



Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (University of Waterloo, 2014)

**“Oh nisa’taro:ten? Learning how to sken:nен as a contemporary  
Haudenosaunee woman”**

School of Child and Youth Care

Friday, January 17, 2020  
10:00 A.M.  
Clearihue Building  
Room B019

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Sandrina de Finney, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)  
Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

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Dr. Edwin Nissen, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is threaded together with sken:nен, the radical practice of peacemaking. As a Kanien'keha:ka woman, I am responsible for finding ways of bringing our peace-full teachings, gifts and intellect into the future. This thesis braids together a resurgent ethic of sken:nен with Haudenosaunee knowledges, Indigenous feminisms and decolonial futurities by taking up the question: *Oh nisa'taro:ten? (What is the contour of your clay?)*, posed in Kanien'keha to situate me in relation to the lands I come from. I am taking this ancestral question seriously by exploring the relationships that make up the 'clay' of my contemporary Haudenosaunee Indigeneity as it is shaped by life in an active settler colonial state. Tracing the rhythmic gestures of my grandmothers' hands, I have created a patchworking star quilt methodology to gather fragments of my decolonial curiosities, weaving them into layered story-maps that capture constellations of my movements through settler occupied places. Through the assimilative policies of the Indian Act, quilting simultaneously became an act of survivance and resistance for my grandmothers; by picking up an intergenerational practice of patchworking as methodology, I am jumping into the ruptures of my contemporary Haundenosaunee identity, roles and responsibilities. Patchworking story-maps involves tracing genealogies of intergenerational trauma, rupturing geographies of lateral violence, overflowing either/or binary cuts of identity (non)belonging, and navigating the urbanized displacements of Indigenous peoples from lands, communities and relationships. In an effort to mobilize the knowledges and practices of sken:nен, and to ensure that my work is accessible to a wider audience, my story-maps have been shared in a digital format using Instagram to stitch moments of Indigenous presence, memory and language (back) into the fabric of cityscapes that are riddled with the logics of settler colonialism. This thesis aims to create generative spaces to explore, transform and (re)imagine futurities of peacemaking that move towards more accountable and inclusive webs of relationality rooted in fluid traditions and (star)world building.