The Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Interdisciplinary: Linguistics & Anthropology)

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2005 University of Victoria MA (LING/ANTH)
1999 University of Victoria MFA
1996 Emily Carr University of Art & Design BFA

“Yexa Uk wine’, yexa Gukw, dúuwida Awinagwis”
The Body, the House, and the Land: The Conceptualization of Space in Kwakwá’kwakw Language and Culture

Wednesday, December, 11th, 2013
1PM
Ceremonial Hall
First Peoples House

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk, Department of Linguistics, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Andrea Walsh, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Peter Stephenson, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Department of Linguistics, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Regna Darnell, University of Western Ontario

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Robina Thomas, School of Social Work, UVic
Abstract
Kwak’wala is an endangered language spoken by the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations of central British Columbia. This dissertation seeks to address the ramifications of Kwak’wala language loss to Kwakwaka’wakw cultural worldview. It asks the general question, “How much of an effect does Kwak’wala language loss have on cultural understanding?” It seeks to answer the question through a specific analysis of the concept of space mapped through linguistic and artistic expression. The concept of space is integral to the understanding of the body in relationship to objects, people, social structure and geographic conceptualization. Through linguistic morphological breakdown a corpus of approximately 600 word and phrase examples drawn from the linguistic documentation of Franz Boas and George Hunt, David Grubb, the website First Voices and contemporary Kwak’wala speakers was analyzed for semantic content (meaning). The content (meanings of words and phrases) was then contextualized into broader cultural expressions and beliefs through prototype theory, radial categorization, metaphor and analogy. The dissertation then explores the connections between “linguistic” spatial expression represented through words and speech with what can be considered as “non-linguistic” cultural expressions such as architecture, social structure, performance and visual art. Four major visual works were created that sought
to express aspects of the spatial concepts that were emerging from the Kwak’wala linguistic study. Ultimately, the research reveals a strong spatial mapping process between the human body, the architecture of “the house” and the landscape traditionally occupied by the Kwakwaka’wakw which results in a metaphorical conceptualization of Body=House=Land/World which can be said to exist in Kwak’wala language forms and translates as highly productive in cultural manifestations. With the replacement of Kwak’wala by English the strength of this metaphor is weakened but not eradicated within Kwakwaka’wakw cultural expression.

**Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships**

2012 – Doctoral Scholarship, *New Relationship Trust*
2011 – Doctoral Scholarship, *New Relationship Trust*
2009 – Phillips Fund for Anthropological Research
2008 – Jacobs Fund for Linguistic Research
2007 – BC Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art
2006 – VIVA Award for Visual Art

**Presentations**


**Publications**