Shelby LaFramboise - Edited

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SPEAKERS

Dylan Cave, Shelby LaFramboise, Brittany Ekelund

B Brittany Ekelund 00:01

We acknowledge that we are on treaty six territory, the gathering grounds of many diverse First Nations, MÃ©tis and Inuit peoples, whose footsteps have marked this land and whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

D Dylan Cave 00:17

Hello, and welcome back to Research Recasted. The knowledge mobilization podcast. I'm Dylan Cave, and I'm here with Brittany Ekelund, and we're joined by acting Director of Indigenous Initiatives Shelby Laframbroise.

B Brittany Ekelund 00:30

Shelby LaFramboise is a MÃ©tis Iskwew, originally from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Shelby is the proud mother of adult and teenage children. Her research interests have included social justice perspectives, and Indigenous perspectives in Canadian curriculum, and how Canadian teachers delve into these practices. As well, researching NÃªhiyawÃªwin language revitalization and reclamation practices across Turtle Island and beyond. Shelby, thank you so much for joining us here today. We really appreciate you giving us your time.

S Shelby LaFramboise 01:06

Good morning, bonjour, taanishi.

B Brittany Ekelund 01:09

So, Shelby, you have a unique appointment here at MacEwan working as an assistant professor, but also working with kihÃªw waciston. Can you tell us a little bit about those roles

and how they interact and how you came to be kind of wearing those hats here at MacEwan?

S Shelby LaFramboise 01:31

Sure. Last year, I began here at kihÃªw waciston. But previously, I'd done a little bit of consulting, and it kind of unfolded from there. Originally, I began as an assistant professor, working in collaboration here with FFAC, Faculty of Fine Arts and Communication, and teaching a course called INTA 362, which is Indigenous arts advocacy. So I did that for the past term, the winter term, and was also writing the Indian residential schools course as well and still working on that. So sometimes it's a little bit tedious, and you kind of go inside of the minutiae, and it can be detailed, and obviously with the recent kind of combination of the papal visit, you know, to kind of take a break and walk away, and a lot of the writing has been kind of going into it, and then walking away going into it and walking away. So that was part of the workload this past year. In June, I began being the the Interim Director of Indigenous Initiatives and that began because, you know, our beautiful Terry is on a project, and she's working with her home community. So I have been asked to carry the work forward over the next year. So I'm really grateful and appreciative that I can continue to lift the work. And she's working on a project within her home community around residential school survivors and healing practices and ground work there. So, you know, in collaboration, I hope that we can continue to support one another. So yeah, that's how I'm here. And I'm really honored to be here, not only in a scholarly academic way, a facilitating way, but also in a connecting and networking and, you know, creating relationship way. So I'm really honoured to be here at this space.

B Brittany Ekelund 03:37

Yeah, I mean, something that I'm kind of curious about is, you know, as a Director of Indigenous Initiatives, what does that encompass here at MacEwan for people who might not very well understand kind of what kihÃªw waciston is about, or what Indigenous initiatives, the centre, and the University have?

S Shelby LaFramboise 04:01

I think over the last year, observing and watching and participating, with kihÃªw waciston, as a writer, and watching Terry in the centre's work, was really a time to almost apprenticeship mentor, indirectly through observation skills. Since June, I would say that the position is almost like being octopi or an octopus with you know, arms and almost every facet of the university and the greater community and beyond. So a lot of the work is literally, you know, student affairs to community relationships, building relationships with the city of Edmonton, you know, in collaboration around the papal visit, working with school boards and partners, elders, business, you name it, and I've only been in the position for a very short period of time, but it really is about creating strong relationships - through ceremony, partnerships, you know, making sure our students have academic advising, that they feel supported with an Indigenous perspective and an Indigenous lens, that they have a safe center for connection with one another. So, I know that's a brief snippet, but it's, I think, really beyond my capacity of understanding at this point. And maybe in a year, I'll have an incredibly insightful perspective of how much the role is varied and diverse, but it really makes it an interesting day. And I

simply just sometimes open up my calendar and see how many meetings or connections I can make. And I think that it makes it interesting, it makes it diverse, it makes it varied, and a little bit exciting too, every day.

B Brittany Ekelund 05:56

100%. I can only imagine that everyone that you get to meet. You know, we were just talking with another researcher, and he was speaking to, you know, every day you're doing so much, but you're learning so much, and the connections that are made at the university between students, and professors and professors and students, as a professor, what attracted you or kind of drove you to start working with Indigenous courses or create Indigenous courses?

S Shelby LaFramboise 06:28

Obviously, it's a personal lived narrative, and, you know, my identity as a Michif woman as a MÃ©tis woman - and a big part of I think my experience, especially beginning in grade three was about seeing myself, and how did I see myself in curriculum, and there was an incredible absence. And that could be as simple as texts, or literature or story, and so I don't think I had an Indigenous teacher until grade 10. And when I really delved into story, probably would be within my own familial network, which would be through my father and how he was storying us as children. So we really knew our stories and our connection to land in place, to Duck Lake to Batoche, to Cypress Hills, to the north, but also to my mother's familial connection to the farm and settling, you know, the settler ally relationship in Saskatchewan. But, I guess my delve, or my quest, or my passion began about seeing myself and it really would have been my undergraduate experience where I, you know, I was able to be a student with Maria Campbell, you know, she was facilitating a Native literature course. And I took a summer session with the late great Howard Adams, who is a MÃ©tis political activist and leader within within our community, and was really reading literature and story that just drove me and I think that's where I became passionate about shifting curriculum and not wanting to wait for curriculum to change and that was a lesson I think, from all of the spaces I've occupied thinking that I had to change it at the helm, or at the ministerial level. And to some degree, absolutely, you know, there's policy and certain pieces that will ricochet that and create effect. But I really believe that it begins with facilitators in relationship with students and you don't have to wait for three years for anything to change, you can change it now you can change it through the stories of your students, you can change it with the stories that you have embedded within your own knowledge, and your connection ultimately, to land. So wherever you are across, you know, what we now call Canada, which is Turtle Island, whatever nation you're living on, or whatever territory you're living on, is making that direct connection to the land and knowing the stories from that land. So I'm reminded how I had to go back to my childhood experiences of my father storying us and making sure we knew our own stories before we went out and then also my mother making sure we knew our stories, and her connection as being a settler ally. So I think it begins ultimately, going back inside of self and being able to stand in your identity and I didn't see my identity in curriculum. So I think if every facilitator great well tuned practitioner, can help students see themselves in whatever facet or whatever space they're occupying and they make that connection, it's a powerful tool.

D Dylan Cave 10:03

Yeah. I mean, we can't wait for the curriculum to change, because it's going to take forever, and it's going to be exactly what we're dealing with right now with having to make revisions and revisions and making sure that there's representation in our curriculum. So you're right, it totally is on the people that are delivering this curriculum. It's our responsibility, I think right now to make sure that that we are diverse in our teachings. So, having said that, this is kind of your how how you would inform your your decision making when creating curriculum, I'm guessing, do you want to speak a little bit more to how you do create curriculum?

S Shelby LaFramboise 10:45

Sure, sure. I guess it depends with what particular area we're focusing in on, but I will reference, you know, the piece where, you know, I'm working on that piece, the Indian residential schools experience, and as much as it is heavy and complex, and a dark legacy of our Canadian history. I'm also hoping that I'm thoughtful in looking at it from the opposite lens of what have we done? And how are we healing? And how are we moving forward? So it's also about considering, you know, how have we changed and the healing practices and the modalities and the process of ceremony and returning to, you know, our connection to land, and the healing spaces that it offers for all of us, all of us as nations, all of us as Canadians, all of us as settler allies, all of us as human beings and so I guess that's a short snippet of of your question.

B Brittany Ekelund 12:07

Yeah, and I think like another piece, because if we're looking at curriculum from something that is informed by policy, or guided by policy, you know, how are things changing now? And what are some of the ways that you know, you're able to design curriculum in accordance, like have policies changed? Or are we saying screw the policy, this is what's important. Can you talk a little bit about kind of how the rules and creation of curriculum that kind of needs to work outside of those roles?

S Shelby LaFramboise 12:43

Sure, I can only speak about myself and my lens. And obviously, my journey as an Indigenous scholar. And I would say that there's a lot of code switching. And for myself, as you know, someone who's had to learn how to work well within systems, and unfortunately, a colonial system. And I would say that's, oftentimes for most of us, and I would say that there is a switch, and there is a takeback, of space of the rules and the idea of rules. And I think it's really - it's understanding, an ideology, it's also understanding pedagogy. And understanding, you know, colonial practices and frameworks. And I'm reminded about this. I remember Roxanne saying this to me as well, the late great, Roxanne Toussis, who was a mentor and a friend and a teacher. I just remember her repeatedly reminding me, the system is not made for us. And so it's about taking back that space and saying, I need to write according to my nation, I need to write according to my inherent way of thinking and being and seeing and when I take that back, I take back my sovereignty, and I take back my connection to land. And I hold that in a sacred space and so especially in INTA 362, which has been here at McEwen and obviously I've taught in a few other places as well throughout my career. But it's a reminder that we are not linear thinkers, and that we are not hierarchical and interrupting that and disrupting that is

sometimes really, really challenging for students who have been trained in a K to 12 outcome based program. And I can tell immediately, when someone is a product of that, and they are just intersecting and disrupting their own inherent way of thinking. And I hope that I can create a safe space for students to interrupt to that process. I'm not saying it's deficit based, I'm simply saying, it's not the way that I function. And maybe it's not the way that most nations function. I'm not saying all but I can only speak on my behalf. And so it's that idea that we are stories, we're made up of stories. And we're circular thinkers, and we pause and we stop. And we we reflect, and we garner new knowledge, and we use provocations and another story comes to us. And then there's another cyclical process taking place, and that's okay. And I hope that I create safe space, an ethical space for people to think within the way that their self or their identity feels comfortable, and creative. And being part of that process is immeasurable. And I know there's this whole idea of what does assessment look like and my understanding is that we cannot measure that. And watching students have those aha moments in your course when they're, they're intersecting with knowledge from their undergraduate program, I'm programming and they're saying Shelby, I'm having one of those moments of, I'm remembering this from undergraduate and I'm having a moment in your course. And then when I receive messages two years later, from a settler ally in northern British Columbia, saying Shelby, I'm still remembering your course, from the U of A around policy studies. And she was saying, I'm sitting here today in my community, as a settler ally with elders, and I'm still thinking about your course. So I think that is measurement that is assessment, that is, you cannot measure it. And you never know, when you're gonna have that moment in your life where you're intersecting with something from the past. And it's bumping up against something in the contemporary or the now. And I think that's beautiful. So, yeah, the idea of how does assessment look different as well. And I know, I'm ricocheting here, and I'm, you know, going off into different areas, but just prompt me back.

B Brittany Ekelund 17:36

Well, no, I think, you know, when you're talking about what assessment looks like, I think it absolutely is a conversation that is being had and how we grade and how we assess and is success predicated on, let's say, a grading system, because people are different learners, people experience things differently, people are acted upon and act in different ways. So, you know, I think there is a huge space to look at, you know, how do we define success? Or how do we define learning?

S Shelby LaFramboise 18:11

And I think that's a reminder of, you know, sometimes focusing too much on the details or the minutiae, when, when we can look at the creative process. And I know, part of, you know, a lot of the course this past year, I remember the students saying, we're really trying Shelby we're really trying, but can you give us some, like, outlines? Or can you give us some outcomes, and I appreciate that, you know, because they were really, really making beautiful efforts, and they were recognizing, I was recognizing that they're inside of the system, you know, despite it, they, they are really attempting to make these efforts. So, like you were saying, you're talking about, and I would say, I'm interested in your process, I'm interested in your process, show me, show me what you're doing. Show me what you're unpacking, show me what you're disrupting, show me through, you know, your story, your art, you know, your creative process, show me and that's how I would see the students individual success. And that, for me as a practitioner

over time, that's what I'm interested in. And it's, you know, it's subjective, and it's unique. And I think if we create spaces where students can demonstrate that they are meeting the outcomes within the design of that course, It's my ultimate goal that they feel their own success within that space, and they're demonstrating it for the greater collective which is our group that comes together for this collective moment of say, three months or however long it is whatever block course that is, and that you not only your individual story comes together or your individual medium of art or expression, artistic expression, and then collectively we come and we create this unique story together, and then we place down our story and we lift it. And then we go off into the universe, the cosmos, wherever we may go. And we begin to restory again. And hopefully, we'll take those beautiful, positive stories with us.

B Brittany Ekelund 20:27

Absolutely. And I mean, something that you mentioned in the pre interview is the role of interruption, unlearning and relearning. Can you talk a little bit about, you know, how you bring these processes into the classroom? But also, what is the importance in the grander scheme of interruption, and unlearning?

S Shelby LaFramboise 20:51

Sure. I think a large part of it, I think, obviously, being a product of the K to 12 system myself, was understanding that my story wasn't there, that the idea of what we call Canadian history, but really history, correct history, and you'll hear, you know, Justice Sinclair talk about it, you know, that we've, we've all been lied to, as Canadians and part of my responsibility, and really, part of my personal passion is, you know, how do we interrupt what we think we know? And sometimes realizing, we don't really know what we don't know. And how do I create a safe space for people to interrupt that to unlearn and also to relearn? Not necessarily my personal agenda, but just to inquire within and realizing, you know, when people especially, you know, being part of the provincial reconciliation project in years past and being a curriculum writer and and simply just being a curious person, I was always a critical thinker. And right from grade three, I was just like, Okay, this teacher is telling me this, and I have no idea why she is telling me this, you know, and I have no idea why this teacher is telling me this when they don't even know the history. And it's not that I was obnoxious or thinking that I knew more. But it was an understanding that people are missing huge pieces of knowledge. And when we're missing huge pieces of knowledge, again, it comes back to we don't know what we don't know. And so it's probably those are the pieces that are used in every course, is interruption, unlearning and relearning. And it's like the key principles of all courses that I facilitate. And I think I think it's a great way to intersect with story, a person's personal lived story, but also to intersect again, and I know I'm bouncing back to this whatever treaty territory you're on whatever settlement you're living within, whatever unceded territory you're living on and making that connection to the land, and then also making connection from a pre contact, a contact and a post contact lens. And that's fascinating.

B Brittany Ekelund 23:27

100% and I think, you know, we've spoken with several people, again, on the podcast, but also in life about I think we are living in over the last few decades of yeah, we're working towards reconciliation we're working towards as settlers and the descendants of settlers also

unlearning. Unlearning, relearning and disrupting kind of the historical narrative that many of us were given. And when I was in elementary school, we didn't. We learned about, you know, all sorts of things, European things, maybe even a little bit of South America, but there was no coursework on Indigenous history.

D Dylan Cave 24:11

We had Indigenous day. We got one day. I think it was once in my entire it was in elementary school. Yeah. And it was it was that that was a because we had, we had Greece day, we had all these other things, and we got one Indigenous day.

B Brittany Ekelund 24:28

There wasn't any there. It wasn't until I came to university and started taking coursework in, you know, Indigenous history of people. My mind was blown. You gotta lay the foundations early. So I mean, a question you mentioned in grade three of not seeing that representation and that kind of starting your journey. Can you talk a little bit about like, we've talked about university curriculum, can you touch a little bit on you know, what kind of curriculum changes should be made throughout that K 12 system that could disrupt people then coming into university with such a rigid kind of mindset.

S Shelby LaFramboise 25:12

You know, obviously being a writer at the, and I've referenced that, at the ministerial level. And thinking that we could change it from a top down approach. Absolutely to some degree, you know, if you can agree in that space, and you can agree provisionally, and then at a greater, greater level, across the nations, I think it, I think there are challenges within that, I think we can't wait for that. And I really believe that it's up to the practitioner, it's up to the practitioner to have that responsibility. And whether you're an early learning teacher, or you're a grade 12 educator, and even a post secondary educator, I think in all facets of society, it's not only a K to 12 facilitators responsibility. It's a post secondary responsibility. It's graduate programming responsibility, its policing professional development, responsibility, its healthcare professional development responsibility, its government agencies professional responsibilities. Every part of society needs to have knowledge and education so that we don't have that those moments that you're referencing, you know, where you're just having a one day off. Or, you know, I had a student from Lethbridge, I remember in my graduate programming, and she said, I, she was having, you know, a difficult time processing. And she was a young woman. And she said, I have never learned any of this, and she was physically upset. And it's not her responsibility to take on that guilt. But when we know better, we can do better as a society collectively. And when we have policymakers and government agencies and leaders who can make that decision at helm, and we can put our stuff aside, and we can collectively raise our consciousness together, it begins and ends with education. And when we have little teeny tiny learners from early learning who are reading beautiful texts, texts not of trauma, but texts that are just beautiful, contemporary stories, and that are friendly, and that they see children living an everyday lived experience. That's a gift. And when they continue to see those beautiful opportunities now, in grade six and beyond, is there a responsibility to learn about some of the challenging complex historical pieces? Absolutely. But it always has to be age appropriate. And

if we're learning about the Holocaust, if we're learning about Japanese internment, if we're learning about Ukrainian internment, if we're learning about World War One and World War Two, we need to learn about the war at home. And there is a war here. There was a genocidal Holocaust here. And we are still impacted and have effects and affects in our everyday lived experience with one another. And that stems from homelessness right here, right across that parking lot. And I walk to my car every day. And I will probably intersect with five people who are homeless, pushing a cart. Those are results - direct correlations - of the Indian residential schools process and the legacy of colonization. So, when we are able to make those big picture understandings of socioeconomic impacts on our society, I think some of the bias and assumption, stereotypes and swiping will lift. And we will realize that this all has direct impacts and correlation.

B Brittany Ekelund 29:35

You cannot understand our current society and the people that live within it without understanding the history and legacy of Indian residential schools in Canada because it is there. And it is astounding to me as someone who learned very late in life about that history, that the things that I hear my you know, white family say they, that I'm like, you're so sometimes very much ill informed. And I don't even know if sometimes it comes from a place of willful ignorance. So, you know, starting that education and making sure that every person in Canada understands that history and has an opportunity to interact and understand that I think is a massive step that you're right needs to be taken on all levels.

S Shelby LaFramboise 30:31

Thank you for sharing that and that's a vulnerability that you're speaking at, and a direct, you know, connection to your own home community. And I think that happens a lot. And it happened to two of my students at the U of A, I remember them going home, they were settler allies, and I remember them both going home to - one was from a northern Saskatchewan community and one was from a northern BC community - and they had been intersecting with the knowledge of the course, right, which was, you know, understanding the symbolism of what a train meant to us, you know, McDonald's train and the symbol of colonization, and, you know, the legacy of Indian residential schools, and they went home for Thanksgiving and I remember them coming back and being viscerally upset, because the discourse at their tables was unsettling and they were recognizing what you were saying - just some of the informal language and, and what was normalized. And again, these are people who live within communities that were completely completely fractured at the time, I guess this would be pre-pandemic, so we're probably in the five year window, but recognizing that, you know, their communities still had this fractured state, and they were from completely oppositional spaces but the one woman referenced that on one side of the bridge, Indigenous people live and then on the other side of the bridge, non Indigenous people live, and the young man said, in my community, there's the reserve, and then there's the town, and there's no, kind of, there's nothing going on. And both of their stories were very, very similar. And I think of within my own family, you know, my mother, being a settler ally, and my father being from - being road allowance. That's pretty common, you know, there wasn't a lot of - until you move to a city, you know, until you have more of a diverse experience. And I'm not going to swipe and say that's for all people. But it was surprising to hear this from young students still. And so, I'm optimistic that, you know, maybe in five years, we've made some progress. And obviously, you know,

we've had this kind of combination, you know, I guess, a little bit of a circle closure with the papal visit, and, and the apology, but it's one step in time. And we'll continue to make these spirals of change, and shift and consciousness. And, you know, maybe in seven generations, or in many, many years to come, you know, we'll be at a space of deeper understanding, you know, and we'll be at a space where it's not so shocking, and so surprising, and making those connections to, you know, the violence within our spaces, and the legacy of colonization, and the violence that people experience within healthcare, or they experienced within policing, or they experience within education. So many different spaces, we have to look at that, right? Gender violence, all of those pieces, and how do we take back our sovereignty. So thank you for reminding me of that.

B Brittany Ekelund 33:43

You're very welcome.

D Dylan Cave 33:45

I do love what you were saying earlier, as well about, we can't always focus it on the negative sides of these things, and having beautiful things like more representation in in children's books. Just like Buffy Sainte Marie saw the change she wanted to see and she's written, she's writing children's books now. And it's such a beautiful thing to see. And more representation in that as well, through art, through everything,

S Shelby LaFramboise 34:16

Even science, you know, you think about it through business. You know, and I think for a long time, you know, like, can you hear that? Through that really, really - oh, cool, It'll be like our artists who give back our voice right? And so that MÃ©tis quote and i think, you know, I think about that, and it really has been our artists who create and give us our voice back and then how do we like transcend all genres and all labels and all disciplines and, you know, if people want access to education, not that it's easier, but how is it equitable? You know, and I think about that through my own familial lens and when your land lists, right, when you have no land and that legacy on a family, you know, from living on the road allowance and being landless and the impact it has on families, generationally, and how do we, you know, if it's choice, how do we create choice for students? You know, how do we create scholarships and bursaries so that they can get into the sciences, they can get into math, they can get into research, you know, and research that matters to them, you know, which is often connected to land. And if people want to be researchers around language, you know, their own language and learning their own language of, you know, when I think about that, myself, you know, my grandparents spoke five languages, and within one generation, it was down to just speaking English. So how do we create spaces? And if that's in the TRC, that says, We can learn within our own inherent language? Where are those spaces? And how do we tie into communities? You know, who are really the richest knowledge keepers and language keepers? And how do we make those relationships possible? So, yeah, it's beyond, it's kind of smashing down all genres and labels. And I think mostly that if you're this kid, and especially I'm speaking, obviously, on behalf of myself and my own children. Now, how do if it's their choice? How do we how do we create some autonomy? And how do we create some sovereignty, and that there is that personal

autonomy within to make choice? So I think that's, that's what I'm really aware of, especially being on the opposite side as a professor, you know, and I look at the numbers, you know, of Indigenous students. So if we have 6% representation here this past year, how do we double that? How do we even get 12%? You know, and in all faculties, you know, what, whatever that may be? And, so I guess I'm always thinking about that.

B Brittany Ekelund 37:21

Well, thank you for sharing it with us. We are actually going to take a very short break right now. We will be right back.

D Dylan Cave 37:45

All right. Welcome back, we are talking with Shelby LaFramboise and we wanted to talk a little bit about Indigenous art and specifically like part of your work as a professor, as you teach courses in Indigenous art history. Would you mind speaking a little bit about some of the differences and similarities in examining Indigenous art history versus maybe Western art history?

S Shelby LaFramboise 38:16

Sure. Obviously, like the connection to land, right, and so, you know, when you're making the difference, or the idea of difference, maybe just more the idea of uniqueness?

D Dylan Cave 38:29

I like that.

S Shelby LaFramboise 38:30

The idea of uniqueness or the idea of relationship to land, right, like, where your ohtisiy from, which is your bellybutton. And you know, so in my particular case, I have one parent who is third generation settler, and then I have one parent who's Indigenous and his, ohtisiy is from here, you know, his belly button is from here and yes, my mom is born here, third generation, but her, you know, her connection, her ancestral connection is to Europe. And so I'm given that beautiful gift, right, of having that, that kind of octopi across the water as well, right, but that connection to here. And so, I think what makes it uniquely special is that, you know, the idea is that we're connected to different places and different lands and different water systems, and different stories. And so what art looks like is usually connected to that land. And so when you're researching or studying, you know, European art history, that connection is usually to that inherent land system or that inherent water systems. And when we look at the connection to art here, we're looking at the connection to land we're also looking at the connection to you know, beadwork and quills and that shows or I should say quills and then beadwork, right because it shows that evolution of of pre contact to post contact, right? Because quills would be pre contact, and then post contact would be glass beads, right. And you can see that in the art,

you can also make the direct correlations to patterns, you know, so often, you know, a Soo influenced would be more of like the angles, you know, a lot of angle usage, and then if you look at Michif patterning, then you would see a lot of that would be a contact people right in relationship. And so you would see floral patterns. And then you look at, you know, I guess Cree patterning, you know, and then looking at, there's also the connection to florals as well, too. But every nation has this unique distinct patterning. And when it shows up in collections, you know, even like our connection to saddles, you know, when you can see the details in the saddles. And you'll see them, you know, in different museums, or some people might say, their jails. And, you know, because, you know, my dad will say, well, it's locked up in that jail over there. You know, and I won't say what jail it is or what museum it is. And again, that that has to go into relationship building. And I know that lots of museums have done incredible work around relationship building, and repatriation and returning bundles, and sacred bundles and artifacts to communities and slowly to different families, but we're still in search of a saddle. So we're looking for old Alex LaFramboise's saddle and my dad would like to see that before he goes. So. But yeah, I think about the connection. And it's always about land.

D Dylan Cave 41:56

Does the art style change over time, like our western does, you know, we go through these art phases of art deco, and all these other things like that.

S Shelby LaFramboise 42:10

Absolutely, like I, again, I'm speaking on my behalf, I'm not speaking on behalf of everyone. And so you'll see that you'll see contemporary Indigenous art, you know, you'll see music and you'll see lyrics, and you'll see, you know, graffiti and, you know, beautiful, traditional portraits. It's, it's really subjective, you know, and it's based on the person's lived experience and their chosen form of expression, and how they've chosen to do that.

D Dylan Cave 42:49

I love seeing that in the history of different eras of art. And it's, it's, you know, that's something that interests me about art history as well, is just like how generations have adapted to the tradition and made it their own I have an Indigenous artist friend who has become quite famous now doing murals. And he is like consigned to do so many murals throughout Alberta and beyond. But beautiful artist, and he takes the art that he does on a personal scale on canvas and other mediums. It is so interesting how he incorporates the contemporary style of oil painting with the tradition that he like blends these two art forms, and it's really interesting that I always love seeing it, but anyways, that's my aside on artwork and things like that.

B Brittany Ekelund 43:55

Well I had a question, you know, speaking of blending, is that, you know, we have a course in Indigenous art history. We have courses in art history, history of photography, things like that. What are the benefits to having Indigenous art history have its own coursework? And are there benefits to us as a university or maybe as academics incorporating more Indigenous art into...

D Dylan Cave 44:35

The cannon that is.

B Brittany Ekelund 44:37

The cannon that is art history and I know obviously, that's important. And when you get to higher levels, people do specifically study 12th century French Renaissance painters. So we're not talking about like, obviously, those specifics, but you know, when we're talking about undergraduate art history, I don't think it needs to be so limited. So, you know, can you talk to the benefits of having it stand alone? But also the benefits of - should it be incorporated more? Is it incorporated already? I haven't taken an art course in a couple years.

S Shelby LaFramboise 45:11

Yeah. Well, I guess, again, it's that idea that I can only reference what I know. And I guess, you know, where I feel comfortable and what I think is valuable. And I, this past year, I taught in INTA 362. So that's Indigenous arts advocacy.

B Brittany Ekelund 45:34

Okay.

S Shelby LaFramboise 45:34

Yeah. And so it's a little bit of a spin, you know, and, you know, the course was written before I arrived, and I entered into it and then, of course, used my own, you know, my own passion, you know, my own drive, and what I know, and how I brought it to life, and also bringing it to life with the students, right, because it's that co-participatory relationship, and that's where it comes alive. So it's, you know, a baseline, it's this facilitator energy, and then it's all of this energy around me, which is coming to life through students. I can't say that there's one or the other. And I think the question about should there be one or the other? Should it be embedded or not embedded or, by itself, or alone, I think it's just null in void right and so I think the best way of looking at it is, absolutely, you know, if you're interested in something, you should search it out, you should become passionate about it. And I would hope, like, if you're just taking a general course, there would be space for Indigenous art history, or contemporary knowledge of art and how it's kind of evolved from pre contact, contact, and post contact, I think it's just a perfect way of exploring art, through the different mediums. When I think about INTA 362, and obviously, I'm speaking about myself, as a facilitator, I think that one way, is that you're able to explore identity, and you're able to use artists as the medium and that's what I was really key, in my focus this past term is that the artists were the medium, and that their stories resonated, and that students were able to participate and observe and be inside of that bubble, and experience, the vulnerability of these artists sharing their personal lived art that came to life through beading, and painting and rattles and songs, and artwork, and poetry and

that's what almost every single student in the journaling was, was so surprised with was the vulnerability of these artists to share their narrative. And again, that's the idea of narrative inquiry. And that kind of touchstone of bringing our, our, our unique stories together, and then lifting our stories, and continuing on. And not only is it the idea of art, but it's also the idea of, we're nothing more than stories. So back to the can I answer the question? Should it be like this? Or this? I can't really answer that. All I can say is that when you create space, and you invite people who are curious about Indigenous art history from a pre contact, contact, and post contact? Absolutely. Do I think in every art course, wherever you are, that you need to have knowledge of the Indian Group of Seven, and you need to have knowledge of prolific Indigenous artists from across our nation? Absolutely. I think that should just naturally be embedded in every Indigenous foundations course across what we now call Canada. And it may spark some interest and it may spark your own passion for artistic expression. And you may be curious about, well, this artist is from Cold Lake Alberta, and I didn't even know or this artist is designing architecture, and I didn't know that they created this building. Or this artist is painting, like you were saying murals and they're from Alberta, you know, so yeah, I guess that's my not quick and easy way of responding. But sometimes we we don't fit and the yes or the No, or the hearing the now or this category or this label.

B Brittany Ekelund 50:13

100%. Thank you for that perspective.

S Shelby LaFramboise 50:15

You're welcome.

B Brittany Ekelund 50:18

We are nearing the end of our conversation. But something that piqued my my interest in my ears is contemporary Indigenous art. But you're teaching that at the U of A?

S Shelby LaFramboise 50:29

Correct that will be this fall term, yeah.

B Brittany Ekelund 50:32

Yeah, I'd love to hear a little bit if you're willing to share just some of the ways in which you know, how modern Indigenous art history is being made in the here and now and you know, what kind of excites you maybe about this course?

S Shelby LaFramboise 50:48

Sure. Well, this will be a first for me. So I'm jumping into that course. And honestly, I usually

just have a baseline and then, and you know, what has been done before. And then it's that trust and understanding that I let artists lead the way. And hopefully the intersection with the students curiosity, and how that will be taken up. So I can't predict the future. I don't know what it's gonna look like. But I know I'll be facilitating two courses here at MacEwan in the winter, or one in the winter term, and then one in the spring session. Yeah. What was the question again?

B Brittany Ekelund 51:24

I was just curious, in some of like, perhaps, you know, ways that contemporary art, which becomes art history is being made if there are artists in the city that you're excited to feature in the course. Just I love art, and I love contemporary art.

S Shelby LaFramboise 51:45

So i'm not going to, I'm not going to reach out and say certain people's names, but I can tell you, the artists that did come into my course, this past term, and so I had elder Francis Whiskeyjack, and he shared-

B Brittany Ekelund 52:00

Of the Whiskeyjack gallery?

S Shelby LaFramboise 52:02

Well, yeah, well he was our elder here. And so he came in, and he, he opened our course. And so, you know, from music, to drumming, to beading, to rattles, you know, giving us his beautiful narrative, his story. We had Cynthia Jim who's from British Columbia, and she gave us her BC perspective, but also her relational perspective here with treaty six territory, you know, her jingle dancing, all of her beading her gallia, her flutes, you know, her drums, you know, giving us beautiful pieces of song and story and music. We also had MÃ©tis artist Angela Hall come in, you know, from poetry to writing to incredible, you know, beautiful artwork, you know, and sharing her life story with us. We had Lana Whiskeyjack, you know, sharing her beautiful moon teachings with us, you know, showing us her art, you know, all of her pieces, the language, you know, bringing that alive for us. So, those are just some of the samples of the artists that were, you know, really the medium or the message and and how students kind of intersected with that now how that will look in the new year, I have no idea. And it's just really trusting that the people who are meant to be there will be there. And I'm interested in the everyday artist, I'm interested in the artist that seldom is recognized as an artist. I'm interested in someone who needs space, and who can share their process with us. And I think that's a gift because we have no idea in 100 years, where we all will be and we have no idea what art history will look like, which is what you were referencing, so I think the contemporary will become the history. And sometimes we just need a little space for the small person or the small voice to have the big voice one day. So yeah, if you know of any contemporary artists send them my way.

B Brittany Ekelund 54:20

Okay, I absolutely will, thank you so much Shelby. Is there anything during the podcast that we didn't ask about that you would like to speak on?

S Shelby LaFramboise 54:35

You know, other than I'm really, you know, grateful and appreciative and honored to be here and, you know, to lift up a small voice and a little girl's voice from grade three and, you know, not being able to see herself and I think the gift of art, you know the gift of voice, the gift of story, the gift of sharing, you know and your ability to share through podcasts because essentially that's what you're sharing is stories. So, I hope my story ricochets a little bit somewhere and people can hear it and they can listen to it and get curious.

B Brittany Ekelund 55:15

Absolutely. Well, thank you. Yeah. Thank you so much for offering us your time and sharing your story with us.

S Shelby LaFramboise 55:22

You bet, Hai, Hai, Maarsii.

D Dylan Cave 55:29

Well, that's all we have for today's episode of research recasted. If you want to support the podcast, you can visit research recasted on your favorite podcasting platforms to find new episodes every two weeks. Also, check us out on Instagram at research recasted where you can leave a like, give us a follow, or send us a message if you have any questions about today's episode.

B Brittany Ekelund 55:49

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