

Messages...



MFA Thesis
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Developing a passage from my older work to my new has found its balance on the line between modernity and tradition. Like the beadwork of my Grandmother and Marcus Amerman, traditional values are kept alive and transitioned into contemporary daily life. For example Amerman's modern beaded baby carrier is an excellent illustration of our reality as Native people, combining our lives in two worlds to survive and maintain now. The way this modern beadwork dances on the line between tradition and pop culture, referencing each other to make a new statement, is how I hope my work will be received; one individual expression of the changes that are going on in our communities, our traditions, and our lives.

Transforming my study of movement and emotional expression into a more in depth way to illustrate oral tradition and place of origin has been key to this new work. Images I have collected over time for this passage are new and contain old values. For example, in the past I have made many pieces about my Grandmother, and illustrated the importance of generations. The image of *Kylie* in this new series is important to reemphasize how valued children are to our culture. The most important people in our communities are the children and the elders. The historians/encyclopedias of our history and traditions, and the new generation, the future of our people. The *Bitterroot* image, the *Sweat*, the *Old House*, and the *Petroglyphs* all reference oral, ritual, sustenance, and home life tradition. No matter how much time has past these values run like an undercurrent in modern daily life. Just as we go to basketball tournaments, powwows, movies, and malls, time is also spent digging roots, hunting, and maintaining spiritual faith.

The installation pieces bring forth more of the physical and tactile mysteries of oral history. The three dimensional aspects of these pieces are important to reemphasize the living tradition that will not die, but maintains itself with each story told, Native word spoken, traditional or contemporary song sung, tradish or contemporary art piece made, and each child that is born.

Like these physical aspects of our lives and tradition the suitcase piece and the car bring some of these values to physical form. The suitcase piece: *Messages/er...Some Understood/Misunderstood...Some Never Forgotten* conceptually is about the messages we receive from the Creator that we think we understand, but later find confusing or totally different then we had understood them to be first off. The small images on the wall that relate to the corn in the suitcase resin are about all the individual feelings or parts of messages we carry

with us. The small images also represent the knowledge we have already that we bring to each new challenge or situation. The suitcases are a way to take things with you, and carry unwanted or wanted 'baggage' with us to each new place or situation. The entire piece illustrates and speaks about all these nonphysical emotions bringing them to form.

To further explore aspects of travel and memory *Mobile Home, 2000* became a reality. The car piece is about always taking your home with you no matter where you travel. The Okanagan landscape is the place I was born, and were most of my family still lives today. It is an image from my reservation in Canada. There is a long modern Native 'tradition' of keeping old cars in your yard or around your house available to you at any time. They just collect there like a pile of old leaves. They are kept around in case of usefulness. For example you could use them for parts, in case you get them running again in the future, or kids have used them for large climbing toys. There has never been one reservation I have ever been to in my life that was without some of these cars. Instead of the car in its usual environment it has the environment on it, a traveling homage to these cars in the landscape, and a place that will always be with me in my heart.

All of these pieces relate to and express the messages, emotion, and tradition in a new way, that is somewhere between now and the past. Like myself, the work is a product of the modern and traditional worlds combined. It is my hope that each person who views my work gets a feeling of resonance. That the audience brings, takes, and takes with them when they leave some kind of understanding to the work, maybe not exactly what I intend but their own version of understanding the messages I am putting before them.