



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

JUSTINE AUBEN DRUMMOND

BA (Hons) (University of Victoria, 2014)

**“Coast Salish Artist Douglas LaFortune: Deconstructing Euro-Settler
Narratives of Indigenous Artistic Practice and Investigating Active
Cultural Practice through Collaborative Witnessing”**

Department of Anthropology

Friday, December 14, 2018

9:30 A.M.

Clearihue Building

Room B021

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Andrea Walsh, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Prof. Carey Newman, Department of Visual Arts, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Deborah Rutman, School of Social Work, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Douglas (Doug) LaFortune is a Coast Salish Master Carver and Graphic Artist of both Quw'utsun' (Cowichan) and Tsawout, WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) heritage, with an artistic career spanning over four decades (City of Duncan 2013:2,6,21,28; Coastal Peoples n.d.). By examining how Douglas' life and work are intertwined in the active practice of his culture, this thesis challenges harmful Euro-settler institutional narratives of Indigenous art that privilege authenticity-as-tradition and place Indigenous cultures in a mythical pre-contact past, thus dismissing references to their lived experiences as inauthentic (Phillips 2012:113; Tupper et al. 2013:42). This project is rooted in community. Douglas and his wife Kathleen told my supervisor, Dr. Andrea Walsh, that they wished to organize their collection of Douglas' drawings and prints (dating from the 70s until the present). Dr. Walsh recommended me (Justine Drummond) for this work, and I agreed to catalogue, photograph, and organize the collection. Through examining Douglas' collection and work as a whole, I witnessed the relationality of his artistic practice, as it is inextricable from family, place, and culture (Wilson 2008:80, 87). This was further illuminated in interviews with Douglas, Kathleen, and their granddaughter Seneca, which I conducted through collaborative witnessing, wherein I acted as a co-storyteller with the participants (Adams et al. 2015:4,54-56). The thesis structure is as follows: the introduction outlines my research objectives and a brief biography of Douglas; chapter 2 reviews the literature on decolonizing approaches towards Coast Salish art; chapter 3 details my methodology and data collection process; chapter 4 presents Douglas, Kathleen, and Seneca discussing their lives as lived through art; chapter 5 explores Douglas' collection, and his entire body of artistic work; and this chapter is followed by the conclusion.