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The Social Fabric: Deep Local to Pan Global

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Wrapped in Wool: Coast Salish wool weaving, Vancouver's public art, and unceded territory

Alison Ariss

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"I'm not going to stop weaving until I've wrapped the city of Vancouver in our work... because when you arrive here and come into the city you should know that it is Salish territory and Musqueam."¹

These words represent the continuous work of accomplished weaver Debra Sparrow, within a community of weavers who have made significant inroads toward this vision. Materializing over the span of three decades, Coast Salish wool weavings (Salish weavings) are visible at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR), the Museum of Anthropology (MOA), and at the Granville at 70th Development project (Granville project). However, woven Salish blankets are not usually the first artworks that come to mind for Vancouverites, tourists, or art historians when they think of local art production. The idea of Northwest Coast Native art - as the Indigenous cultural production of the region was historically framed - rests upon visions of monumental totem poles, cedar masks adorned with crest figures and carved in the abstract 'formline' design system most well known through the canonization of Haida artists such as Charles Edenshaw and Bill Reid.² Other styles and forms in circulation throughout the region, such as Salish weaving practices, have only comparatively recently gained attention as art.³ How then, have Salish weavings become situated as public art in Vancouver in the last few decades? What is it they are understood to represent to the traveller, the student, and the passerby in these public spaces? Local press releases and art blogs have noted the weaving installations, but a sustained critical discussion of their paradoxical wrapping of institutional infrastructure has yet to occur in the discourses of textile art, craft, and of Indigenous art.⁴ This paper analyzes how the presence of Salish weaving as public art has evaded critical attention within the art historical discourse of contemporary Northwest Coast Indigenous art.

It is not possible to adequately address the many Salish weavings that hang in public spaces across this region in one brief paper. The sites focused on here are only three examples of

¹ Debra Sparrow (artist), in discussion with the author, April 2017.

² Wayne Suttles, "The Recognition of Coast Salish Art," in *S'abadeb, The Gifts: Pacific Coast Salish Art and Artists*, ed. Barbara Brotherton (Seattle Art Museum, Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2008), 50, 56-9. And Alice Campbell, "Shifting Theory, Shifting Publics: The Anthropology of Northwest Coast Art in the Postwar Era," in *Native Art of the Northwest Coast: A History of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Jennifer Kramer and Ke-Ke-In (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 553. See also Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Not a museum but a cultural journey: Skwxwu7mesh political affect," *JRAI* n.s. (2011), S40.

³ Barbara Brotherton, "Introduction," in Brotherton, *S'abadeb*, 1-5. See also Toby Lawrence, lessLIE, and India Young, *Record, (re)create: contemporary Coast Salish art from the Salish Weave Collection* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria: Hemlock Printers, 2012).

⁴ Claudia Kwan, "Granville at 70th project is '15 minutes to everything'," *Vancouver Sun*, October 13, 2013, <http://www.vancouversun.com/touch/story.html?id=9007003>. And Ann Cameron, "Once we gathered salmon. Today we gather to buy it," *The Beat* (blog), April 14, 2014, <http://www.coastalartbeat.ca/once-we-gathered-salmon-today-we-gather-to-buy-it/>.

publically visible Salish weavings, and have a relationship through their makers.⁵ In keeping with Indigenous feminist approaches, this paper foregrounds the ideas and experiences that Salish weavers have shared in texts and exhibitions, interviews, presentations and workshops.⁶ The weavers are individual practitioners within a diverse community, and this analysis is not generalizable to all Salish weaving practices. I cannot speak on behalf of any weavers. As a descendant of settler-families who came to Anishnabek territories in the mid 19th Century (also known as southern Ontario, Canada), I aim to sustain a critical awareness of the normalized structures of settler-colonialism in my research. I attend to the writing of Carolyn Dean, and that of Melanie Hertzog and Sarah Stolte, who have called for scholarly conversations to challenge colonial constructs behind naturalized categories of art.⁷ As an outsider to Salish weaving communities, I expect I will make mistakes of protocol as I continue to learn: I aim to conduct my work in a respectful manner, and I welcome correction of my errors and omissions.

Coast Salish Weaving in Context

Jordan Wilson succinctly describes the territory in which these weaving installations are located.

“What is now referred to as the Greater Vancouver area in British Columbia, Canada, is in fact the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the hənqəminəm-speaking Musqueam First Nation. Our main village and reserve is located at the mouth of the Fraser River, and the ancestors of present-day Musqueam people have lived in this estuary for thousands of years.”⁸

Thor Carlson and Sonny McHalsie also attend to the history of extensive familial and social networks that are sustained across Salish communities within and around the Salish Sea (south toward Puget Sound, along the Fraser River valley, and north toward Whistler, BC).⁹ Their work points to the necessary contexts of uncaded territory and complex social relations to support an analysis of Salish weaving as public art.¹⁰

Practices of Salish weaving across this region are ancient. Diverse plant and animal materials harvested from Salish territories provided the warp and weft for woven objects.¹¹ Due to changes

⁵ Works by Debra and Robyn Sparrow also hang at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s Vancouver studio (Debra Sparrow (artist), in discussion with the author, 2017). See Ingrid Bachman and Ruth Scheuing, *Material Matters: The Art and Culture of Contemporary Textiles* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 1998), 251. Weavings by the “L’hen Awtxw Weaving House” hang at Simon Fraser University, http://www.sfu.ca/archive-sfunews/news/story_03190901.shtml

⁶ Nancy Marie Mithlo, “A Real Feminine Journey: Locating Indigenous Feminisms in the Arts,” *Meridians* 9 no. 2 (2009), 12-13.

⁷ Carolyn Dean, “The Trouble with (the Term) Art,” *Art Journal* (Summer 2006), 30. And Melanie Hertzog and Sarah Stolte, “American Indian Art: Teaching and Learning,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 27 no. 1 (2012), 85-86, 101.

⁸ Jordan Wilson, “Gathered Together: Listening to Musqueam Lived Experiences,” *Biography* 39 no. 3 (2016), 470.

⁹ Thor Carlson and Sonny McHalsie, *A Sto:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 1-3, 6-7, 21.

¹⁰ Crisca Bierwert, “Weaving in Beauty, Weaving in Time,” in Brotherton, *S’abadeb*, 245.

¹¹ Leslie H. Tepper, Chief Janice George, and Willard Joseph, *Salish Blankets: Robes of Protection and Transformation, Symbols of Wealth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 7-30. See also Liz Hammond-Kaarremaa, “Coast Salish Spinning: Looking for Twist, Finding Change,” *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* 938 (2014).

to the region's flora and fauna through colonial settlement and urban development, much of this material is no longer available or accessible.¹² In Canada, the federal Indian Act criminalized Indigenous cultural practices for over sixty years, as well as disrupting language learning and inter-generational knowledge sharing practices through the imposition of the residential school systems.¹³ Despite such systematic attempts at erasure, Salish weavers have persevered and innovated, producing a wide range of woven forms, designs, garments, and public art.¹⁴

Academic research has documented the depth of Salish weaving practices over millennia; it has categorized the objects in museum collections into styles and periods, and has documented Salish weaving as "revivals" across the region.¹⁵ Tepper, George and Joseph have incorporated the voices of contemporary weavers alongside an in-depth investigation of historic Salish blankets, and MOA has taken a similar approach in past publications focused on Musqueam weavers.¹⁶ A small number of Salish weavings have been part of exhibitions in art galleries since the 1970s, and it was only in 2008 that the field of Coast Salish art was considered 'mature' enough for critical analysis.¹⁷ This paper takes up the call for critical analysis and reflection on the work of Salish weaving as public art.¹⁸

It is clear that Salish weaving is not completely absent from scholarly discourse or art gallery exhibitions.¹⁹ What is in question is how the weavings have been conceptualized within the framework of Northwest Coast Indigenous art. This research proposes that entwined modes of marginalization have played a role in the situation of Salish weaving as public art. As evidenced in a recent anthology of the history of Northwest Coast Native art, this field is a shifting construct, and one historically based on externally driven hierarchies and categorizations.²⁰ These hierarchies devalued material culture that did not conform to now defunct theorizations of "unilineal...evolutionism" applied across material culture systems and designs throughout the Northwest Coast.²¹ The work of scholars such as Michael Kew, Susan Point, Barbara Brotherton

¹² Tepper, George and Joseph, *Salish Blankets*, 11, 35-50. And Paula Gustafson, *Salish Weaving* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), 69-71.

¹³ Doreen Jensen, "Metamorphosis," in *Topographies: aspects of recent B.C. art*, eds. G. Arnold, M. Kin Gagnon and D. Jensen (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996), 91, 96. And Musqueam Indian Band, *Musqueam: A Living Culture* (Victoria: CopperMoon, 2006), 11.

¹⁴ Debra Sparrow, "A Journey," in Bachman and Scheuing, *Material Matters*, 152-55. And Tepper, George and Joseph, *Salish Blankets*, 51-54.

¹⁵ Gustafson, *Salish Weaving*. And Bierwert, "Weaving in Beauty," 235-42.

¹⁶ Jill Baird and Elizabeth Lominska Johnson, "Musqueam Weavers Source Book," 2002. And Johnson and Bernick, *Hands of our Ancestors*.

¹⁷ Barbara Brotherton, "How did it all get there? Tracing the Path of Salish Art in Collections," in Brotherton, *S'abadeb= The Gifts*, 137. See also Rose Spahan, *SMASH: International Indigenous Weaving*, (The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 2010), 11.

¹⁸ Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "The Raven, the Eagle, the Sparrows, and Thomas Crow: Making Native Modernism on the Northwest Coast," in *Native Modernism* (Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of the American Indian, 2006), 101.

¹⁹ See Spahan, *SMASH*. And Lawrence, LessLIE and Young, *Record, (re)create*. Works by the Salish Weavers Guild were part of the *Collective Acts* exhibition at the Belkin Gallery, UBC in 2018. The Guild's component was curated by Jordan Wilson, <https://belkin.ubc.ca/exhibitions/beginning-with-the-seventies-collective-acts/>.

²⁰ Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Jennifer Kramer and Ki-Ke-In, "Introduction: The Idea of Northwest Coast Native Art," in Townsend-Gault, Kramer and Ki-Ke-In, *Native Art of the Northwest Coast*, 1-5.

²¹ Bruce Granville Miller, "Anthropology of Art: Shifting Paradigms and Practices, 1870s-1950," in Townsend, Kramer, Ke-Ki-In, *Native Art of the Northwest Coast*, 203-4.

and Wayne Suttles has presented the nuanced and complicated aspects of Salish material culture, as well as the histories of its reception and comprehension (or lack thereof). These authors recognize Salish art on its own terms, within its own design systems and social contexts.²²

Within contemporary Coast Salish art practices, weaving is metaphorically significant, but the material object of wool weaving is still less frequently encountered in art galleries than those made by other means and in other media.²³ Salish wool weaving techniques also sit between external technical categorizations that were deployed in debates of the 1960s-70s to argue for and against the status of weaving as “craft” or “fine art.” Elissa Auther and T’ai Smith address those assumptions made about the intellectual content of weaving, along with gender biases that surround textile art forms.²⁴ Scholars such as Martine Reid and Evelyn Vanderhoop, and Ruth Phillips have pointed to the specific struggles of Indigenous weavers to overcome material- and gender-biases.²⁵ For instance, Julie Nagam has pointed to the broader struggles of Indigenous women artists that are also part of the complicated relationship of Salish weaving to the realm of fine art.²⁶ The conflation of Salish weaving with Euro-colonial concepts of textiles positioned them as domestic, decorative, and everyday objects, without considering the weavings in terms of their existing status as relational and political actors in complex Coast Salish social networks.²⁷ The way that Salish weaving was framed as domestic craft in British Columbia overlooked its well-established social and political importance for Salish communities.²⁸

Indigenous scholar Doreen Jensen critically addressed the decontextualization of Indigenous material culture in the art gallery, pointing to how the social, spiritual and emotional affect embedded in the material culture of the Pacific Northwest was overlooked.²⁹ The need for context that Jensen brings to light is consistent with what Salish weavers speak of when they attend to the emotional and affective aspects of their weaving practices.³⁰ For instance, Susan Pavel’s artwork *Sacred Change for Each Other* at the Seattle Art Gallery is understood as a

²² Michael Kew, “Traditional Coast Salish Art,” in *Susan Point: Coast Salish Artist*, ed. G. Wyatt (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2000). And Brotherton, “How did it all get there?” *S’abadeb = The Gifts*, 68-109. And Suttles, “Recognition,” *S’abadeb = The Gifts*, 50-67.

²³ Lawrence, lessLIE and Young, *Record, (re)create*, 10-17. And Spahan, *SMASH*.

²⁴ Elissa Auther, *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 93-97, 100. And T’ai Smith, “Architectonic: Thought on the Loom,” *The Journal of Modern Craft* 4 no. 2 (2011), 270-73, 290. This paper does not seek to re-open an argument over divisions of art and craft, as this has been well addressed by Glenn Adamson, in *Thinking Through Craft*, 2007.

²⁵ Martine J. Reid and Evelyn Vanderhoop, *Time Warp: Contemporary Textiles of the Northwest Coast* (Canada: Metropolitan Fine Printers, BRG Gallery of NWC Art, 2010), 15, 18. And Ruth Phillips, “A proper place for art or the proper arts of place? Native North American objects and the hierarchies of art, craft, and souvenir,” in *On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery*, eds. L. Jessop with S. Bagg (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002), 62.

²⁶ Julie Nagam, “Transforming and Grappling with Concepts of Activism and Feminism with Indigenous Women Artists,” *Atlantis* 33 no. 1 (2008): 75-76.

²⁷ Tepper, George and Joseph, *Salish Blankets*, 55-73. And Johnson and Bernick, *Hands of Our Ancestors*, 5-8. And Bachman and Scheuing, *Material Matters*, 16, 25.

²⁸ Brotherton, “How did it all get there?” 75-105. See also Wilson Duff, “The Indian History of British Columbia,” *Volume 1, The Impact of the White Man*, Anthropology in B.C. Memoir No. 5, Victoria: B.C. Provincial Museum, 1964.

²⁹ Jensen, “Metamorphosis,” 120. And Suttles, “Recognition,” 58.

³⁰ Baird and Johnson, “Source Book.” And Polygon Gallery, “Interweave” Discussion Panel, Chief Janice George, Melvin Williams, Shelly Thomas, and Lisa Lewis, March 11, 2018.

feminine entity.³¹ These woven forms are powerful entities that play an important role in social and political realms of Coast Salish societies.³² Chief Janice George and Willard Joseph clearly describe Salish blankets as “merged objects” that foster rich social connections within, between and beyond Salish communities.³³ Respected weavers Wendy Grant-John and Barbara Cayou discussed their feelings as important components of weaving processes as part of their work in reviving the practice in the Musqueam community.³⁴ And Debra Sparrow has described the importance of attending to spirit as she and her colleagues grew in their knowledge of Salish weaving practices.³⁵ The affective capacity of Salish weaving is evident to these expert weavers.

Weaving as Public Art

In her seminar at UBC in February 2017, Jessica Hemmings discussed the “interplay of textiles and politics.” Hemmings’ summarized that although the everyday-ness considered natural for textiles predisposes them to being overlooked, it also lends them the potential to “move or communicate differently” than objects that attract greater attention.³⁶ Are the assumptions made about Salish weaving that limited its legibility as critical artwork, the same assumptions that have sanctioned it as public art? An argument for this paradoxical situation can be launched through reference to local newspaper reporting. During an interview in 2008, the art consultant for the YVR airport indicated that they aimed to avoid artworks that contained overt political statements, so as not to offend travellers.³⁷

The “Musqueam Welcome Area” at YVR is home to the four massive weavings entitled *Out of the Silence*. Woven by Musqueam weavers Krista Point, Robyn Sparrow, Debra Sparrow, Gina Grant and Helen Callbreath, they are visible to international travellers arriving in Vancouver, and juxtapose a massive carved wooden spindle whorl and houseposts. The airport’s description of the weavings highlights the endurance of this art form over millennia, and its role in upholding Musqueam identity and community.³⁸ In 2006 Charlotte Townsend-Gault raised a question about the critical potential of these weavings, leaving open an invitation for deliberation.³⁹

³¹ Seattle Art Museum, (n.d.). “Du’kwxaxa’t3w3l (‘Sacred Change for Each Other’),” Collections, <http://art.seattleartmuseum.org/objects/33443/dukwxaxat3w3l-sacred-change-for-each-other?ctx=118d91ed-880d-4fdd-882a-9c858ab44eb8&idx=33>.

³² Gerald Bruce subiyay Miller and Michael CHiXapkaid Pavel, “Traditional Teachings About Coast Salish Art,” In Brotherton, *S’abadeb*, 36-38. And Bierwert, “Weaving in Beauty,” 242-44.

³³ Tepper, George and Joseph, *Salish Blankets*, xiii, 134-41.

³⁴ Johnson and Bernick, *Hands of our Ancestors*, 16, 20, 25.

³⁵ Sparrow, “A Journey,” 149.

³⁶ Jessica Hemmings, “Craft and Labour” Graduate Seminar, AHVA Department, UBC, February 10, 2017.

³⁷ Megan Stewart, “Controversial Art Can’t Land at Vancouver airport,” *TheThunderbird.ca*. Nov. 23, 2008. It is unclear to this author if this approach was applied earlier in 1996.

³⁸ Robin Laurence, “Musqueam Welcome Area: Canada Customs,” in *A Sense of Place: Art at Vancouver International Airport* (EBSCO: eBook Collection, 2015), 37-38, 40-41, 45.

³⁹ Townsend-Gault, “Making Native Modernism,” 101.

Figures 1 & 2: Krista Point, Robyn Sparrow, Debra Sparrow, Gina Grant and Helen Callbreath, Out of the Silence, 1996. Hand-dyed, hand spun sheep's wool. Each 4.9 x 1.5m. Courtesy Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR). Photos by Kenji Nagai.

Many travellers may not be aware that these artworks perform an ongoing 'welcome' gesture into unceded Musqueam territory. An earlier analysis of this site presents the weavings according to the weaver's vision of their purpose: to generate a visual presence of Musqueam's place in the history of Vancouver.⁴⁰ Of course, the lengthy negotiations between the Musqueam First Nation and governments at all levels over the airport's expansion is not visible in these forms, but as Alexa Fairchild insightfully cautioned, "absence of confrontation should not be mistaken for a compliant attitude toward the dominant social order."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Alexa Fairchild, "Canada Customs, Eash-you-eyh-ul Siem(?): Sights/Sites of Meaning in Musqueam Weaving" (Masters Thesis, UBC, 2001), 1, 29.

⁴¹ Fairchild, "Sights/Sites of Meaning in Musqueam Weaving," 36, 40.

Figure 3: Debra Sparrow and Robyn Sparrow, *Ten*, 1999. Dyed Sheep's wool, S-spun, 3.48 x 1.54 m. Courtesy of UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada. MOA ID No. Nbz842. Photograph by Kyla Bailly

The installation at MOA is also located in unceded Musqueam territory. The Salish weaving *Ten* was created by Debra Sparrow and Robyn Sparrow in 1999, and it addresses the gender biases and material hierarchies of the museum's historic collections. Both Charlotte Townsend-Gault and Ruth Phillips have attended to the installation of this weaving as a critical intervention in the space of the museum.⁴² *Ten*'s intricate patterns embody the complexity of Musqueam peoples. In a similar manner to the airport installation, the viewer is positioned to look up at this large scale weaving, altering its status from "blanket" to something much more monumental. Its position in the Great Hall also directs attention to the long-term relationship the Musqueam First Nation and the Museum have maintained with each other, a relationship that is sustaining collaborative engagement with weavers, weavings, and Salish communities.⁴³

⁴² Townsend-Gault, "Making Native Modernism," 92, 99-100. And Ruth Phillips, "A proper place for art," 52.

⁴³ The exhibition, *The Fabric of Our Land* at MOA was engaged with Salish communities and weavers across planning, development and programming. Curated by Dr. Susan Rowley, <https://moa.ubc.ca/exhibition/the-fabric-of-our-land-salish-weaving/>.

The most recent installation consists of five weavings that hang in a rectangular glass vitrine on the Granville Street façade of a mixed-use building complex, close by the Musqueam First Nation community.⁴⁴ The weavings are visible day and night along this busy traffic corridor from the airport to downtown Vancouver.⁴⁵

Figure 4: Granville Street frontage of Granville at 70th project.
Glass vitrine containing Weavings #1 to #5. Photo by author, 2017.

The accompanying artist statements of Krista Point, Robyn Sparrow and Debra Sparrow speak to Musqueam's ancient and unceded territory; to losses encountered through colonial dispossession; of altered and diminished access to fish and mountain goat wool; of Musqueam's legacy of land claims; and of the importance of family and social relations, language and culture, and shared spaces and experiences of urban existence.⁴⁶ The brevity of their statements belies the breadth and depth of the complex history they reference. Scholarship on Northwest Coast Indigenous art has attended to this complex "layering of many thought worlds" that occurs in the works of many Indigenous artists, which creates diverse readings across audiences.⁴⁷ Specific instances where the Musqueam community has resisted dispossession, held vigil, and thwarted development to protect their ancestral villages are documented by Musqueam in the *Cesna?em: City before the*

⁴⁴ Westbank Corporation, "Granville at 70th," (n.d.), <http://westbankcorp.com/granville-70th>.

⁴⁵ Alison Ariss, "Wrapped in Wool and Copper: Encountering Musqueam Art at Vancouver's Granville at 70th Development Project" (Master's thesis, UBC, 2017), 1-5.

⁴⁶ Robyn Sparrow (artist), in discussion with the author, June 2017). Robyn spoke of making her weavings visible to generate family and community pride.

⁴⁷ Judith Ostrowitz, "The Good Reader of Contemporary Native American Art," in *Interventions: Native American Art for Far-Flung Territories* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 139-41.

City exhibitions, and in the work of scholars such as Susan Roy.⁴⁸ History becomes legible in this space, but remains dependent upon the viewer's prior knowledge of the Musqueam community, and close consideration of the artist's words.⁴⁹

Figure 5: Robyn Sparrow, *Weavings #1 and #2*, 2014. Dyed and spun wool fibers. Photo by author, 2017.

However, the Granville Street installation also inspires an affective encounter.⁵⁰ The eye-level vitrines do not command the viewer to look up, and reading the artists statements requires the viewer to stand in close proximity to each weaving. On the street and surrounded by vehicle and pedestrian traffic, the weavings shed the decontextualizing effect of the art gallery. Like the passerby the weavings are subjected to the elements, and despite concerns raised about their conservation, Debra Sparrow is confident in the choice of location.⁵¹ On the sidewalk they become relatable entities encountered in the course of daily life. It is this opportunity of daily encounter that leads to the potential for the weavings to generate a space for the enactment of what Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes call “everyday decolonization.”⁵² This research by Hunt and Holmes “acknowledge(s) that Indigenous peoples’ resistance to colonialism has unfolded in daily acts of embodying and living Indigeneity, honoring longstanding relationships with the

⁴⁸ Musqueam Indian Band, “cəsna?əm, city before the city,” (n.d.), <http://www.thecitybeforethecity.com/musqueam>. And Susan Roy, *These Mysterious People: Shaping History and Archaeology in a Northwest Coast Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 114-15, 146.

⁴⁹ Musqueam Indian Band, *Musqueam: A Living Culture*, 2006.

⁵⁰ Charlotte Townsend-Gault, “Sea-lion Whiskers and Spray-crete: the affect of Indigenous status in contemporary British Columbia,” *JMC* 16 no. 4 (2011), 416-28.

⁵¹ Rita Beiks (art consultant) in discussion with the author, April 2016. And Debra Sparrow (artist) in discussion with the author, April 2017.

⁵² Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes, “Everyday Decolonization: Living a Decolonizing Queer Politics,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 19 no. 2 (2015), 154-72.

land and with one another.” They seek to understand the “quiet, relational processes” of decolonization beyond the sphere of public protest and events of confrontation.⁵³

Figure 6: Krista Point, Weavings #3 and #4, 2014. Dyed and spun wool fibers. Photo by the author, 2017.

Foregrounding the processes of lived experiences of everyday life, social relations, and emotional connections situated within the weavings, presents a means for comprehending these public art sites as non-confrontational modalities for decolonial praxis. Indeed, Musqueam author Lee Maracle’s call to re-incorporate “female knowledge of conduct” may also be materializing in the work that these installations conduct.⁵⁴ And if the idea of “self-narration” that Nancy Marie Mithlo witnessed in her work with Indigenous women artists is applied, perhaps what these Salish weavings enact is also resistance to categorization as art, rather than an enduring marginalization from that status.⁵⁵ To paraphrase Jessica Hemmings and uphold Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes’ approach, a normalized view of political change as confrontation and struggle may “overlook” the potential of everyday life to sustain long-term and relational activities that have affected change within this unceded territory.

⁵³ Hunt and Holmes, “Everyday Decolonization,” 157-58.

⁵⁴ Lee Maracle, “Indigenous Women and Power,” in *Memory Serves: Oratories* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2015), 150-52.

⁵⁵ Mithlo, “A Real Feminine Journey,” 3, 12.

Figure 7: Debra Sparrow, *Weaving #5*, 2014. Dyed and spun wool fibers, appliqued leather binding. Photo by the author, 2017.

Prior individual analyses pointed to the potential of Salish weaving public art installations to make critical interventions. Together and in the context of the Salish weavers' words and actions, their continual negotiation of the complex categorizations applied to artworks becomes visible.⁵⁶ The Salish weavings at the Granville project, at MOA and at the Vancouver airport may be "merging" the performance of public art with that of Salish protocols: they conceptually re-narrate and re-present spaces of colonial dispossession into places that become legible as unceded territory.⁵⁷ On a daily basis, the weavings make visible a relational aspect of Musqueam protocol that operates prior to and beyond the now naturalized concept of property, the litigious processes of land claims, and the decontextualization of "fine art."⁵⁸ In wrapping unceded territory, the weavings are more than signposts that tell the passerby "you are here." Rather, they make the place the 'here' that it is. The weavings and the weavers assert Coast Salish "presence," making visible the social relations they continually embody.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Julie Nagam, "Transforming," 78.

⁵⁷ Tepper, George and Joseph, *Salish Blankets*, 135-141.

⁵⁸ Townsend-Gault, "Not a museum but a cultural journey," S41.

⁵⁹ Crisca Bierwert, "Weaving in Beauty," 226-30.

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