

**ATONAAN
BLACKFOOT QUILLWORK**

REBECCA SERENE WEASEL TRAVELLER
Bachelor of Fine Arts – Indigenous Art, University of Lethbridge, (2022)

A support paper submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

ART

Faculty of Fine Arts
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

© Rebecca Weasel Traveller, 2025

ATONAAN
BLACKFOOT QUILLWORK

SERENE WEASEL TRAVELLER

Date of Defense: June 9th, 2025

Josephine Mills Thesis Supervisor	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Miguelzinta Solis Thesis Examination Committee Member	Adjunct Professor	Ph.D.
Christine Clark Thesis Examination Committee Member	Associate Professor	M.F.A.
Lousia Minkin External Examiner University of the Arts London London, United Kingdom	Senior Lecturer	M.A.
Bryn Hewko Chair, Thesis Examination Committee	Assistant Professor	M.F.A.

DEDICATION

Ikinniiyoisskitsipahpahsinni (Having a gentle or soft heart), Aamokso'ki noko'siks (these are my children). My eldest son Ponokainaa Traven, my daughters Naatoyisaaamiakii Monique, Naato'siisaaamiakii Symone, my first grandchild kipitaipokaa Piita Saahkomaapi Egsy.

ABSTRACT

My art practice focuses on Siksikaitsitapi or Blackfoot porcupine quillwork techniques while incorporating my contemporary art practice. My art practice is informed by stories of how I continue to work from a lived experience as a Blackfoot artist raised within the Blackfoot ways of being, also referred to as Siksikaitsitapi. I have viewed the digital images from Apani Blackfoot Digital Library and Mootookakio'ssin website. I feel a responsibility to learn and preserve the art of quillwork and to take pride and celebrate in my ancestral art form. Quillwork reflects the connection to my ancestors that I want to honor. My quillwork practice, both historic-based and contemporary, will evaluate connections between Siksikaitsitapi existence within cosmology belief systems and the continuance of affirming cultural rejuvenation while contributing to the respect deserving to the environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my parents, Audrey and Leonard Weasel Traveller, for their prayers and wisdom that have guided me throughout my academic journey and for creating a strong foundation in Siksikaitsitapiipaitapiiyssin that continues to positively impact my life. My sisters Michelle Provost, Nicholle Weasel Traveller, and Sahvanne Weasel Traveller for role modeling their strength and determination to achieve their goals. My nieces Alexandra Smith, Taylor Smith, and my nephew Leo Smith for brightening my days with their laughter. I acknowledge my grandmother, Dorothy Yellow Horn, who remains in my heart and blessed me with the passion to create art. I acknowledge Dr. Betty Bastien as my guiding light toward true Siksikaitsitapi. I acknowledge my committee Josphine Mills, Miguelzinta Solis, Chirstine Clark for seeing me through to the finish line. I acknowledge the UofL Niitsitapi POD for their Blackfoot cultural support, and to Nayan Velaskar for bringing my virtual environment to realization. As well as Dr. Reg Crow Shoe and Duane Mistaken Chief for personal communications, finally, I proudly acknowledge my Piikani Nation community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Methodologies and Materials.....	5
2.1. Storytelling.....	6
2.2. Plants and Animals.....	7
2.3. Ceremony and Community.....	9
2.4. Art.....	10
2.5. Personal Reflection.....	11
Chapter 3: Frameworks.....	12
3.1. Quillwork Epistemology.....	12
3.2. Siksikaitsitapi Feminism.....	14
3.3. Historical Epistemology and Feminism.....	16
3.4. Indigenous Futurism.....	17
Chapter 4: Artwork.....	19
4.1. Ka'ksimi Siksikaitsitapi War Shirts.....	19
4.2. Siksikaitsitapi Series #1 and #2.....	19
4.3. Return to the Old Man River Video Performance #1.....	21
4.4. Offering Asinapi Writing On Stone Video Performance #2.....	21
4.5. Virtual Environment Video Performances Old Man River and Aisinapi	22

4.6. Girl’s Dress	22
4.7. Siksikaitsitapi Woman’s Wool Dress	23
4.8. Siksikaitsitapi Woman’s Cotton Ribbon Dress	24
Chapter 5: Conclusion	25
Chapter 6: Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition	27
Bibliography	33
Appendix A: List of Works in Show	35
Appendix B: Documentation of Show & Performances	36
Figure 1. Piikani Nation Crow Lodge Park, Powwow Arbor	36
Figure 2. Video Performance of Offer to Aisinapi	36
Figure 3. Virtual Environment	37
Figure 4. Girl’s Dress, Siksikaitsitapi Women’s Cotton Dress, Siksikaitsitapi Women’s Wool Dress	37
Figure 5. Work in Progress	38
Figure 6. Floral Quillwork Earrings	38
Figure 7. Floral Quillwork Earrings	39
Figure 8. Thunderbird Medicine Pouch	39

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I am a Blackfoot artist raised on the Piikani First Nation reserve land in Southern Alberta. I am known by the Blackfoot name, Ksisstsikomakii, translated to Thunder Woman that was given to me when I was three years old by an elderly Blackfoot healer. I am actively involved with my community's ceremonial practices as I assist my parents who are key knowledge keepers and ceremonialists from our community. I am a skilled seamstress, bead worker, and recent quill worker. I am a powwow dancer along with my daughters.

My quillwork, as with my other artwork, is an interpretation of my Siksikaitsitapi belief system. Siksikaitsitapi creation stories are a constant reminder of the alliance between the environment and humanity. These stories are irrefutable to a practitioner of ancestral ways of knowing and being. The true practice of Blackfoot ways of being lies with the experience of being Blackfoot. Dr. Betty Bastien states three major aspects of Siksikaitsitapiipaitapiiyssin (the Blackfoot ways of life). First, it identifies the responsibilities that make up tribal Siksikaitsitapi identity. Second, it identifies how responsibilities are taught and how the people learn them. Third, it identifies how these responsibilities are maintained through ceremony (Bastien, p. 3). We believe that all things are alive, are imbued with spirit and sacred alliances exist everywhere in creation.

My University of Lethbridge experience provided me with the monumental opportunity to view the digital images from Apani Blackfoot Digital Library and Mootookakio'ssin website. This is an important tool for Blackfoot people and researchers to virtually access specific items that are held in the United Kingdom. Items highlighted on the Mootookakio'sin were selected by a team of well-versed

Blackfoot elders from each of the Blackfoot/ Blackfeet tribes. The selected group of Elders travelled to the United Kingdom and once in the United Kingdom the elders selected the appropriate artifacts to be part of Mootookakio'ssin. Each artifact is listed with a detailed description of the background story of family connections, where the items came from, the materials used to make the objects, how it was used, and the how the artifact came to be in the current collection or museum. The viewer can than interact with the objects virtually, created using photogrammetry and reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), a sophisticated technique that will produce a high-resolution representation of the objects and environments (Mootookakio'ssin). This was an exciting experience to have digital accesses and to be able to maneuver the artifacts to examine the details on the 3D models. From this experience, I accepted the responsibility to learn and preserve the art of quillwork and to take pride and celebrate in my ancestral art form. Quillwork reflects the connection to my ancestors that I want to honor. My quillwork practice, both historic and contemporary, will evaluate connections between Siksikaitisitapi existence within cosmology belief systems and the continuance of affirming cultural rejuvenation while contributing to the respect the environment deserves.

The primary focus of my art practice is based on the Pitt Rivers Blackfoot Shirts. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England, brought the Blackfoot Shirts exhibit to the Glenbow Museum in 2010. The event was well publicized in the southern Alberta First Nations communities. When I took my family to go see the shirts, I was truly amazed. The Blackfoot Shirts were displayed in protectives glass exhibition showcases. I studied the details of the shirts specifically to how they were

constructed and their large sizes. They were made for men of the period that were very tall, lean and robust. As I was leaving the Glenbow Museum I felt an overwhelming sadness consumed me. The Blackfoot Shirt exhibit appearing to me as a archive piece of history, a remnant of a bygone time of my people to remain a part of a museum collection.

As I left the Blackfoot Shirts Exhibit, I reflected on how the shirts are a direct connection to my ancestors. The time of the War Shirts' wearing was a magnificent one, when my people were majestic in all they did on the Great Plains of North America. I realized my sadness was embedded in a deep genetic sorrow that conveyed a time of colonialism, when economic, political and cultural domination was exercised over First Nation people. Inevitably, my ancestors were forced to do whatever it took to survive and selling their prized possessions was one of them. Ultimately, I came to terms with how the First Nations have lost so much and the results are evidenced in our community's level of health and well-being.

The Pitt Rivers Blackfoot Shirt Exhibit presented excellent workmanship of quillwork that fascinated me. In my research for Blackfoot quillwork, I would use on-line search engine to see what the algorithms would provide. The Pitt Rivers Blackfoot Shirts would appear consistently in my online search. It was from an innate thought process that I must base my art practice on the Pitt Rivers Blackfoot Shirts. From my elder's teachings, I learned that "quillwork comes from the land and should be returned to the land". I felt this would be the appropriate message for this research. From two of the Pitt Rivers Blackfoot Shirts, I replicated the quillwork design on to

my handmade sage paper with the intention of returning the Blackfoot Shirts, in symbolic form, back to the land of the Siksikaitsitapi.

There are several terms that I use in this document that I will clarify. I use Indigenous, as a capitalized term, to refer to the original people of Canada prior to European arrival. I also use First Nations to describe the people that entered the treaty-making process with the government. I use the term Siksikaitsitapi to describe my people who are also known as Blackfoot people. The Siksikaitsitapi practice life affirming ways through a belief system that is described as Siksikaitsitapisinni. Another term well used to describe my people is Niisitapii that translates to 'The Real People'.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGIES AND MATERIALS

INDIGENOUS SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH METHODS

Atonaan will apply the Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods as the framework of a theory that will ensure an Indigenous perspective continued to be honored and upheld. These methods are approaches grounded in Indigenous life ways of knowing, being, and doing. The Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods will be a reflection of the Siksikaitsitapi ways of knowing as a true integration of holistic theory that will include physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of knowledge. Indigenous Research Methodology titled, “Research by and for Indigenous Peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the tradition and knowledges of those people” (Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson & Sookraj, 2008) will be used as a framework in my research. As the researcher and writer, I am a part of Piikani-Blackfoot community, having been raised on my southern Alberta Indian reserve land. I am not an outsider to the community and clearly understand the importance of practicing respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility as I approach my research objectives. My art and research has been exhibited in Piikani. By sharing my research objectives in my home community, I will create a stronger relationship with friends and relatives and strengthen our shared cultural foundation. My ultimate intention is to support others in cultural revitalization initiatives for future generations.

The intent of the project is to research quill work from the viewpoint of its sacredness because the quills are a creation of an animal, the porcupine, who is a natural part of the kinship relationship between animals and Indigenous people. The animal offers its quills that will be processed to be applied in a specialized art form that in turn

contributes to the Siksikaitapi by providing a connection to their life ways.

The Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods, properly met, provide the worthiness of the research project. The following will describe how the Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods will be applied.

2.1 STORYTELLING

Storytelling is the foundational method for sharing, teaching, and preserving the Indigenous peoples' history and belief system. Stories continue to be told and retold by memory founded within a strong oral tradition that is evidenced to this day.

Stories have been repeated as a reference to indicate the exact location, time, and characters complete with story plots that described events supporting the Indigenous belief system that give evidence to a transfer of knowledge and understanding. As an example, one Siksikaitapi story is about a Blackfoot couple camped at Paahtomahksikismi, in English known as the Upper Waterton Lake in Waterton National Park. This was at a time when humans and animals openly communicated with each other. The story relates the couple's interaction with a beaver that shaped shifted into a Blackfoot man. The story's plot includes how the beaver, as a man, kidnapped the wife and later returned her to her husband, but not before the husband was taught about a new ceremony that would help his people. The story is about the creation and transfer of the sacred Beaver Bundle, a holy entity, which is still a prominent ceremony amongst the Blackfoot people today.

Oral storytelling effectively conveys meaning that is critical to upholding values of good living, giving purpose for ceremonies as well as many other critical elements of

the First Nations' identity, territorial locations and cultural practices. Dr. Betty Bastien states that story and ceremony are the primary way to be human, to be Niitsitapi, the real people. Further, the essence of our stories are a form of knowledge instructing Siksikaitsitapi how to live their lives (Bastien 2004, 88). Storytelling is the guideline for identifying my project's research, as it must reflect the stories known to the community. The stories to be included will describe the origin of the quillwork as it arrived to the Siksikaitsitapi, the creation of the guild of female quill workers, and returning to the land of quillwork.

2.2 PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Plants and animals have a kinship relationship with Indigenous people of this continent. The kinship relationship is based on the familiar plants and animals of a particular territory that is shared with the Indigenous group. "Plants and animals re-enact life's cycle and are woven throughout Blackfoot speakers' traditional beliefs and practices, social structures and stories" (Ross, 23). Plants and animals have a life cycle that is closely observed by Blackfoot people. The changes that naturally occur to the plants and animals are indicators of predictable weather changes that will follow in an estimate time. As an example, the distance from the water's edge that a beaver will build its lodge is an indicator of the coldness of the coming winter. The lodge's proximity to the land serves convenience for ready access to trees for the cold winter season. The dyes for quills were gathered depending on the season that the plants were ready for harvesting. This also applies to other non-plant sources for dye. The art of quill work

depends on the colors extracted from various plants as a means of dyeing the quills to make very defined outlines in the quillwork pieces.

Specific plants of the area are used for smudging ceremonies as a means of cleansing energy of a person or place. Smudging plants are place-specific and used by the Indigenous people of the area. The northern people use local plants and a tree fungus that they readily find. Blackfoot people use sweetgrass and sweet pine to create the smoke that holds the purification energy, while prairie sage is used without exposing it to a hot coal. A blend of finely grated tree bark and other plant materials are mixed to meet the preference of the maker to create a fragrant mix to be smoked in his or her pipe. Plants are medicinal and critical to the physical health of the community when made into tea or mixed to apply as a salve to heal wounds. For the Siksikasisitapi, a particular tree, referred to as the lodge pole pine are used for shelter structures or tipi's, as well as a V-shaped structure from two tipi poles tied together and used to haul heavy household belongings over a long distance.

A significant animal, the bison of the plains are central to the survival of the Plains Indigenous people. My people understand that animals give their lives in order to sustain humanity, as a result we believe they gifted their lives to us for everything. From the bison we receive clothing, robes, food, utensils, tools, and their dried dung as a fuel source to heat the tipis. The most notable gift from the bison is their contribution to ceremonial practices. Many other birds and animals make up the ceremonial basis of Siksikasisitapi life ways. Each has their own song and dance that are reenacted during the major ceremonies held in the communities.

The plants and animals offer themselves as good medicine for the health and

longevity of the people. My research will describe the porcupine animal as the source of the quillwork, the plants and other sources of dyes critical to the creation of the beautiful art pieces.

2.3 CEREMONY AND COMMUNITY

Ceremonies are the mainstay of the Siksikaitsitapi identity and spiritual practices and continue to be the foundation of community unity. For the Siksikaitsitapi, ceremonies occur on an annual basis depending on the type of ceremony. The ceremonies are necessary to the well-being of the community as a basis of prayer offerings in small and large group settings. The ceremonies illustrate the interconnectedness of all living forms, from the smallest to the largest energetic forms. Human interaction was one of paying reverence and homage to the life forms from the tiny mouse within the Beaver Bundles to the Sun who is the central entity of the ceremonies, Duane Mistaken Chief states “We are Sun Worshipers” (Mistaken Chief 2025), we perform song and dance that holds the universe together. This is what we are told our purpose on earth is, “to perform ceremony” (Crow Shoe 2004).

Communities are held together with an identifiable language, cultural practices, and ceremonial gatherings that repeat the same procedure and sequence of events that have occurred for centuries. The ceremonial practices will continue to be acknowledged and practiced by the next generation thereby ensuring the continuance of ceremonies performed in their home community.

Incorporating ceremony and community in research identifies and validates community recognized knowledge keepers and ceremonialists. The interconnectedness of

living beings of the plant, animal, cosmic and human existence is the basis of the spiritual dimensions of research. My research will give identity to the community of first language speakers, their ceremonies and stories of origin that validate our practices.

2.4 ART

Art is the reproduction of life experiences, the sharing of dreams and visions, and the retelling of stories. Art can be used for the expression of Indigenous knowledge and tribal perspectives. The ability to construct, in a form with available materials, can capture an occasion in time as well as reflect the emotion of the event to effectively hold the experience within an art production. Physical movements such as many categories of social dance seen at a powwow celebration can be described as Indigenous performing arts. The use of recorded film can capture the social dances as performing art production. The ceremonial dances can only be spoken of and never filmed as the accepted protocol of Siksikasıtapi community norms.

My research will depend heavily on art production to illustrate organic art creations. The art of quill work, for the Siksikasıtapi, is accepted as a sacred act. The process of quilling has holiness attached because quill work was given to the people by the Thunder spirit as told by Jenny Duck Chief, a Blackfoot quill worker from southern Alberta, as she describes her porcupine quilled moccasins with a Thunderbird design (Brownstone 2021). Likewise, according to the writings of Bebbington, who was commissioned by Glenbow Museum to write a book *Quillwork of the Plains*, the gift of quill work from the Thunder Spirit was also recognized (Bebbington 1982, 16). Quill work will be the basis of my artwork. My other art pieces will include one that reflects

natural water movement, a dress's yoke illustration that shows the natural movement of the hills, and the creation of paper using the leaves from living plants from the local area, as well as other art productions that are a reflection of Siksikaitsitapiiyssin Blackfoot ways of knowing.

2.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION

Personal reflection is a fundamental element of Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods and makes it possible for me to express the significance of my research project. I am a Blackfoot woman raised on my Indian reserve therefore my personal reflection will come from my own lived experience. My community recognizes and accepts me as an active member and therefore my research is authentic and a means of creating accountability to the art of quill work. My project carries the integrity of my ancestors; therefore, I am invested in creating a positive impact for generations to come (Drawson 2017).

My personal reflections will allow the space for me to express my thoughts regarding historical wrongs that resulted in Indigenous artwork to be in museum productions and the inability to have my community participate fully in ceremonial life as a result of the colonial violence. My personal reflections will also give me the opportunity to articulate a hopeful future for my community's children and grandchildren.

CHAPTER 3: FRAMEWORKS

3.1 QUILLWORK EPISTEMOLOGIES

Quillwork epistemologies will focus on the knowledge source that initiated working with quills in ways that resulted in colorful designs on items of clothing, sacred objects, and household items. Bebbington found in her interviews of Siksikaitstapi women, that quillwork was a gift of the sky beings, more specifically, from thunder (Bebbington 1982, 16). The spirit of thunder is considered powerful as it is signified by the Thunder Bird Spirit that makes its appearance in the spring season with loud rolls of thundering sounds. It is understood the Thunder Bird Spirit has returned from the western ocean coast and Rocky Mountain Range to be with the lands of the Siksikaitstapi again. Once heard, the people ready themselves to commence certain sacred ceremonies that the community has waited one year for. At these ceremonies, several vows will be fulfilled to restore health and wellbeing. The significance of the Thunder Bird Spirit is evidenced in its effigy carvings on the cliffs observed on my visits to the Writing on Stone Park in southern Alberta. The Park holds many stories of sacred connections to the spirit world and clear diagrams of the Thunder Bird Spirit are unmistakable. It is Siksikaitstapi common knowledge for a warrior to have a Thunder Bird Spirit design painted on his warrior shield, he had to have experienced the holy entity in either a dream or while he was on a vision quest, so sacred was the representation of the Thunder Bird Spirit.

The quill worker is aware of the sacredness of the work she is doing. The exact motion of her hands to clean and sort the quills are done with careful movements. The preparation of the organic dye is as sacred as well, simply because it is a sacred step in the process of a work of holiness. The planning and design of the finished artwork

requires a knowing that can best be described as innate, as a special knowing. The spiritual energy of the quill allows the quiller's fingers to move with accurate precision.

The quills are acquired from the porcupine animal that was well suited to survive in the territory of the Siksikaitapi. The porcupine is an animal recognized for its genius ability. It travels close to the earth on very short legs, is not fast enough to outrun predators and humans, yet it has mastered its self-defense mechanism. When a porcupine is threatened, the quills detach easily from its body releasing sharp barbed quill into the aggressor. If the aggressor is struck by the quills, they will penetrate their body with a force and depth that would surely be painful enough to stop the aggression immediately. The Siksikaitapi were an aggressive force to be dealt with as the warriors used bows and arrows in a similar fashion to stop or initiate aggressive action and to hunt big game animals for the community. The level of admiration the Siksikaitapi had for the porcupine is evidenced by the naming of a large area of geography after the animals, these are the Porcupine Tail Hills of southern Alberta. In Blackfoot language we refer to this geographic area as Kai'ihka'ahpohsoiyis (Mistaken Chief 2025). They are a place of abundance and prosperity, where large bison harvesting occurred on cliffsides that we refer to as buffalo jumps. It is a place where warriors went for vision quests, and a landscape filled with medicinal plants.

There is clear evidence that revealed quillwork has extremely significant sacred origins that are spiritual and ceremonial, as well as honoring the kinship relationship to the superior porcupine animal that presents their quills and goes on to live after releasing its quills.

3.2 SIKSIKAITSIKAPI FEMINISM

The Siksikaitsitapi honor their girls and women as the creators of life. Their gender role is distinct from that of the males. Women are extremely hard workers and were tasked with teaching the young girls to be independent and skilled enough to be future wives and mothers. In the past, the work was hard at the time of harvesting and storing for the winter season, winter was so challenging that the age of a person was counted by the number of winters they survived. When the hard work of gathering was complete, this was the time that quillwork was introduced to the girls and women by way of a sacred transfer ceremony. Dempsey's primary informant, Victoria McHugh, who was taught the Siksikaitsitapi method of quill working indicated, "whenever persons wanted to do quillwork, they put the (sacred) necklace on, and this was a signal for everyone to leave the tipi. This was partly because of the holiness of quill working..." (Dempsey 1963, 52-53).

The ability to do quill work as a form of adornment to clothing, sacred Items, and household wares gives evidence to the fact that life was not always a hand-to-mouth subsistence. There were many times of thriving as opposed to surviving, and during these times girls and women would do quillwork in the quiet and security of their tipi. Siksikasitapi quillwork is a sacred art given by the spirit world and therefore, a youthful lady that showed motivation, maturity and independence was selected to become a quill worker to carry on the sacred duty of quill adornment.

In the English perspective, quill work can be described as comparable to a specialized guild of skilled workers. Much like the European guilds, quill workers were organized groups that held recognizable sacredness that was held in high esteem by the

community. The specialized sisterhood would necessitate the recognition of a matriarchal system composed of older, skilled women with the objective of perfecting the art of quilling. Always the observant eye, the matriarchs would come to an agreement on the young ladies that will be initiated into the specialized sisterhood of quill work. A transfer ceremony would occur in the quiet of the matriarch's lodge that would necessarily include a smudging ceremony to cleanse and purify the environment and the young lady to be initiated. Regarding this initiation, Ewers, quoted in *Dempsey's Religious Significance of Blackfoot Quill Work*, stated it was a "sacred craft" and that "younger women were initiated ceremonially into the art of handling the sharp-pointed quills" (Dempsey 1963, 52) . Only women were allowed to participate in the transfer ceremony and because of the sacredness of the ceremony, only the young lady is allowed to know the procedures following the smudge ceremony that allows her to become a full-fledged member of the quillwork sisterhood. This process was retold in a story from a respected 92-year-old Piikani elder, and my maternal grandmother, Dorothy Yellow Horn in 2022 when I began my research for this project (Yellow Horn 2022).

At the completion of the transfer ceremony the young lady is allowed to begin her honorable role working with porcupine quills. She is taught the entire process that will keep her safe from accidentally mishandling the sharp quills. She is now able to safely collect, clean, sort, and dye the porcupine quills under the close attention of the more experienced and older quill workers. The young lady will practice her new craft on smaller items of clothing likely for children.

With the passing of time, and much practice, the young lady will create her own designs with colorful quills in geometric designs that reflect the geography of the

landscape composed of mountains being reflected in the lakes, the rolling hills and the various animals and birds held in esteem by her people. The older matriarchs will inform her of her responsibility to the sacred art and how she must behave as a positive role model in the community. She is also told that one day in the future, when the time is right, she will in turn transfer her skill to a new young lady of the community (Yellow Horn 2022).

3.3 HISTORICAL EPISTEMOLGY AND FEMINISM

There is value in reviewing the historical conditions that created the basis for the Siksikaitstapi valuing of girls and women and their roles and responsibilities in the community. In the history of pre-contact, it was a form of liberation that the Siksikaitstapi society practiced polygamy where having sister wives was not only accepted but welcomed. The workload of bison harvesting, raising children, and gathering duties was shared by fellow wives that were biological sisters in most cases (Yellow Horn 2022). Life could be extremely harsh and short lived given the extremes of winters when food sources could become scarce on the plains while following the bison herds, not to mention the threat of marauding enemies. Safety was secured in numbers. In safe times and when food was plentiful, the community experienced very comfortable lives.

The gender roles and responsibilities of the Siksikaitstapi were well defined given the life on the plains and the natural sequence of predictable weather patterns. With certainty, all activities were meant to prepare for a winter season that could be unforgiving. The Siksikaitstapi were able to read the animal behaviors and the timing of

the migration of birds to determine the length and harshness of the upcoming winter. This was common knowledge that was freely given to the youth, such as the meaning of the rings that appear around the moon at night, the appearance of sundogs on a cold winter day, the timing of color change seen on the rabbits' fur coat. I was fortunate to gain this information from listening to stories from my older relatives, parents, and grandparents. As children we were raised to sit respectfully and listen when the adults spoke. As challenging as winter camp life may appear, it was in these circumstances that the Siksikaitapitapi value system was practiced as the basis of survival. Siksikaitapitapi demonstrated kimmapiiyipitsinni (kindness to others) with the giving of gratitude, and the expressions and actions that promoted the importance of reciprocity.

It is in this environment that plant and animal kinship relationships have magnified. The long nights of winter allowed for winter ceremonies and the storytelling that reminded the community of their responsibilities to nature, the cosmos and to each other. The matriarchs would gather in a warm and safe lodge to tell their own stories of origin for the sacred art of quill work. They would repeat stories of the magnificent and generous Thunder Bird Spirit and the cunning warrior skills of the porcupine animal that had an entire hill landscape named after it.

3.4 INDIGENOUS FUTURISM

I wanted to explore a virtual space where my quills might exist. I was pleased to realize that quill work can be appropriately represented in a 3D virtual environment. When I was introduced to the *Mootookakiosinn* website, I was unaware that 3D photogrammetry of Blackfoot artifacts could exist with exactness. I have since had the opportunity to use

photogrammetry to capture and preserve my quill work. I am satisfied with the representation of the quills.

I believe Indigenous Science and Research Methodologies are comparable to current virtual spaces, as both hold energy. I experience virtual space as easily accessible where I can use my cell phone and upload the 3D images. Indigenous Science and Methodology are equally accessible through common knowledge, ceremonies, and Knowledge Keepers. Space is virtual, or space is environmental, evident through creation followed by decomposition. I am very interested in my community's reaction to such a comparison. I am seeking that familiar energy that was in line with my current research teaching from my elders and knowledge keeper and as I have experienced in ceremonies.

CHAPTER 4. ARTWORK

This section will describe my artworks by name, dimensions, and year.

4.1 KA'KSIMI SIKSIKAITASITAPI WAR SHIRTS, 8 INCHES X 10 INCHES, RECYCLED PHOTOCOPIED PAPER, SAGE, 2024

The art piece is a combination of the energy of the Pitt Rivers Museum Blackfoot shirts and the healing power of the sage plant.

The process of making the paper included regular black and white photocopied prints of the Blackfoot Shirts that were cut into thin strips. I then removed the leaves from the sage plants. Both paper strips and sage leaves soaked in water for 24 hours. After 24 hours I used my hands to further break down the paper and sage into a pulp. I used a paper making deckle that ensured the consistency of desired dimensions and thickness of the paper sheets. I carefully slid the deckle under the pulp that was floating on top the water. I slightly agitated the pulp to evenly cover the deckle. I lifted the deckle to allow excess water to drain. To remove the pulp, the deckle is removed from the screen holding the pulp, revealing the paper. Another 24 hours is needed for the paper to dry. The resulting paper is slightly greyish in color because of the printer ink. The sage leaves are visible on the surface of the paper. The texture of the paper is porous, and the weight is similar to a light cardstock.

4.2 SIKSIKAITSITAPI WAR SHIRTS, SERIES #1 AND #2, 8 INCHES X 10 INCHES, PORCUPINE QUILLS, 2025

Series #1 and #2 are quill work that I was inspired to make after viewing the Blackfoot Shirts from the Pitts River Museum collection. I quilled the designs on to the Ka'ksimi

Siksikaitsitapi War Shirts paper (4.1). I stitched individual quills in a pattern like those found on the Blackfoot shirts. I used red and black dyed quills. With a needle and thread, I stitched the quills into place on to double layered sheets of the Ka'ksimi Siksikaitsitapi War Shirts paper (4.1). I applied red acrylic paint to fill in the empty spaces between the rows of stitched-in quills.

I planned to do the quillwork on Ka'ksimi Siksikaitsitapi War Shirts paper (4.1) to create an offering that would be returned to the land. An offering is a gift to the spirit world. I chose Writing on Stone Park as the location to leave *Series #2* on the ground. This is how I was taught to do an offering.

I was told quillwork comes from the land and therefore should eventually return to the land. The quill work that I witnessed in museums and other collections that have been kept from natural disintegration which is a natural cycle of life.

Even though I continue to be in awe of the richness of the artistry that went into making the shirts, I feel there was also an undertone of feeling a deep loneliness and sadness at the fact they are on display in a sterilized space. My response to the feelings of sorrow is to reflect on how I can resolve the spiritual disconnection between shirts and the Siksikaitsitapi and the land. *Series #1* and *Series #2* will be physically placed on the land as my offering. The offering of *Series #1* and *Series #2* will reconnect the sacred quillwork of my ancestors to the traditional land where the porcupine quills came from. I perform this offering as a symbolic gesture for my ancestors who could not make the offerings of their quillwork. There are countless quill work art held in various collections everywhere.

4.3 THE RETURN TO THE OLD MAN RIVER VIDEO PERFORMANCE #1, 2025

Series #1 returned to the Old Man River water to the land of Piikani/Siksikaitapi.

I am initiating the process of disintegration of the series #1 quillwork art made on the Ka'ksimi Siksikaitapi War Shirts Paper. I will physically place the quillwork into the natural water of the Old Man River located in Piikani First Nation. The process will be documented through a video recording and still frames of myself walking into the water and placing the Series #1 quillwork into the water allowing the disintegration to fully complete. I am fulfilling the teachings of the natural process of quillwork coming from the land and returning to the land. The documenting will highlight in the foreground tall grass beside a still pond adjacent to the river, while the background highlights the southern tip of the Porcupine Tail Hills.

4.4 OFFERING TO ASINAPI WRITING ON STONE, VIDEO PERFORMANCE, 2025

Series #2 will be returned to Asinapi Writing On Stone Park. I am initiating the process of disintegration of the series #2 quillwork art made on the Ka'ksimi Siksikaitapi War Shirts Paper. I will physically place the quillwork near the petroglyph features. The process will be documented through a video recording and still frames of myself walking at the rock formations. This will be a slow and natural disintegration. Again, I am fulfilling the teachings of the natural process of quillwork coming from the land and returning to the land. Aisinai'pi Writing On Stone dates back over 9000 years showing hieroglyphs craved into the sandstone telling stories of war and victories, a visual documentation warning enemies that the Siksikaitapi are a force to be reckoned with.

Blackfoot warriors were brave and were highly skilled in the art of war. Aisinai'pi holds sacred connections informed by Siksikaitstapi epistemologies. The hieroglyphs tell creation stories. One can sense the energy of Aisinai'pi as a place of reverence.

Appreciating this space, the land, and the cultural significance. It is appropriate that I offer Ka'ksimi Siksikaitstapi War Shirts Paper to this space, where Blackfoot people go for prayers, solitude.

4.5 VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT, VIDEO PERFORMANCES OLD MAN RIVER AND ASINAPI WRITING ON STONE, 2025

Two virtual environments were designed using 3D photogrammetry to create the illusion of depth, distance, sound and color to display the landscapes near the Old Man River and Aisinapi Writing on Stone Provincial Park. Virtually replicating the performances of The Return to the Old Man River, Performance #, and Offering to Aisinapi Writing On Stone, Performance #2, with the invaluable assistance of the Niitsitapi Pod. The virtual environments were created to effectively tell a story of archives of a time and place that is lasting. In these virtual environments the quillwork digitally disintegrates in water and air, and within seconds it reappears, allowing for the digital representation of the quillwork to disintegrate and not the actual quillwork. This process will forever remain a documented archived artwork story.

4.6 GIRL'S DRESS, OIL PAINTING AND MASONITE 4 FT X 4 FT, 2023

This a top-down view showing the front and back of a Blackfoot style dress inspired by Girl's Dress documented on the Mootookakio'sin Project.

This painting is informed by traditional clothing styles. I am focusing on the women's clothing to represent the Siksikaitsitapi Quillwork that would have been the basis of adornment prior to the arrival of beads as a trade commodity. Old photographs show the style of dresses worn by the Siksikaitsitapi women. Dresses were and continue to be made from tanned animal hide and adorned with quillwork, beadwork, and earth paints representing the landscape.

All Indigenous people take pride in their clothing and aesthetics, as a seamstress using beadwork and quillwork, I can relate to the number of days, weeks and months it takes to meticulously stitch the designs into place.

4.7 SIKSIKAITSITAPI WOMEN'S WOOL DRESS, FABRIC TEXTILES, 2025

Maroon colored wool sewn into a Siksikaitsitapi style of dress, adorned with cotton strips cut from fabric to be used as ribbon, crystal beads and shells. I will be wearing this dress when I offer Series #2 quillwork to Asinapi Writing on Stone Park.

I made this art piece that shows the evolution of Siksikaitsitapi women's dress. There was a transition from animal hides to fabric textiles introduced by trade goods. Decorative elements included the use of glass beads that slowly replaced porcupine quills, and shells that we once traded with coastal tribes. As I designed this dress, I reviewed historic photos and replicated the style worn by the Siksikaitsitapi women. This style of dress is still popular among women today.

4.8 SIKSIKAITSIKAPI WOMEN'S COTTON RIBBON DRESS, FABRIC TEXTILE, 2025

Black cotton fabric with gold embossed patterns that represents tall golden colored prairie grass. Satin ribbons in multiple colors sewn around the circumference of the skirt. I will be wearing this dress when I am initiating the process of disintegration of the series #1 quillwork art made on the Ka'ksimi Siksikaitsitapi War Shirts Paper as I will be physically placing the quillwork into the natural water of the Old Man River located in Piikani First Nation.

This Siksikaitsitapi Women's Cotton Ribbon Dress is a representation of the evolution of the wool dress. The ribbon dress is an evolution from traditional animal hide dresses to the wool dresses during the beginning of the colonial trade era. All styles of dresses are still worn today, with the ribbon dress more available due to the rising costs to make the traditional animal hide and wool dresses. The quillwork in current times has been making a comeback within Indigenous jewelry and other accessories worn by both men and women.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The practice of creating and keeping a collection of art as an object safe from disintegration is not natural because it does not allow for the natural process of life. This is why my art project was to replicate porcupine quill work from the Blackfoot Shirts on two layers of recycled paper and return it to the land. The intention was to replicate the quill work of the shirts on recycled paper and physically return the porcupine quill work to the traditional land of the Blackfoot people.

The research began with the study of quill work and quickly became so much more. I came to appreciate how the Indigenous Science and Research Methodology affirms Siksikaitstapi epistemologies as a knowledge base and allowed my research to focus on specific areas. My ancestors were acutely aware of the scientific methods that determined their survival and the transference of knowledge that continues to be a huge part of Siksikaitstapi life.

When I began my journey into Blackfoot quill work, I was told it was important to respect and care for my quills, and to create a sacred space to do my quillwork. I used found objects in the University of Lethbridge Fine Arts workshop to create my sacred workspace in my studio. I was then able to make smudges before I started my studio work. I became aware that I was on a significant journey into my return to the Indigenous thought processes.

My research helped me realize the importance of Siksikaitstapi storytelling as the foundation of teaching important life lessons to uphold values, preserve history while affirming belief systems. I gained a greater appreciation of the scientific methods used by

my ancestors to survive on the plains, the same knowledge has carried on to current times. The gift of porcupine quill art came from the Thunder Spirit, and it is the responsibility of the Indigenous artisans to not allow the quill work to disappear as this could result in quill work easily being erased from our knowledge. Quill work as a connection to spiritual practice that must be renewed.

I have an appreciation that my ancestors kept their teachings alive. At times it had to be kept secret from the authorities, I am certain the ancestor's held faith that the teachings were passed on through dreams. As an artist I want to renew the energy surrounding us by using the teachings of my elders and respect the quill work. I was blessed with the sacred knowledge of quill work.

From the research I have gained awareness of how interconnectedness is key to understanding spirituality. Connections occur in many levels of existence and ceremony is the path to practicing and acknowledging all life on earth and in the cosmos. Community experience is the foundation of a good life, not individuality. We have a responsibility to continue the cultural practice of our ancestors and to pass it on to our children and those yet unborn.

CHAPTER 6: ATONAAN BLACKFOOT QUILLWORK EXHIBITION

As a component of the academic study Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition was an expectation and well worth the effort it took to make it a reality. The planning of the art exhibition was a lengthy and detailed endeavor with numerous crucial undertakings that would culminate in the exhibition. The Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition, as with the written component, was curated using the Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods of Storytelling, Plants, and Animals, Ceremony and Community, Art and Personal Reflection.

Several components of the Indigenous Scientific and Research Methods, with an emphasis on Personal Reflection, led me to decide upon installing the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition to my home community on the Piikani First Nation, in southern Alberta. The production of all parts of the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition reflected the land of my people, the Piikani of the Blackfoot Confederacy. By presenting the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition in my home community it was in essence, bringing the art home to a familial place of belonging. This was a strong theme of the entire academic project.

The act of bringing art pieces to be exhibited in the lands of the original artists who were inspired by the environment and its plants, animals, birds, water, colors and geographic features was in strong contrast to the usual sterile environment of an art gallery or museum that could have been easily accessible. It must be repeated that galleries and museums are colonial spaces and changing the conversation within and regarding those spaces must not be overlooked. It was concluded that the need for deconstructing colonial gallery and museum institutions would be accomplished by

having the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition in my home community among family, friends, and neighbors. I was clear that I wanted to engage with my community and invite the participation from my community in the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition.

On June 2nd of 2025, I held the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition in my home community at the Piikani Nation Crow Lodge Park, in our Powwow Arbor. This is a place of cultural celebration where we host our annual powwow that brings hundreds of people together from distant communities that stay for a three-day weekend of celebrations with families camping in tipis, tents, and recreational vehicles. It felt appropriate to have my art exhibition in this location and venue.

Planning for the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition began with communication with my community. The venue had to be secured, once this was done there was other concerns to resolve as they arose. Advertising began with the design and distribution of the poster. I emailed the poster to my community that was shared numerous times on social media, with family and friends sending well wishes for a successful show and many interested people. A buzz was created because of social media as the major means of advertising.

I began the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition at 11:00 AM with the hopes of visitors during the lunch hour as it was a regular workday in the community. I wanted the exhibition to be during the day to be available for the local school students and Piikani employees to attend. An opening prayer was offered for all those in attendance, those who would arrive later, the community, and for Atonaan Blackfoot Exhibition. The opening prayer and words of wisdom were shared by Elders Leonard and Audrey Weasel

Traveller. They spoke of the importance of the stories they retell and remind us of our place in the universe contained in artwork, quillwork and other forms of Niitsitapi art.

The Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition began with attendance from the University of Lethbridge Faculty of Arts, my committee members, Niitsitapi Pod, fellow art students, and family members. Later, community members arrived. The weather of the day was cold and rainy and the venue, the powwow arbor, did not have an internal heating system. Individuals fortunately dressed for the weather, as it had been raining for several days prior to the Exhibition.

The Crow Lodge Powwow Arbor is a large circular wood-built structure with a great central wooden support pole with wood-built structure with a great central wooden support pole with wood beams reaching the outer edge of the building. A seating system of high bleachers surrounds the rounded walls of the building. It was crucial that the space did not minimize the artwork. The Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition floor plan strategically used the large circular space using the center as a starting point. By placing the six projection screens at an equal distance from the center and from each other, it effectively gave the exhibition a central focus.

In the center of the projector's plinths were placed with the different artworks, Thunderbird Medicine Pouch, Floral Quillwork Earrings, Work in Progress, Smudging Alter and Women's Dresses and Girl's Dress Painting. In summary the art included firstly, the Thunderbird Medicine Pouch made of smoked elk hide, red wool, glass and brass beads, silver metal sequence. The black and white quillwork represents the Thunderbird, the designs are the lighting or thunder talons of the Thunderbird, all influenced by the Thunderbird cave at Aisinapi Writing On Stone Provincial Park. The

medicine pouch was fitting of the Thunderbirds gift of quillwork to be the Blackfoot. Secondly, the Floral Quillwork Earrings, I wanted to make art that would be recognized by the community. It was also for me to practice quillwork techniques that I am still practicing and learning. Thirdly, Work in Progress represents my proposal to the City of Lethbridge for the OKI Sign Public Art Project that was not accepted, another proposal was accepted. I continued my work on the declined OKI sign by adding floral designs inspired by the flowers seen around the area surrounding Lethbridge. Fourthly, the Smudging Alter that was in place in my art studio on campus as a means of cleansing and purifying my energy prior to working with porcupine quills. The altar, made of found objects within the greater studio, is complete with sweet grass and coal. Next were the Women's Dresses and Girls Dress painting where the decorative patterns on the dresses represent the rolling landscape of the great plains that were home to the Piikani People.

Larger spaces were dedicated to the Returning to Land art performances. These are two performances documented through video recordings made at two separate landmark locations within Blackfoot territory. In the background of each performance, my son Traven Weasel Traveller is singing the Black Horse Society honor song that was composed after the last Indian battle between the Blackfoot and Cree, known as the Battle of Belly River, October 25, 1870. The song represents the Blackfoot warriors that wore war shirts like Pitt Rivers Blackfoot War Shirts. In the present day my son would be considered a modern-day warrior with his own victories and brave deeds.

The first performance was documented in my community near the Old Man River overlooking the Porcupine Hills, currently known as the Foothills, a large landscape that the Blackfoot named after the porcupine. It was a place of abundance that included a

buffalo jump that would sustain the lives of the Blackfoot, a landscape where numerous medicinal plants and berries are harvested for the Niitsitapi to live a life of plenty and comfort. It was important that the location be identifiable by my community members. In the performance I am on the landscape as I look out in appreciation to the land. I walk into the still water and allow the disintegration of Siksikaitsitapi War Shirt series #1 into the water. The second was documented at Aisinapi Writing On Stone Provincial Park. Aisinapi is a site where Niitsitapi creation stories are written into the stone. I felt this was the appropriate space to offer the Siksikaitsitapi War Shirt Series #2 to the land by leaving the work in a secluded area at Aisinapi.

Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition in the Piikani Powwow Arbor allowed enough space for each work to be viewed, and it allowed the audience to walk around and watch the performances. The layout was well planned for the audience to walk around and have ample space for standing, viewing, and discussing each piece. I was busy walking around and conversing with every person that came into the display area. This was the most enjoyable part of my day as the attendees were genuinely interested in the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition.

Community involvement and support was evident by the Piikani Department volunteering to prepare and provide lunch for the people that attended the exhibition. They served pemmican, fry bread with saskatoon jam, and water. The volunteering Department indicated to me that providing food and feeding visitors is a significant part of being Niitsitapi. The provision of a traditional luncheon was well received by the people in attendance.

One classroom of students from the local high school arrived and spent the afternoon at the exhibition. The students asked well-thought-out questions about the artwork, as many of them admitted being artistically inclined. I was very pleased to have the students enjoy the exhibition. I was impressed to have one of the high school students dance along to the honor song. He indicated to me that he was happy to be there in the arbor, it made him want to dance in his traditional powwow style. I felt his pride in his Niitsitapi identity that surfaced in the moment, and he expressed it through our performing arts of dance.

Another cultural practice of Niitsitapi is gift-giving. At Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition I gifted each of my elders' braids of sweet grass, scarfs and thank you cards. I presented my committee members with Piikani Nation logo t-shirts. Gift giving is an important part of being Niitsitapi and had to be included in the exhibition.

It was very interesting to me that weeks after the Atonaan Blackfoot Quillwork Exhibition, community members continued to ask me about the event and if I was going to present it again. These discussions arrived because the person asked could not come to the exhibition and heard many positive comments from someone that did attend, and they wanted to see the exhibition themselves. I felt this feedback was the community acknowledging my work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alison K. Brown, Tony Eccles, Anita Herle. 2015. "Storied Landscapes: Enlivening Blackfoot Collections in Uk Museums." *Museum Ethnographers Group* 29 - 52.
- Anderson, Jeffery D. 1958. *Arapaho Women's Quillwork. Motion, Life, and Creativity*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma.
- Bastien, Dr. Betty. 2004. *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing, The Worldview of the Siksikatsitapi*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.
- Bear, Dr. Leroy Little. 2015. *The Banff Center inspiring creativity*. Accessed September 3, 2024.
- Bebbington, Julia, M. 1982. "Quillwork of the Plains." In *Quillwork of the Plains*, by Julia, M. Bebbington. Calgary: Glenbow Museum.
- Brownstone, Arni. 2021. *ROM, Fancy Footwork*. April 21. Accessed April 28, 2025.
<https://www.rom.on.ca/media-centre/magazine/fancy-footwork>.
- Crow Shoe, Reg, interview by Serene Weasel Traveller. 2004. *Blackfoot Knowledge Keeper*
- Dempsey, Hugh A. 1963. "Religious Significance of Blackfoot Quillwork." Edited by Taylor & Francis Group. *Plains Anthropologist* (Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Plains Anthropological Society) Vol. 8 #19 (February, 1963): 52-53.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25666489>.
- Drawson, A .S., Toombs, E., Mushquash, S. J. 2017. "Indigenous Research Methods: A Systematic Review." *The International Indigenous Policy Journal* (iipj.org) 8 (Issue 2 Reconciling Research: Perspective on Research Involving Indigenous People- Part 1): 1-27.
doi:10.18584/iipj.2017.8.2.5.
- Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson & Sookraj. 2008. "Research by and for Indigenous Peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditional and knowledges of those people".
University of Alberta Library. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Library. 1-2.
doi:<https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/c.php?g=715568+p=5102303>.
- Grinnell, George Bird. 1913. *Blackfeet Indian Stories*. Helena, Montana: Riverbend Publishing.
- Langille, Sophia. 2023. "If Looks Could Quill: Bringing Back Porcupine Quillwork Back to Life in Contemporary Indigenous Art." *The Journal*. December 19. Accessed September 3, 2024.
- LYFORD, Carrie A. 1940. *Quill and Beadwork of the Western Sioux*. Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Publishing Company.
- Mistaken Chief, Duane, interview by Serene Weasel Traveller. 2025. *Blackfoot Knowledge Keeper* (April 29).

2019. *Mootookakio'ssin Distant Learning*. January. Accessed September 4, 2024.
- Raczka, Paul. n.d. "Art of the Blackfoot Indians." *Blackfoot Digital Library*. Accessed september 5, 2024.
- Radius, Daniel. 2018. "Margaret Boyd's Quillwork History." *Early American Literature* 513 - 537.
- Ross, Michael. 2008. *Weasel Tail: Stories told by Joe Crowshoe Sr. (Aapohsoy'yiis), a Peigan-Blackfoot elder*. Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest Press.
- Traveller, Leonard Weasel, interview by Serene Weasel Traveller. 2025. *Oral storytelling* (January 15).
- Traveller, Nicholle Weasel, interview by Serene Weasel Traveller. 2023. *Elder* (September 15).
- Yellow Horn, Dorothy, interview by Serene Weasel Traveller. 2022. *Piikani Blackfoot Elder* (October).

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WORKS IN SHOW

1. Offering to Aisinapi Writing on Stone, video performance.
2. Return to the Old Man River, video performance.
3. Virtual Environments Old Man River and Aisinapi, digital performance.
4. Girl's Dress, Oil painting.
5. Siksikaitsitapi Women's Cotton Dress.
6. Siksikaitsitapi Women's Wool Dress.
7. Thunderbird Medicine Pouch.
8. Floral Quillwork Earrings.
9. Work in Progress.

APPENDIX B: DOCUMENTATION OF SHOW & PERFORMANCES

FIGURE 1. PIIKANI NATION CROW LODGE PARK, POWWOW ARBOR



FIGURE 2. VIDEO PERFORMANCE OF OFFER TO AISINAPI



FIGURE 3. VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT



FIGURE 4. GIRL'S DRESS, SIKSIKAITSI TAPI WOMEN'S COTTON DRESS, SIKSIKAITSI TAPI WOMEN'S WOOL DRESS



FIGURE 5. WORK IN PROGRESS.



FIGURE 6. FLORAL QUILLOWORK EARRINGS.



FIGURE 7. FLORAL QUILLWORK EARRINGS



FIGURE 8. THUNDERBIRD MEDICINE POUCH.

