buffalo Girl. I've used this name multiple times. Oh hello Gerald [cat], Gerald's going to say hello. So this piece, I pulled it out

multiple times and reworked it and reworked it. The last time I reworked it, Joanne Cardinal-Schubert came to my home. This was in I believe 2009. She picked a whole bunch of works across Alberta for the collection for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. This piece was picked; however, it's unfortunate there's actually a hole in the piece. Anyway, through this piece, it was a very fun piece to do. The namesake is from Buffalo right here, which Buffalo is the title of the jeans that I once wore; they were Buffalo jeans. So I thought that was kind of funny, the connection. It actually has parts of the jeans.

I have this concept; it's called the MEAM. That means 'Metis Ecological Arts Message.' I start by reclaiming materials and giving them a voice for something else. In that part, the aspect is that there's multi-layers in the piece. It talks about looking to the land, less waste that we have within our land. When the Indigenous peoples lived, they would utilize the entire plant for many different medicines, for uses; anything from birchbark baskets to the pedals themselves that they ate for snacks. The petals have a nice flavour to them. When it goes to rose-hip they make special medicinal teas high in Vitamin C. The whole plant is very useful. The aspect to that part is the Indigenous folks, when they lived in the land back in the day, there was zero waste. They were very good environmentalists. They used only what they needed. That's what I think in a lot of ways we need to get back to, is that way of thinking, to use less and less waste. That essentially is my MEAM, my message; it is to use and take only what we need.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about, particularly in your upcoming exhibition?

HS: Sure. I have a few exhibitions actually, quite a few. I don't have the names of all of them exactly yet. Excuse me. She [cat] was scratching at the art. Bad kitty. This light keeps flickering. . . . [light is adjusted]

So, I have a number of exciting exhibitions that I wanted to share. The one coming up right away is called Mâmitonêyihcikan Kotâwîw, which is part of this body of work, a turtle that I had sewn, a resting turtle. That was based on some teachings that I received with Hazel McKinnet, which is another elder that I didn't speak about, and also another elder, which is Lynne Lush. Anne Cardinal is another elder that I've been working with. So that exhibition is going to be traveling to Halifax and it's at the Centre of Contemporary Craft of Nova Scotia. It's at the Mary E. Black Gallery in May, starts May 11th and shows until July 1st. Then it travels back to Alberta and then in November and part of December it's going to be showcasing at the Art Gallery of St. Albert. I've forgotten those dates but I'm sure you can go to the website to check that out. That's the same exhibition, Mâmitonêyihcikan Kotâwîw. There's going to be lots of fun activities and things to see, so if you're in town check that out.

Q: What's the translation of those words?

HS: Mâmitonêyihcikan kotâwîw means 'my mind digs in the soil like a turtle.' The exhibition is all about Ministik Miskinahk and the teachings my mother had given me on Turtle Island, the making of Turtle Island. Part of that exhibition, there's going to be some exciting things where my mom's going to be doing talks and stuff. There might be some exciting events that the curator is going to work with me. Then I have another exhibition that is happening at the McMullen Gallery at the University of Alberta Hospital. That exhibition is going to be opening in January.

It's going to be up for quite a few months. That one will be Kayasacakosuk, which means 'long ago stars.' But I might change the name, so keep tuned for that.

Q: When does that start?

HS: January. In that body of work, we're going to be turning the gallery into space. It's based off the teachings of the 13 moons, and they're literally the moons and the different days in the months of the year. Then I have 'Whispers in the Forest' showcasing at the Esplanade Gallery. That is part of a group exhibition in March. I've forgotten the name of that; I can forward that information.

Q: Is that in Medicine Hat?

HS: Yes, the Esplanade.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to say in closing?

HS: Sure. Throughout my lifetime I've gotten a lot of help from so many different people. My most recent stay at the Banff Centre for the Arts, we had a wonderful person that sponsored me to do a latent studio visit. I was so honoured and thankful for that. Through this work, I've received some funding from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, The Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Heritage Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts. Through those multiple exhibitions it's been an honour creating the work. I also sell my work at the Alberta Gallery of Art, art rentals and sales. There's a body of work there. The Art Gallery of St. Albert, the art and rental program, there's a bunch of paintings there that you could purchase. Then there's some other works at the Rowles and Company Gallery, which is located in Edmonton as well.

[END]