

PETER

MORIN'S

MUSEUM


PETER MORIN'S MUSEUM

an installation with performances

TEXTS BY
Peter Morin and Karen Duffek

PRESENTED AT
Satellite Gallery, 2011
by the Museum of Anthropology
at the University of British Columbia

the drum has a heartbeat
the song has a heartbeat
I have a heart beat
you have a heart beat
this museum has a
heart beat



This Song is a Museum Peter Morin's Museum and the lyrics of Tahltan Knowing

"I'm interested in how we organize knowledge," says Peter Morin, as he arranges his mother's family photographs on the wall of Satellite Gallery. The earliest photo in the group is a striking portrait of his great-grandmother, Ida Quok, taken by the ethnographer James Teit in 1915. This picture is accompanied by numerous snapshots from more recent decades, showing Peter's aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers, and mother, variously posing with their Elvis and beehive hairdos, or with a trophy mountain sheep, or outside their homes.

*The pictures are the wealth of my family
These pictures help us to trace our connection
to the land.¹*

The photos normally hang in Peter's mother's house in Surrey. Their mix of plastic and wood frames, some adorned with seashells and bits of abalone, could be out of place here. But this urban gallery is also a transforming space in which indigenous Tahltan knowledge is practiced, and in which some of the structures that carry that knowledge—

words, images, songs, cloth, stories, tents—will change and appear or disappear over the two month run of the show. Performance is as much a part of this museum as are the objects it displays.

At first, when *Peter Morin's Museum* opened, the faces in the photos weren't visible. Each image was wrapped in red cloth, like a sacred bundle. Then, over successive days, they were unwrapped, the cloth strips dropped to the floor and left there, pooled like blood. Gallery visitors' access to the family portraits changed through this slow reveal. The process of unwrapping the photos recalls the artist's own awakening to Tahltan ways of knowing the world. Indeed, his ideas about museums and their transformation through indigenous ways of knowing began at summer fish camps in northern British Columbia. There, during visits with friends, relatives, and elders, Peter was offered a gradual understanding of Tahltan history and how knowledge is structured and shared.

*Each family has a curator of Tahltan history
My mom is the curator of these images
stories
history
structure
When it is time
I will become the curator.*

There is another image near the family photos: a projection onto the cedar-plank table of a beaded and embroidered Tahltan knife sheath now in the collection of the Royal British Columbia Museum. Vividly coloured and textured, it appears three-dimensional. But the projected "artifact" slips through our fingers. For Peter, the sheath he videotaped is reminiscent of a beaded belt he was shown one day while having

tea with an elder at Telegraph Creek. Seeing that belt marked a significant beginning for his journey of coming into Tahltan knowledge. *Peter Morin's Museum* is an idea that started at that kitchen table, at this place of connection, where the Stikine and Tahltan Rivers meet.

Peter Morin's Museum is an idea in practice—and how to physically represent the structures that support the idea. When Annie Henryu showed me the beaded belt, she changed my life forever. But knowledge does that. Knowing (ideas in practice) does that. The belt was built by Tahltan ideas from the foundation upward. Wearing the belt is practice. Making the belt is practice. The belt becomes a teacher of Tahltan ideas andways of knowing.

Where objects speak Tahltan

Peter Morin has been grappling with the idea of museums off and on for the past two decades, and at times directly in his work as a visual and performance artist.

The first museum Peter ever visited was the community museum in Smithers, where, he recalls, he felt lost because he saw nothing that represented Aboriginal people's contributions to a shared local history. In 2005 he was invited to create a performance for the Museum of Anthropology (MOA), where the New Forms Festival symposium was taking place. Peter staged his performance, *I grieve too much*, on top of a glassed-in drawer of Tahltan objects. Through cleansing, storytelling, singing, humour, and pouring tea—all of which was mediated through closed-circuit TV for an audience only

metres away—Peter evoked something of his experience of museums: the distancing effect of the glass barrier, the interpretive texts, the removal of the object from the Aboriginal body—close but out of reach. Also at MOA was a component of an exhibition he curated for the Western Front: in *Speaking to the Old Ones* (2009), Peter positioned video monitors, featuring works in Aboriginal languages, face-to-face with totem poles. The poles and videos in conversation became a way of connecting stories of urban experience and history, and of elders and youth, through voices of this land.

These visual, performance, and curatorial projects contribute to a broad history and practice of interventions in and against the Western museum model. Over the past few decades, diverse forms of performance and installation—including such seminal and still-resonant works as *The Artifact Piece* (1987–1990) by James Luna, and *Mining the Museum* (1992) by Fred Wilson—have directly confronted racialized representations and how these are produced and mediated by the museum, playing with institutional structures and cultural subjectivities selectively visible and absent. An important and evolving performance practice by Canadian artists is contributing further to a new discourse in contemporary art. It has among its powerful forces Rebecca Belmore, Dana Claxton, Kent Monkman, and numerous other indigenous artists whose work navigates a colonial history beyond the museum, interrogating established representations and policies affecting Aboriginal peoples in the past and today.¹¹

Even as Peter proposes what an

indigenous-based museum would look like, he resists having his work framed as “intervention.” *Peter Morin’s Museum* is built on the assumption that “museum” is also a Tahltan idea—and that the indigenous concept can be a structure that supports the practice of Tahltan knowledge, whether on the land or in urban, “Western-located” spaces. The artist does not simply dismiss The Museum but sets it firmly—and literally—on the kitchen (camp) table: the place of gathering and knowledge-in-practice.

I am inviting people inside my cultural heart and calling this a museum. So I am changing the word. Tahltan knowledge is supported by structures that are designed to remember the history of Tahltan ideas, train Tahltan people in these ideas, and support the creation of new ideas. Tahltan museums are old. I imagine that the house from the story of how Crow got the sun, moon, and daylight was also a museum—a place where ideas are housed.

Here at Satellite Gallery, a place of potential slippage between museum and gallery and nightclub, some standard elements of institutional display are instantly recognizable: artifacts, display cases, didactics, pictures hung on walls, a reading corner. Yet through Peter’s installation and performance practice, each of these becomes a site of intersection, belying a simple opposition between museum and anti-museum, or a competition between contrasting claims for centrality. Tahltan ways of ordering knowledge mediate our museum experience here, twisting it into something perhaps not so familiar. Articulating with institutional structures are what Peter describes as “objects that speak



*the heartbeat
writes the sacred
the sacred
is remembered*

Tahltnan”: melton cloth, stories, a blackboard, teacups and pine-needle baskets, recordings of the Tahltnan language, stones from the traditional territory. These objects are not only contained *within* the museum, but through the process of their gathering, dreaming, making, using, and even re-location may be understood to be a kind of museum.

Nailed to the entrance wall is *Peter Morin’s Museum Manifesto*. Its declaration of 27 principles and possibilities are as provocative as they are tongue-in-cheek, inviting laughter and remembering, tea drinking and noise, and the freedom for people “to make their own museum.” Principle 8: “There is no urban. There is no reservation. The land is where you are.” Principle 26: “Indigenous knowledge is made every day.”

Inside out

*I turned five button blankets
inside out
to make this space
into an interior space
you are inside
the culture right now.*

Peter Morin’s handwritten label offers visitors a clue to the idea of reversal he subtly evokes: that the gallery space, and all of us in it, are not external to Tahltnan culture, but literally “inside the blanket.”

Suspended from the gallery’s ceiling is a house-shaped tent, sewn of dark wool melton cloth. The fabric is the essential material for ceremonial button blankets worn for generations by the Tahltnan and other coastal First Nations people. These robes, with their appliqued crest motifs highlighted with buttons, proclaim their wearers’ embodiment of clan histories and belonging. They have also become assertive markers of an Aboriginal presence at court cases and disputes over land and resource rights. Here, in the form of a tent, the cloth alone carries these associations.

I think about the blankets as the highest cultural practice. When I wore a blanket for the first time I felt wholeness. When I danced for the first time I felt connected. We need to search out the specific words to articulate the practice.

Inside the blanket is the museum (or the place of transformation). I can’t ask you to wear a blanket or dance beside me in a blanket... or I could, and you might, but you might not. So what if you have no choice but to become as connected as me, to be on a journey like me? What if you are standing inside the culture in a line just like me?

If we can envision ourselves wrapped in this metaphorical blanket, we may look more closely at the ground beneath our feet. During his performance at the opening of *Peter Morin’s Museum*, Peter climbed into the small tent and from there, pushed out on the floor a series of sewn circles of melton cloth, arranging them around the tent’s perimeter (and therefore into the cultural centre). These circles are appliqued with representations of the two Tahltnan clan symbols, the Crow and the Wolf; the shapes of these cutouts resemble continents on a globe. They rest there like maps: a record of Tahltnan lands—portable, moving into the city.

In a later performance, Peter will bring another tent into the gallery: a canvas wall tent of the kind familiar to his relatives who travel their territory in the Stikine River basin.

I imagine the canvas wall tent as the museum. There is food there. You go there to visit relatives. You go there for stories. This tent will have the markings of foot-steps. It is a reminder of our own walking on the land.

Outside in

The Tahltnan Reading Room is in the corner, near the entrance of *Peter Morin’s Museum*. Its library-like setting invites you to sit down and peruse the materials gathered there: published texts, Peter’s own MFA thesis, and books of archival photographs about Tahltnan people and their history. A series of front-and side-view portraits of Peter’s great-grandmother, Ida Quok, appears in one of the volumes of Tahltnan ethnography. Encompassed within these printed texts are accumulated teachings and experiences transferred between generations, practiced through words and other structures of knowing, and recorded in part by visitors from outside.

This part of the museum—the articulation of ideas and philosophies constituting an archive of Tahltnan thought—is also “inside the blanket.” Reminding us of this are a pair of snowshoes and a stretched piece of melton cloth, mounted on the wall.

*The Tahltnan museum moves on the land.
How does the museum move on the land?
In the bodies of the people.*

Amid the books on the reading table is a well-worn Salish basket from Peter’s personal collection; lean close and you will hear words coming from within. These are voices of other ancestors: a recording of the 1971 debate, “On Human Nature: Justice vs. Power,” in which the philosophers Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault consider whether we are the product of external factors or if, in spite of our differences, we have something we could call a common human nature.ⁱⁱⁱ The talking basket invites us to honour and find a shared terrain between fundamentally different ways of knowing and being in the world. It also prompts us to ask, on whose terms may this knowledge be shared?

Moving from the Reading Room further into the museum, we encounter display cases holding an assortment of objects behind glass. Peter enjoys the irony of using this museum apparatus in his Tahltnan space, and the conceptual twist he proposes through its use. By looking into the case, he says, we are looking outside the blanket. Just as the blanket/tent is “inside out,” the vitrines are “outside in”—or at least, they render their contents “outside” the sensory experience of knowing. The sweet, smoky aroma of the tanned hide is masked; the cassette recordings of Tahltnan voices are silent; the coolness of the river rocks can’t be felt. But the objects hold memories of all of these things.

I was thinking about my own experience of outside looking in. Why are the museum cases like that? What is protection? What does it mean for the indigenous communities that made these objects? When Annie Henyu showed me the Tahltnan belt, she developed my spiritual ways of knowing because I was able to see the hands that made the belt. I was able to move my hands in the way that the belt maker moved her hands in the making. To put myself into

that position deepened my experience of Tahltnan knowledge: not just physical, not just mental, not just emotional, but spiritual.

We need to work at gaining this knowledge. We need to look at the outside to experience and practice this. The displays are outside of Peter Morin’s Museum, but we are still able to be connected. I see all of that when I look at the cases: we are standing together, starting a journey, in the middle of a journey, at the end of a journey... looking at our relationship to knowledge.

River

At the public opening of *Peter Morin’s Museum*, the artist approached the gallery’s rear wall—an expanse painted completely black—and began to write. White chalk words flowed over the blackness like a river, from one side to the other, from above, from below, then on top of what was already written. It became increasingly difficult to pick out the sentences in this visual stream. There are fragments of the story of the Crow bringing light into the darkness, and a question: “Did something happen in the community which helped us to see that this story would enable survival?” On the right there is a song: “Woah black river, gonna take my cares away, gonna carry my cares away...” And scrawled in the centre of the wall, circled like a teacher’s main point: “Museum of tahltnan ideas. A house for tahltnan ways of knowing.”

The blackboard, tied to Tahltnan memories of residential schools and to one system of knowledge inscribed over another, was made manifest here—and with an act of intense physicality, overwritten and transformed. When he finished writing, Peter took a bundle of black hair and wiped it over the words, partially obscuring them; the hair like that shorn from the heads of young Aboriginal students entering those schools. *Manifesto* principle 16: “This space is designed to demonstrate indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is like a river.”

In the days and weeks following Peter’s performance, a line of paper fish started to flow along this blackboard/river. Fish printed in red, each made of two halves, pinned one by one onto the wall. Spawning salmon are a recurring motif in Peter’s work, used recently in *Gathering the memories of a Tahltnan River*, where hundreds and

hundreds of printed fish—a form of letters to his grandmother—became an act of connection, of supporting the survival and renewal of knowledge. He would eventually put the prints into the river like the Crow from Tahltan stories first did.^{iv}

If there was a Tahltan museum, you would have to swim through the information. The information would envelop you. You would feel changed by the experience.

Lying on the cedar-slab table across from the blackboard is a large book titled *Portraits of Traditional Knowledge in Practice*, by Peter Morin and Edward S. Curtis. The altered pages of this book, formerly titled *Portraits from North American Indian Life* (by the photographer Edward S. Curtis, 1869–1952), await our (white-gloved) touch. On almost every one of the portraits, depicting what the original author called “a record of the Indian’s relations with and his dependence on the phenomena of the universe,” is an ink drawing by Peter. The drawings are black, in the form of river stones. They seem to connect the photos to the river, signaling the knowledge practiced by the ancestors portrayed.

And the river was made present in another form at the exhibit opening. Where the projected knife sheath now lies, Peter placed all of his fancy bone-china teacups, ready to be filled with tea. Already they were filled to overflowing with the light of the sheath’s image.

I wanted the tea to be the river. I wanted the tea to be the river water. I wanted to make tea with river water. Sharing tea. Sitting down. Drinking tea with relatives. A place of connection. A place for transferring Tahltan ways of knowing. Drinking tea is Tahltan school.

I learned from that moment she made tea. Tea connected with stories. Connected with the fish camp. Connected to the land. I wanted to pour the tea/river through the image projected on the table, because the river flows through all of the Tahltan artwork.

Songs Sung

“It’s sound that will give life to the objects,” the Kwakwaka’wakw elder, Chief Robert Joseph, once told me. We were at MOA, looking at a group of masks from his community and exploring possibilities for rethinking their display according to their place in Kwakwaka’wakw experience. *Manifesto* principle 15: “This is a place of belonging for the community. Community members, from near and far, come to this place to spend time with their relatives.” Principle 6: “If you can’t laugh or talk in the museum then you are not in the museum.”

There is one final component of *Peter Morin’s Museum* to enter. Or maybe it’s the first. An exhibit within an exhibit, this display of new hide drums is also a visual record of songs sung. Peter invited one of his favourite singers, Hwieumten (Fred Roland), to inscribe each drum with the act of singing by using a drumstick dipped in black paint. The result is a gallery of abstract, Rorschach-like inkblots, but without the required symmetry. Only one drum looks contrived—evidence of the drummer’s conscious creation of form.

Peter Morin’s Museum needed to have singing, because singing transforms the vibrational frequency. Then the space becomes like a ceremony: a.k.a. research and practice. There is also witnessing or participation in the performance of knowledge.

I wanted to figure out an indigenous way to document the song using indigenous materials (remembering that this is a museum). The drums are a record of his practice of indigenous knowledge. The record or the practice relates to the environment. And the record will always be different.

There are two video monitors alongside the drums, allowing visitors to experience, in an endless loop, the beat of the drumstick, the process of “painting,” the repetition of the song, the curious horse wandering by. Principle 10: “Knowledge and knowing happen in a circle. There is no beginning. There is no ending.”

Peter Morin’s Museum continues to undergo subtle changes—a photograph unwrapped, a salmon print added to the flow, a teacup filled and emptied—as well as more dramatic ones,



through performance. (Next up: A curatorial lecture by the artist’s mother, Janelle Morin, about her family photos). Embedded in this museum is a profound truth: that knowledge is always changing; that Tahltan knowledge, too, is changing and that the artist has a place within that structure.

The artist has a sacred responsibility to make work which is formed from a history of ideas and to present new ideas. In the continuum of knowing from a specific nation of peoples, art does something specific. As a structure that conveys ideas and language of making, it supports the transference of these ideas, this knowing.

Peter talks about the risks of tackling the idea of Tahltan knowledge within the gallery space. He is aware of his own place as someone still learning about his culture, still journeying through ways of expressing Tahltan ideas without fluency in the language. Just as language learners must take the risk of making mistakes, Peter is committed to this journey, and to the practice of gathering and sharing that knowledge “so that we can all live well.”

I ask him, “As you invite museum visitors into this space of Tahltan knowing, are there also limits to their access?” “It is an invitation,” he answers, “a first step onto the land.”

*You don't get the end of the story first.
The knowledge is both abstract and
experienced. The Crow wasn't just rewarded
with the light. He/she had to grow, had to
do work, had to deserve the light. This is
just like me with the beaded belt. I had to
deserve to see that artwork. If releasing the
light is a metaphor for knowing, then you
have to share it.*

*Tahltan knowledge is specific to an area,
a location, a time, a time frame, a historical
reference, a historian, a structure, an art
form—and it is also portable. You walk into
that room at the Satellite Gallery and it
reads as an exhibition, and it also feels like
it is more than an exhibition because you
are feeling Tahltan ways of knowing.*

Contemporary practices like Peter Morin's are helping to complicate the still-pervasive binary between contemporary and tradition-based approaches to art making, and between institutional frameworks. He challenges himself to build an art practice that moves on the land and through its urban spaces in ways centred on the teachings he has received—and so may join other structures supporting Tahltan ways of knowing the world. As we gather "inside" his blanket, we are invited to listen with our senses, and reflect on museums, knowledge, and places of connection.

*This song is hundreds of years old.
This song is a museum.*

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ⁱ This and all other quotes by the artist are drawn from Peter Morin's label texts and from our conversations and personal correspondence, 2010–2011.

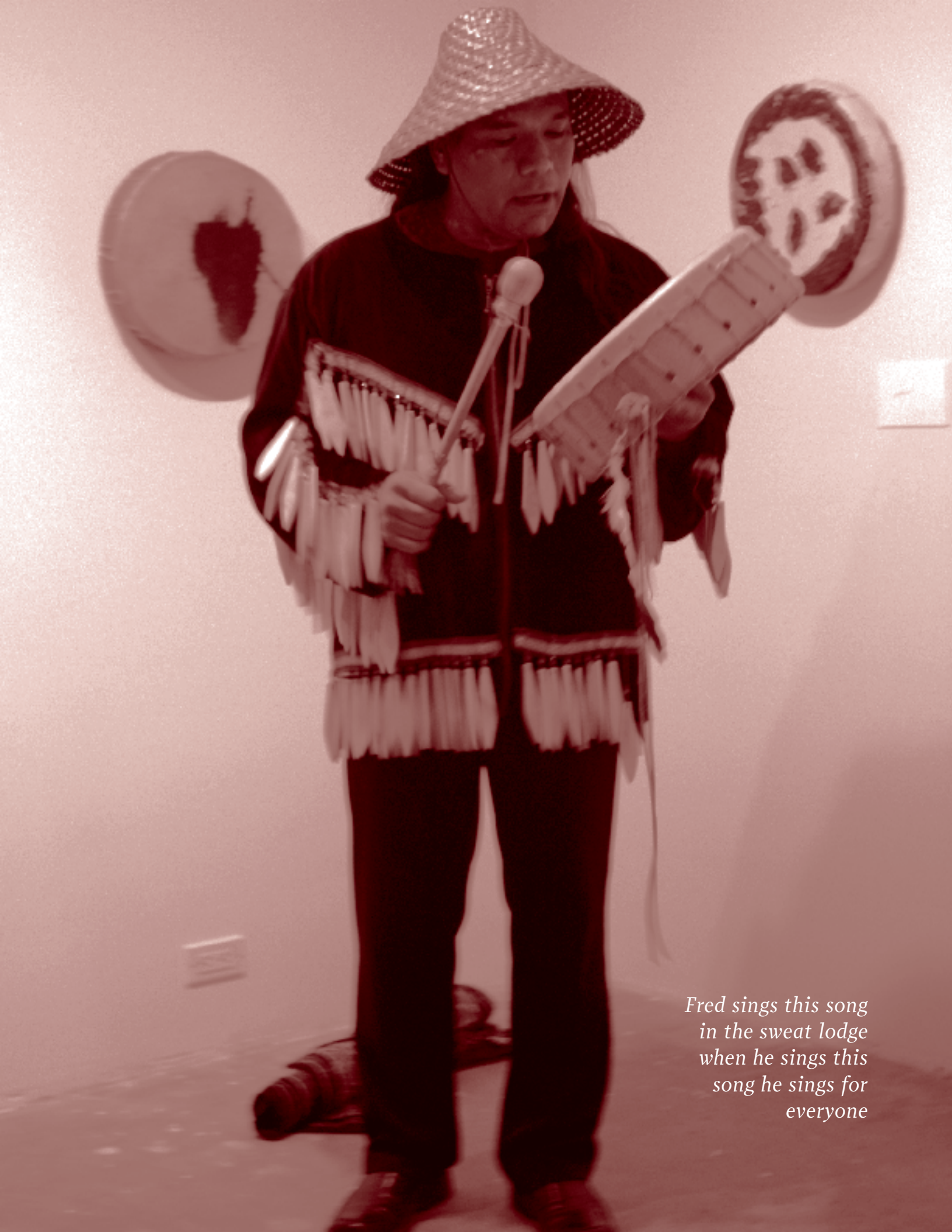
ⁱⁱ For discussions of contemporary Aboriginal performance-art practice see, among others, Greg A. Hill, "Caught... (Red-handed)," in *Caught in the Act: The Viewer as Performer* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2008), pp. 145 – 163; *The Medicine Project* (<http://www.themedicineproject.com/index.html>; Grunt Gallery, 2008); and Charlotte Townsend-Gault and James Luna, *Rebecca Belmore: The Named and the Unnamed* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 2003).

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.chomsky.info/debates/1971xxxx.htm>

^{iv} See Peter Morin's unpublished thesis, *Circle* (Master of Fine Arts in the College of Graduate Studies [Interdisciplinary Studies], University of BC [Okanagan], 2011).

PETER MORIN'S MUSEUM MANIFESTO

1. I invite you to participate in this new museum.
2. There is a possibility to remember.
3. There is a possibility for people to learn.
4. There is a possibility for the sacred.
5. There is a possibility for worship.
6. If you can't laugh or talk in the museum then you are not in the museum.
7. The objects watch us as much as we watch them.
8. There is no urban. There is no reservation. The land is where you are.
9. We are changed when we come into contact with the objects. Our DNA is changed.
10. Knowledge and knowing happen in a circle. There is no beginning. There is no ending.
11. You are welcome to cry. The museum is place of emotion, of laughter, of happiness.
12. There will be no boring tours in Peter Morin's Museum.
13. Children are invited to run around.
14. There will be food for sharing and tea for drinking.
15. This is a place of belonging for the community. Community members, from near and far, come to this place to spend time with their relatives.
16. This space is designed to demonstrate indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is like a river.
17. The Tahltan land is present here. The Tahltan land is present in our hearts.
18. The museum changes like the land changes.
19. Most of the objects speak Tahltan.
20. The objects are philosophy. The objects are the organized structures which support the transfer of Tahltan knowledge. You have to read the objects in order to understand Tahltan history.
21. There is a history of Tahltan ideas. New Tahltan ideas happen every day.
22. The museum is not just for old stuff. People can make new stuff and bring it to the museum.
23. We all have ancestors. These ancestors connect us to a land. These ancestors come with you when you enter into the museum. These ancestors help you to understand.
24. This is a temporary museum. People should feel free to make their own museum. People should make a museum wherever they go. Please honour your family, community, and culture.
25. Tradition is also a record of the tools used to make new objects.
26. Indigenous knowledge is made every day.
27. I heart Peter Morin's Museum.



*Fred sings this song
in the sweat lodge
when he sings this
song he sings for
everyone*

*a 1 minute transcription of a 32 minute conversation
between Fred & G.*

When you squeeze your drumstick it makes it very difficult to keep rhythm
Because now you're reaching
Your whole arm tightens up
So it's better if you just keep your arm loose
And be able to feel your drum
Because a lot of people don't feel the drum all they want to make is noise
And they don't understand what they're drumming so
You always again make those relationships between your lefts and your rights
So it balances out your female and your male aspect
Because again
A lot of people hold
The drum
When they're right handed
In their female aspect
That's the gentle side
But then they over dominate with the right side
And beat the piss out of their drum
So it shows an imbalance
And that's where again
If you don't have a balance
We can't hear you sing
So that's where the elder is saying
Don't drum over your singing
Because if you're singing a song
The song is only a part of the drum



I wanted the tea to be the river...





HOW CROW GOT THE SUN, MOON, DAYLIGHT

Long, long time ago, there was a man and wife who has a daughter

When the time came she became a woman, they took her to a cave far from the village
They put her in that cave and they put a moose skin over her head
That moose skin came to her knees
They make her stay in the cave

Only women can come to see her
They brought sewing for her to do
They brought roots and moss and they put it around her neck like a necklace
Her mother tied just like string around her fingers
That was to make her so she wouldn't be lazy
They put fancy little decoration right beside her hand where that string is tied
That daughter couldn't see anyone

She just learned how to sew and make things
If the women didn't think it was good, they tore it apart and made her do it over again
She learned everything
Two months she stay in that hole in the rock
Then they take the string off her hand and the moss and roots from her neck
They went to clearing and found young trees
They tied the string from her hand to a brand and it flapped and moved in the wind

That was to always keep her fingers busy
The moss and roots they put on a tree to give her luck
To always bring good luck to her

Now the daughter could go home
Her parents wanted to keep her good so she could marry some nice man
They made little place for her to stay behind their own house
She never went anywhere
She just go from her place to her parents
She was real good and never fool around with anyone
They watch careful to even see what she want and drink to make
sure she don't swallow anything to make her pregnant
Crow, he know that girl's father keep sun, moon, and daylight for himself
in his house
He think, how am I going to get light for the world?
One day he make himself as small as a speck of dirt
He put himself into her cup of water
Her mother bring her water to drink
The daughter say, 'Throw that water away. There's a speck of dirt in it.'
So they spill the water and Crow jump out

He watch that girl
Just as she was ready to drink again, he jump to her lips as just a small speck
and she swallowed him
After a while that girl said, Mother I don't know why something is
growing in my womb
The mother said, Maybe you not careful
But the girl said, How come you never see anyone around here?
They know she's been good

So they wait
Here, in nine months she have a little baby boy
They wonder how come
The father say, Wait until he can talk, then we learn how he come here.

They wait
That little boy grow fast
One day he can walk around
He's about as big as my grandchild—five years old
That kid he see moon on the wall
He start to cry for it
He cry, cry, cry
He won't stop crying for that moon
But his grandfather won't give it to him
He cry until grandmother say, oh why don't you give him the moon to play with
He won't hurt it
Then you can put it back
Don't be so stingy



*the pictures are the wealth of my family
these pictures help us to trace our connection to the land*

So grandfather give him the moon
That little boy he play with it for a little while then he say,
Grandpa give me the sun to play with
But grandfather don't want to so that boy cries
Grandma says, give him the sun, maybe he get headache and
get sick from crying

So grandfather give him the sun to play with
He play with that
Then he ask for daylight, give me the daylight to play with, grandpa
Grandpa say no
but that kid cry so much he finally give it to him
When that boy got daylight, he grab the moon and the sun and quick as
anything he turn to crow and fly up through the smoke hole in the roof
Long ago, you know, they have five on the floor and hole in roof for smoke

Crow go "CAW!" and he is gone
When he get outside, he throw the moon in the sky and there's a great
loud noise in the world
CRASH!
Then he throw the sun up in the air and there is another really loud noise
All the animals get really scared
They start running
The fish go to the seas
The goats and sheep ran to the mountains
The beaver to the rivers

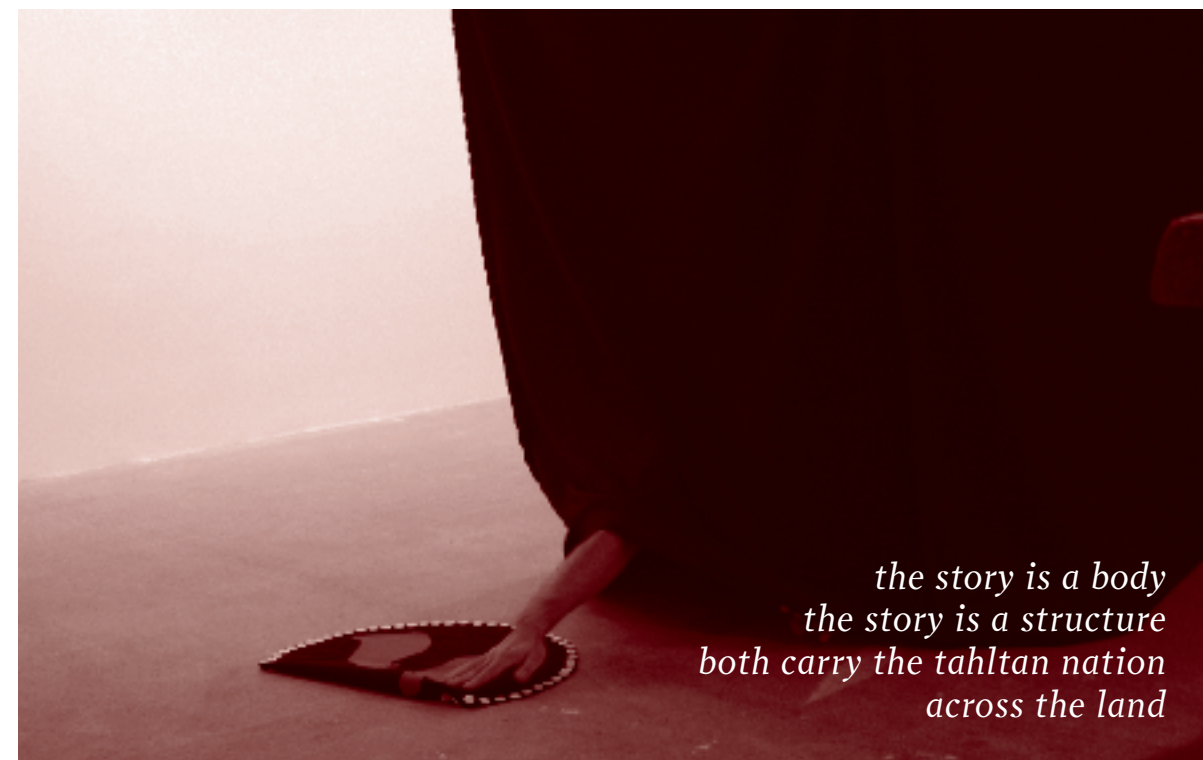
All the animals ran
That's how we came to have animals all over the world
Martin ran up a tree
He see crow and he see he's got daylight and he shout out daylight
coming, daylight coming!
Grizzly bear was under the tree
He scared and in such a hurry to run, he put his moccasins on
the wrong feet
That's why if you look at grizzly tracks, you see he got toe on
wrong side of foot

All those animals have always had darkness
Now they got sun, moon and daylight

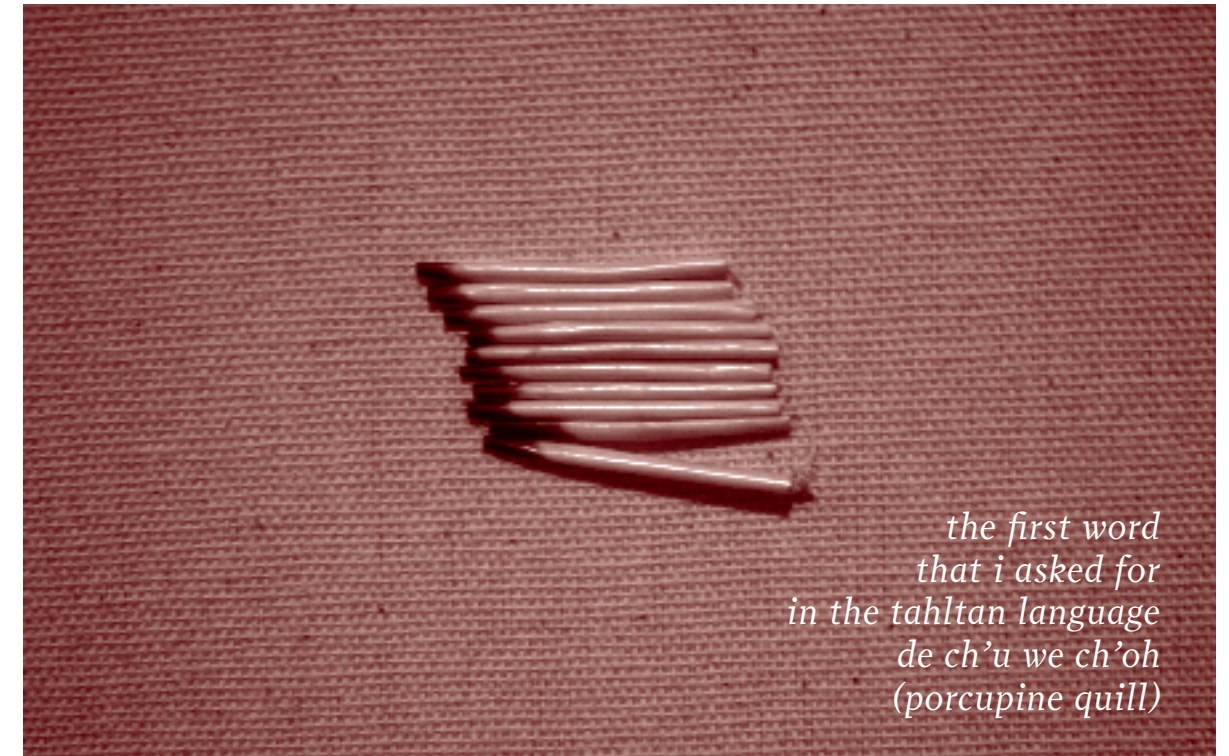
All lessons reflecting Tahltan meaning are in this story. Our respected Elder, Grandma Eva Callbreath, tells this version. This story was compiled into the book called Tahltan Native Studies, which was and produced in 1984 by the Tahltan Indian Band in partnership with School District 87. A dedication in the book reads: "For all Tahltan Indian children... so you will better know and understand the ways of your people."

WORDS in the Language
Come from walking on the
Land.

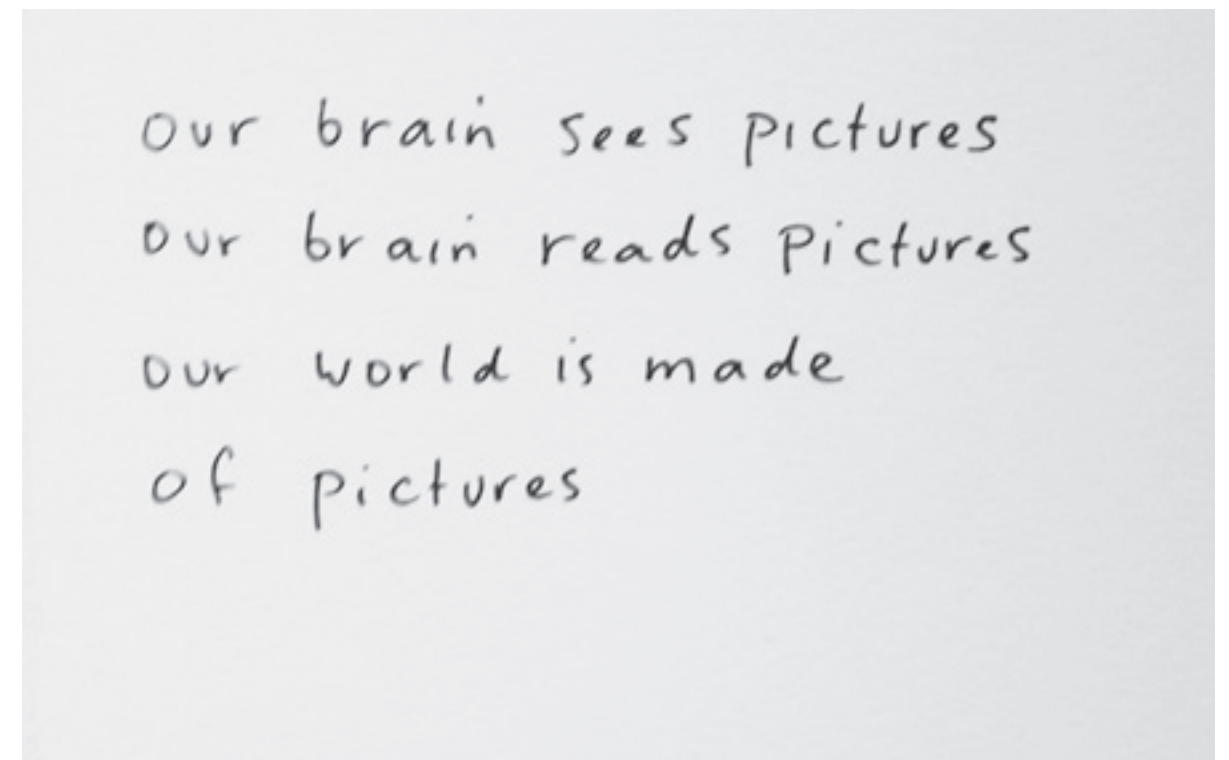
Words are one of the
Structures which carry
tahltan thought over the Land.



*the story is a body
the story is a structure
both carry the tahltan nation
across the land*



*the first word
that i asked for
in the tahltan language
de ch'u we ch'oh
(porcupine quill)*



Our brain sees pictures
Our brain reads pictures
Our world is made
of pictures

Notes for a potential performance to outline Tahltan history number 1

A Tea Party
Tahltan aunties like tea
I invite these aunties to the tea party
I pour tea in fancy teacups
My grandmother liked these bone china teacups
The tea tastes better in bone china
The teacups are made with the bones
We have to pour the tea before we can talk about ideas
I need a blackboard
I need a giant blackboard
The size of a wall
This blackboard is all of the blackboards
This blackboard is every blackboard ever used through time
My blackboard is over-writing any missed information
Time develops our spiritual intelligence
I am going to re-write history by writing a genealogy of Tahltan ideas for my aunties
This is dangerous
Because my aunties could correct me
And I would feel foolish
Write anyways
Write about the Tahltan creation story
Write about how this story could be a framework for Tahltan ways of knowing
You are a Tahltan philosopher
Swimming through Tahltan ideas
Alone in a cave called Victoria
Pour the tea
Tell a story about Tahltan art history
You have to tell a framework for understanding Tahltan knowledge
Before you can tell a story about Tahltan art history
Tahltan Art History
Once you tell a story about Tahltan Art History
Then you can see the Tahltan territory
Bring out the maps
These maps are fixed locations of Tahltan land
In the city
These maps are the body of the land
That I can bring with me
These maps are the way my aunties can be in the room with me
Bring the teacups to them
They are guests to the tea party
Then use hair to erase the blackboard
The hair acknowledges the loss because of the residential schools
Reminder
We re-write the blackboards
Sing a song about the river taking my fears away

Notes for a potential performance to outline Tahltan history number 2

For my mom's curatorial talk
set up a canvas tent
set up a circle of chairs
the tent is a record of walking on the land
the circle is a practice of knowing
my mom tells stories
I tell stories

Notes for a potential performance to outline Tahltan history number 3

Time travel
We travel back in time
To a time before light
In the one story of the crow there is no light just darkness
The crow finds the light
Yet we remember a time without light
Travel back to that time
To do beadwork
We can experience beadwork without light
This will help us to see beadwork
Beadwork is one of the written forms of knowing
Written on the body

about the artist

Peter Morin's Museum is a work of installation and performance by Victoria-based artist, curator, and writer, Peter Morin.

Peter is a member of the Crow clan of the Tahltan First Nation in northern British Columbia. He spent four years working with Redwire Magazine as a community educator and advocate for Aboriginal youth through media, writing, and art, and has continued his work with youth in Victoria. Peter completed his MFA at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan Campus) in 2011.

Among Peter's many exhibitions and performance works are *Stop Drop and Bingo*, Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art, Winnipeg (2004); *Team Diversity Bannock: The World's Largest Bannock Attempt* (2005); *7 Suits for 7 Days of Colonialism* (2005); *A return to the place where God outstretched his hand*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (2008), and *12 Making Objects, AKA First Nations Dada, Open Space*, Victoria (2009).

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