

T'XWELÁTSE IS A MAN. He was turned to stone but he is still alive. He connects us to time immemorial. He is at the heart of the exhibition **Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse** as it was produced at The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford in April 2011.... This book is a translation of that exhibition, a transformation in itself, helping to keep this story alive.

—From the Introduction

AND WHAT A STORY IT IS. T'xwelátse, revered ancestor of the Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe (Chilliwack Tribe) of the Stó:lō people, was born in the distant past when the world was not quite right. He lived in the land of the Stó:lō, in what is commonly known as the lower Fraser River watershed of southwestern British Columbia.

How T'xwelátse was turned to stone is one part of his story. But only part. Late in the nineteenth century, he was taken from his community and ended up in a Seattle museum. Another century passed. In 2006, due to the efforts of his family caretakers, T'xwelátse came home to his people.

The loss of T'xwelátse coincided with the loss of many aspects of Stó:lō culture and landscape through the effects of colonization. His return speaks to cultural renaissance and brings the opportunity for learning and cross-cultural understanding. Using various media—from photography through storytelling, film, and dance—this book, like the exhibition on which it is based, relates multiple transformation narratives to bring forward the story and enduring message of T'xwelátse: *We must all learn to live together in a good way.*



MAN TURNED TO STONE: T'XWELÁTSE

Stó:lō Nation / Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre • The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse



PUBLISHED BY



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Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse



Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse

An exhibition at **The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford**, Abbotsford, British Columbia • April 14 to May 29, 2011

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To our youth—our future generations.

*“As humans, we are the weakest of all beings.
The Creator put us on this Earth to learn.”*

—T’xwelátse (Herb Joe)

• STONE T’XWELÁTSE • THE T’XWELÁTSE FAMILY • T’XWELÁTSE (HERB JOE) • DAVID CAMPION •

Man Turned to Stone: T’xwelátse

in all its forms, including an exhibition, publication,
and website, resulted from the collaboration of:

• SANDRA SHIELDS • SCOTT MARSDEN • DAVID M. SCHAEPE • NAXAXALHTS’I (ALBERT “SONNY” MCHALSIE) •

“Collaboration” refers to the process of or product that comes from working together.

Collaborations have no beginning and no end. They are circular in form. Collaborative projects are, by their very nature, projects and productions centred around getting along, sharing ideas and control, cooperating, and maintaining good relationships—much like the central message of Stone T’xwelátse.

Such projects require members to share with each other—to the point of becoming a collective.

They require interconnection. When done well, they can create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This collaboration benefited from the creative input of the team members in this way.



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Stó:lō

Stó:lō: A Note on the Halq’eméylem Language

“Stó:lō” is a Halq’eméylem word that refers to both a river and a people. It means “River,” “River of Rivers,” and “Tribe of Tribes,” all in reference to the “People of the River,” Stó:lō. The Stó:lō are the indigenous peoples of S’ólh Téméxw (Our land, our world), occupying the lower Fraser River watershed of southwestern British Columbia. Halq’eméylem is the upriver dialect of their language.

Stó:lō Elders say, “S’ólh Téméxw te it’kwelo. Xyólhmet te mekw’ stám it kwelát” (This is our land. We have to take care of everything

that belongs to us). They also say, “We have always been here.” Archaeological evidence documents at least ten thousand years of occupation in S’ólh Téméxw. The current Stó:lō population is approximately ten thousand people.

The Halq’eméylem words and phrases listed below are used throughout this book as important parts of the exhibition Man Turned to Stone: T’xwelátse.

Halq’eméylem

Halq’eméylem. The upriver dialect of Halkomelem, language of the Stó:lō.

shxwelí

Shxwelí. Spirit; life force; spiritual bond connecting all things.

S’ólh Téméxw

S’ólh Téméxw. Our land, our world.

Sqwélqwel

Sqwélqwel. True news or personal histories.

Stó:lō

Stó:lō. People of the River, Tribe of Tribes, River of Rivers, River.

Sxwōxwiyám

Sxwōxwiyám. The period of the distant past when the world was mixed up; also the narratives of Xexá:ls (the Transformers).

T'xwelátse

T'xwelátse. The first man of the Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe (Chilliwack Tribe) of Stó:lō. He was born in the distant past when things were not quite right and transformed into stone by Xexá:ls.

Xexá:ls

Xexá:ls. The Transformers: four black bears—three brothers and a sister—born from red-headed woodpecker and grizzly bear, who travelled through the land “making things right.” Xá:ls is the singular form.

Xyólhmet te mekw' stám it kwelát

Xyólhmet te mekw' stám it kwelát. We have to take care of everything that belongs to us.

Halq'eméylem

Key to the Stó:lō Writing System for Halq'eméylem Used in This Book

Halq'eméylem was traditionally an oral language, having no written form. Work in the 1970s and 1980s by Stó:lō Elders at the Coqualeetza Cultural Center and Brent Galloway (a linguist who was then with University of California, Berkeley) has produced a standardized “orthography,” or way of writing the language as it is heard.

This orthography is used throughout this book.

Brent Galloway published an excellent discussion of the orthography and the pronunciation of Halq'eméylem sounds in his short article “The Significance of the Halkomelem Language Material.” This is reproduced and slightly summarized here.

The vowels in Halq'eméylem are:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| <i>a</i> | as in English fat, bat (when under ´ or ` or before w or y) or as in English “sell” or “bet” (elsewhere). |
| <i>e</i> | as in English sill, bill (when between palatal sounds l, lh, x, y, s, ts, ts', k, k') or as in English “pull” or “bull” (when between labialized sounds m, w, kw, kw', qw, qw', xw, xw) or as in English “mutt”, “what” (elsewhere). |
| <i>i</i> | as in English “antique”, “beet”, “eel.” |
| <i>o</i> | as in English “pot”, “mop”, “father”, “brother.” |
| <i>ō</i> | as in English “no”, “go”, “crow.” |
| <i>u</i> | as in English “Sue”, “soon”, “moon”, “flu.” |

Most vowels can be followed by [y] or [w] in the same syllable:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| <i>aw</i> | as in English “cow.” |
| <i>ay</i> | rare in English, some have it in “sang.” |
| <i>ew</i> | as in Canadian English “about.” |
| <i>ey</i> | as in English “bait.” |
| <i>iw</i> | as in English “peewee” minus the last “ee.” |
| <i>iy</i> | as in English “beet.” |
| <i>ōw</i> | as in English “ah well” minus the last “ell.” |
| <i>oy</i> | as in English “bite.” |
| <i>ow</i> | as in English “bowl.” |

- | | |
|--------|---|
| ´ or ` | Almost all Halq'eméylem words have at least one stressed vowel (like á or à or ´i for example). Some words have several stressed vowels. The stress marks are needed to tell which part of the word is said louder and higher. Without this a speaker will have a foreign accent or say the wrong word. Stress (´ or `) does not change the pronunciation of a vowel (qwá:l “mosquito” and qwà:l “talk” both rhyme with English “pal”). Stress means the vowel is pronounced fairly loud and with a higher melody than if the vowel was unstressed. High stress (shown by ´ over a vowel) has the highest pitch, about four notes above a vowel without a stress mark. Mid stress (shown by ` over a vowel) has a medium pitch, about two notes above a vowel without stress. |
| : | means that the sound before the colon is prolonged or dragged out twice as long as a sound without a following colon. |

Extracted from “Key to the Stó:lō Writing System for Halq'eméylem,” in Keith Thor Carlson (ed.), You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada's Pacific Coast History (Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 1997), v–vi.

The only consonants which are pronounced like those in English are:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| <i>p</i> | as in English “pill” and “spin.” |
| <i>t</i> | as in English “tick” and “stand.” |
| <i>ch</i> | as in English “church.” |
| <i>ts</i> | as in English “rats.” |
| <i>k</i> | as in English “king” and “skill.” |
| <i>kw</i> | as in English “inkwell” and “queen.” |
| <i>th</i> | as in English “thin” (but not voiced as in “this” or “the”). |
| <i>sh</i> | as in English “shine.” |
| <i>s</i> | as in English “sill.” |
| <i>h</i> | as in English “hat.” |
| <i>m</i> | as in English “man” and “bottom.” |
| <i>l</i> | as in English “land” and “camels.” |
| <i>y</i> | as in English “yes” and “say.” |
| <i>w</i> | as in English “wood” and “how.” |

This leaves eighteen sounds, most of which do not even occur in English.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| <i>q</i> | made by raising the very back of the tongue to touch the soft palate |
| <i>qw</i> | made just like the q but with rounded lips |

There are ten consonants written with an apostrophe: ch', k', kw', p', q', qw', t', th', ts', tl'. These are popped or glottalized consonants. Th occurs in English width and breadth.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| ´ | glottal stop. It is found in a few words in English like, “mutton” or “button” or Cockney English “bottle” (spelled with “tt”) or beginning each “uh” in “uh-uh” (the sound meaning “no”) or the sound beginning “earns” in “Mary earns” when pronounced differently from “Mary yearns.” |
| <i>lh</i> | made by putting your tongue in position to say an “l” but then blowing air (like an “h”) around the sides of the tongue. This sound may be heard in English after “k” sound in a few words like “clean” (klhin) or “clear” or “climb.” |

There are four blown x sounds. These sounds are made by raising the tongue to narrow the passage of air till you hear the friction of the air.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| <i>x</i> | made with the middle of the tongue raised roughly in the same place is it is put to make a y as in “yawn.” But instead of using your voice you just blow air and it produces a friction sound between the middle of the tongue and the front of the hard palate. English has this sound first in “Hugh” or “hew.” |
| <i>xw</i> | made with the tongue raised a little further back, by the middle off the hard palate (roof of the mouth), but it also requires rounded lips. It sounds a lot like wh in some words in English but with more friction on the roof of the mouth. |
| <i>x̥</i> | made still further back, in fact with the back of the tongue raised close to the soft palate (where the q is made). German has this sound in “ach” for example, and Scottish has it in “lock” meaning “lake.” |
| <i>xw̥</i> | made in the same back place as x̥ but is also made with round lips. It is like a blown qw while x̥ is like a blown q. |



Xyólhmet te mekw' stám it kwelát

Introduction

Reflections on Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse

T'xwelátse is a man. He was turned to stone but he is still alive. He connects us to time immemorial. He is at the heart of the exhibition *Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse* as it was produced at The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford in April 2011. The exhibition told the story of Stone T'xwelátse. It described how he was transformed to become a part of the Stó:lō cultural landscape and explored the history of colonization that led to his being lost for more than one hundred years. It also documented the cultural revival and complex process of repatriation that brought him home again. Of course, the exhibition had to be taken down at the end of its run. Like the exhibition, this book tells the story of Stone T'xwelátse.

This exhibition was a collaborative effort that recognized and directly involved the T'xwelátse family as co-producers. The T'xwelátse family clearly expressed their interest in the educational value and importance of this project. *Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse* explored historical, cultural, and spiritual elements of the T'xwelátse transformation narrative to reveal the fundamental Stó:lō relationship to land and resources and to share elements of their underlying worldview with the broader community. Like the exhibition, this book tells the story of Stone T'xwelátse. In brief:

T'xwelátse is an ancestor of the Stó:lō who was transformed as a lesson for his descendants about how to live properly. Stone T'xwelátse contains the soul of a transformed man who came from the Ts'elxwéyeqw (Chilliwack) village of Th'ewá:lí (Soowahlie) on the Chilliwack River. The man T'xwelátse was turned to stone by X̱exá:ls (the Transformers), who travelled through the land in the distant past making the world right. This was the time of the Sxwōxwiyám, the period of the distant past when the world was mixed up. Stone T'xwelátse forms part of a broader landscape transformed by X̱exá:ls. Using the supernatural powers they possessed, X̱exá:ls physically transformed people they encountered at particular locations into stones, mountains, and other forms. X̱exá:ls transformed the living souls of these people, who ever since have remained embodied in their altered forms, just as T'xwelátse's soul remains alive and embodied in stone. These transformations surround us as the living, ancestral landscape of S'ólh Téméxw—the Stó:lō world.

Stone T'xwelátse provides a centrepiece around which we weave together multiple transformation narratives. These narratives derive from the time of X̱exá:ls, and they also derive from the most recent era of transformations unleashed in Stó:lō territory by colonization and those whom the Stó:lō call Xwelitem (hungry people), in reference to the newcomers' seemingly insatiable appetite for land and resources.

Stone T'xwelátse offers profound access into the cultural heritage of the Stó:lō—from the dramatic events that led to his loss over one hundred years ago to his subsequent recovery by the Stó:lō and the message he has to share with the community at large. That message—*We must all learn to live together in a good way*—is particularly relevant today as we attempt to bridge divides and unite communities. Reinforcing this message, the exhibition highlights themes of caretaking responsibility and repatriation as well as the theme of transformation that, once recognized, can be viewed all around us.

The exhibition, originally curated at The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford, helps Stone T'xwelátse carry out his work as a living teaching icon. As a stone man, he cannot do this work alone. He relies on his family, his caretakers, the carriers of his name, and his friends to bring out the messages contained within him. Within his story are teachings and principles that are valuable educational tools for contemporary society. Those of us involved in this exhibition, Stó:lō and Xwelitem alike, were his arms, legs, and voice... helping to express his teachings about Stó:lō ways of understanding the world and bringing them to public attention.

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse mixed photography, film, performance, oral and written history, and community collaboration—all surrounding Stone T'xwelátse as the central figure. With so many elements, translating the exhibition into a book was a challenge. This challenge parallels that faced by the Stó:lō in maintaining the integrity of the oral narrative while translating knowledge and culture into a form that could/can be understood by their Xwelitem neighbours as they arrived... and arrived... and arrived since the early 1800s, and as they continue to arrive in droves today to settle in S'ólh Téméxw.

In carrying out the transformation from exhibition to book, we maintained a principle of “fixation”—of transferring images and text from the exhibition to the book as directly as possible, maintaining the essence, the core, the structures. This was no easy task. It stressed us out at times. Changing structures. Imagine facing the challenge of maintaining the integrity of your laws, culture,



and beliefs while confronting a total shift in societal structures. You face shifting languages, symbols, and the meanings of things. You are trying to bridge a divide between two communities. Imagine *that* stress.

Imagine... you are Stó:lō. Imagine the challenge. Convey to the “other” your laws, your way of doing things using only the spoken word and oral history, and do so in a foreign language—English. Is there an English word for *shxweli*? No. How about *S̓xwō̓xwiyám*? Not exactly. How, then, can you convey the richness and depth of these Halq'eméylem words, let alone the worldview from which they arise?

Would writing down the words help? Try it. Part of the meaning gets lost in going literary. You are an oral society. You have your own laws, cultural beliefs, and ways of understanding and doing things—all things, both very broadly and in great detail. Could it be that such detail and such a general philosophy simply cannot be translated across the societal and cultural divides that face you? Is it worth trying?

The potential for miscommunication is enormous. Yet look around. Communication plays a major role in accounting for losses to the land and resources around you: losses meted out at the hands of “others”—hungry people—often unwittingly. Your lakes are drained. Your heart is drained. Yet you are dealing with human relations. Xwelitem are humans; Stó:lō are humans... sharing this “space.” Or is it a “place”? Even differences in meaning between these two simple, one-syllable words are difficult to pin down, yet central to developing respectful understandings and relations with one another. Look them up. These impacts result mostly from a lack of communication. We must fill this divide. We can do so with knowledge. It is therefore necessary to communicate, despite the difficulties. We have to try in order to learn how to do things better—in a good way.

That lakes are drained without awareness of the impact on people's hearts is an act of ignorance. Knowledge, awareness, and consideration of such impacts serve, ideally, to enlighten the actions of others. They help avoid such situations; help maintain health and balance; work towards understanding and reconciliation. When such acts continue to be carried out knowingly, they shift from ignorance to active violence that may then be clearly pointed out and described in terms such as “atrocities.” People die from cultural stress. Drain a lake and people die. It's no joke.

Education, communication, awareness, and respect stand at the heart of influencing these arenas of action. Our goal, in this “exhibition become book,” is to raise awareness of the need to live together in a good way. Finding ways to communicate and truly understand one another remains one of our greatest challenges. To help address this challenge for six weeks in April and May of 2011, The Reach Museum and Gallery Abbotsford was transformed from a “space” into a “place” of cultural interconnection, social interaction, dialogue, debate, and exploration of issues that define the communities sharing S'ólh Téméxw—the Fraser Valley of southwest British Columbia. For that period of time, the seeds of a cross-fertilized community were nurtured. The aim is that those seeds will grow into a crop of heightened awareness and informed action—in which the integrity of Stó:lō laws, culture, and landscapes is kept intact, is “fixed.”

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse mixed many voices, integrating (versus assimilating) them in a collaborative way. Collaboration

means “working together; sharing.” If you have a big ego or want to brand your thoughts, ideas, products, or properties with your one and only name—as personal possessions—then collaboration is not for you. It's a great thing, however, if you want to explore a universe of collective possibilities. It works if you are willing to engage in collective brainstorming, see things in new ways, creatively address issues, and come up with entirely new and entirely shared ideas, products, and properties—collective possessions.

Uninterested in the status quo and attracted to invention, those involved in this exhibition ventured into “collaboration.” “Institutions” came together. The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford, the T'xwelátse family, a photographer/writer duo (the Campion/Shields family), the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (SRRMC), and the Semoya Dance Company all agreed to work together—each bringing their perspectives and thoughts to the collective table. It was a big table.

The Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse exhibition wove together stories, narratives, photographs, films, writing, drawing, maps, people, performance, voice, sound, walls, floor, ceiling, space, and, of course, Stone T'xwelátse himself in order to communicate his message. The exhibition went beyond words, including them but adding these other senses and ways of communicating and understanding. As humans, we can learn through all our many points of sensation: our ears, our eyes... even our feet. People were invited in. They walked every which way through the exhibition in a generally circular form. Let your fingers do the walking through this book, beginning and ending as you please, exploring the various elements of this exhibition as they interconnect with one another.

The work of photographic artist David Campion is an integral part of this production. His involvement with Stone T'xwelátse began in 2006 when he and his wife, writer Sandra Shields, were invited by T'xwelátse (Herb Joe) to document the repatriation of this Stó:lō ancestor. His portraits of the fifteen Grandmothers, caretakers of Stone T'xwelátse, share the central place—spatially and thematically—of the exhibition. Conscious of his position as a Xwelitem artist, David chose to focus on exploring the transformations unleashed on S'ólh Téméxw by European occupation. In two related works, *Semá:th Lake Birds* and *You See Mount Cheam, Lhílheqey Looks Out Over Her People*, he created images that explore the physical and imaginative transformations wrought on the landscape by the shared history of colonization.

The film *Written in Stone*, a part of the exhibition, was directed by David Schaepe and Sonny McHalsie of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (in conjunction with Bear Image Productions). This film portrays the landscape of the upriver portion of S'ólh Téméxw (the Central and Upper Fraser Valley through the lower Fraser Canyon), following the path of Xexá:ls as they travelled through the land making the world right. As a Stó:lō-Xwelitem pair who have collaborated on many projects for over a decade, Sonny and Dave approached and resolved questions of “portraiture” and representation of the Stó:lō cultural landscape as a form of Stó:lō Constitution written on the land—representing the words of Xwelixweltel (Steven Point, currently His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia) of the Skowkale First Nation. Also provided through the SRRMC were the repatriation reports *T'ixelasta Repatriation Report, Part I and Part II*, and the documentary film *T'xwelátse Is Finally Home* (Joe, Schaepe, McHalsie, Pederson, and Bear Image Productions, 2006), from which quotes were extracted for the section “Voices of Repatriation.”

The story of the repatriation of Stone T'xwelátse was shared in an installation that brought together handwritten words, documentary photos, the official repatriation report, and the spoken words of family, community, and museum staff. Writer Sandra Shields collaborated with her husband David Campion to produce *Storyboard for a Repatriation*, an integrated artwork installed as a scroll over twenty feet long that tells the *sqwelqwel* (personal history; true news) of the loss and return of Stone T'xwelátse. *Storyboard* anchored the “Repatriation Station” in the exhibition, appearing alongside a desk upon which sat the repatriation report and a computer playing the film *T'xwelátse Is Finally Home*. In creating *Storyboard*, Sandra and David faced challenges personifying the teaching that “we have to learn to live together in a good way” at the most basic level of family relations, that of husband and wife—the core relationship for which T'xwelátse was, himself, turned to stone. Sandra addresses this in her narrative in the centre panel of *Storyboard*.

The Semoya Dance Company (Maxine Prevost, Darwin and Francine Douglas), a Stó:lō performance group, produced and launched their world premiere of *The Sxwōxwiyám of T'xwelátse* as a performance artwork for the exhibition. For their production they designed and made the costumes and regalia, some of which were created from local materials collected from the land around us. They effectively faced and overcame the challenge of transforming these *sxwōxwiyám* from a literary form, actively re-incorporating these *sxwōxwiyám* within a Stó:lō context of orality and theatrical storytelling.

The written versions of the *sxwōxwiyám* included in the exhibition and in this book all originate from tellings by Stó:lō community members (George Chehalis, Herb Joe, Amy Cooper) to Xwelitem (Franz Boaz, David Schaepe, Oliver Wells). These tellings are recorded and transcribed. Although this may serve a practical purpose and be well intended, the literary process is limiting, separating and isolating the words, alone, as only one piece of the full set of things involved in the “telling.” The transcript, the literary version, is less than the whole of the *sxwōxwiyám*.

Literary and oral forms are not equal in this way. Laws and ways of one are not accommodated by the other, hence both forms must be recognized and respected as distinct systems of communicating and recording things so as not to impact their integrity. The actors in this performance, mostly youth, all Stó:lō, not only recode but decolonize and reconstitute these *sxwōxwiyám* through their actions / acting. As Stone T'xwelátse was returned to the Stó:lō after a century of separation, the Semoya Dance Company brings holism back to the *sxwōxwiyám* of T'xwelátse. Now, better understanding the difference, how could we avoid impacting the narrative as an element of the exhibition? We made a film of the premier performance—providing sight, sound, action, voice. This film was projected onto one of the walls of the gallery for the duration of the show. Semoya's voices actively filled the space.

Scott Marsden, curator of The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford, collaborated in every aspect of the exhibition and installations,

which also included storytelling and panel discussions at The Reach. He provides a curatorial essay as an afterword in this volume. In it he examines the role of the “gallery museum” as an institution and, in this case, a place of intercommunity dialogue and shared experience promoting societal change. Extracted from this essay, he writes:

The exhibition offered a unique opportunity to invite the kind of participation and dialogue through which First Nation and non-Native communities can engage in the ongoing construction of social meaning. This exhibition mediates between the history, codes, and culture of the Stó:lō Nation and their neighbours, between Campion's photographs and the gallery space, and between the visitors and the exhibition....

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse provided the most comprehensive account yet assembled of the significant historical, cultural, and spiritual elements of the story of T'xwelátse and presented a core understanding of the Stó:lō people. The exhibition offered the unique challenge of how to present Stone T'xwelátse, the embodiment of a living being, containing the soul of T'xwelátse, a *shxwlá:m* or “Indian doctor” who was transformed to stone. This exhibition provided Stó:lō Nation with an opportunity to share private memories and stories... with the intention of community building through a dialogue in the form of an exhibition....

The role of The Reach in the process of meaning-making entails understanding the gallery as a site to create contact zones where different identities, people, and artworks can discover new possibilities to develop a cultural remapping, to rewrite cultural borders, and to create experiments in visual art, history, and community collaboration.... The exhibition Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse offered an opportunity for people to explore their own identities in relation to others, to reflect on how people are different and how they are the same.

The T'xwelátse family and T'xwelátse (Herb Joe) provided the foundation upon which this exhibition was built, from which societal transformation can occur, recognizing the need for cross-cultural education. They put their trust in a collaborative process including Stó:lō, Xwelitem, and a Xwelitem institution to do this work—as a microcosmic cross-section of the social landscape of S'ólh Téméxw / southwestern British Columbia—under the guidance and watchful eye of the Grandmothers, of course.

To share the experience of Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse as fully as possible, visit the interactive version of the exhibition at www.srrmcentre.com/StoneTxwelatse.html.





We have to learn to live together in a good way.

—T'xwelátse (Herb Joe)

Sxwōxwiyám

Sxwōxwiyám are the stories about a long time ago when the Elders explained that the world wasn't quite right. It was a time when animals and people could talk to each other and could transform from one to the other. Through sxwōxwiyám we are all connected.

Xexá:ls (the Transformers) were given the responsibility to walk through S'ólh Téméxw and make things right. In walking through S'ólh Téméxw they were confronted a number of times by people and different situations that were going against the laws of the land and the

The Birth of T'xwelátse —Ancestor of the Ts'elxwéyeq̓w

In Th'ewá:lí, on the lower Chilliwack River, there lived a chief who had a very beautiful daughter. K-ā'iq [Mink] wished to have her for himself. So he assumed the form of a handsome young man and walked upriver on the shore opposite the village. He carried a harpoon in his hand and fish on his back so that it appeared as if he had just caught them. At just this moment an old man had sent all the young girls to bathe, among them the chief's daughter. The girls saw the young man, who kept calling "Ps! Ps!" and when they noticed the fish that he was carrying, they asked him to throw one over to them. He fulfilled their wish; the fish fell into the water, swam into the chief's daughter and made her ill. Her father searched for a shaman to heal her. So Mink assumed the shape of a shaman. In the evening he went to the village and when he was seen by an old woman, she said, "Surely he will be able to heal the girl." They called him into the house and he promised to heal her. First, he sent all the people out of the house, leaving only an old woman sitting outside the door to accompany his song with the rhythmic beats of the dancing stick. To begin with, he sang, but then he slept with the girl and she gave birth to a child right away. So Mink leaped at once out of the house. The old woman heard the child's crying and called the people back. They became very angry, took the child and threw him out of the house. But Mink was standing outside with his mountain goat cape spread wide; he caught the child in it and went away with him. After a while the girl's father became sad that he lost his grandson. So he went to K-ā'iq and begged him to send him back. Mink granted his wish and sent the boy back. He was named T'xwelátse (from the lower reaches of the river). He became the ancestor of the Ts'elxwéyeq̓w.

—As told by George Chehalis, 1890

rules received from the Creator. Xexá:ls were given the task of making those things right, turning those people into stone.

If, as Moses went to the top of Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments written by God on a stone tablet, he had instead been given one commandment and himself turned into stone or the mountain itself as the inscription of that law on the land, that would then parallel the actions of Xexá:ls and transformations of S'ólh Téméxw.

T'xwelátse's Transformation

T'xwelátse and his wife were on the riverbank arguing when Xá:ls happened upon them. Xá:ls, the great Transformer being given the responsibility by Chíchelh Siy:ám for making things right as he travelled through our lands, asked this man and woman if they would consider not arguing and that there were better ways of resolving conflict and resolving problems. As a result of his intervention Xá:ls and T'xwelátse, who was a shaman, decided to have a contest. They tried to transform each other into various things—a salmon, a mink, a twig. Finally, Xá:ls was successful in transforming T'xwelátse into stone. Xá:ls then gave the responsibility of caring for Stone T'xwelátse to T'xwelátse's wife. Stone T'xwelátse was to be brought home and placed in front of their house as a reminder to all of the family that we have to learn to live together in a good way. And the family's responsibility from that point in time was caring for Stone T'xwelátse—given to one of the women of our family. They were to be the caretaker of Stone T'xwelátse throughout their lifetime and would pass it on to one of their daughters or granddaughters, who would then be responsible for caring for Stone T'xwelátse for that generation.

—As told by T'xwelátse (Herb Joe), 2003



*The Creator, in his wisdom, decided
to take certain people and make an example of them.*

*So throughout the Nation you have these
stone figures which represent rules or values . . .*

Our Constitution has always been here.

*Our rules of conduct, our rules of behaviour,
the way that we think, our moral values . . .*

and they are actually situated around the Stó:lō Nation.

*They not only define our Nation but they
define how we are supposed to conduct ourselves.*

*Our Constitution has been there and
it really is written in stone.*

*The T'xwelátse Stone is part of that complex
of these written rules, which are very important.*

—Xwelixweltel (Steven Point), in *T'xwelátse Is Finally Home* (2006)

S'ólh Téméxw

Written in Stone

The film *Written in Stone* is an aerial flyover following the path of X̱ex̱á:ls as they travelled through the eastern half of S'ólh Téméxw making the world right . . . Xwelixweltel's words (taken from his interview in *T'xwelátse Is Finally Home*) scroll across the screen as an introductory statement. Stó:lō songs alternate with elevator music as the only other “sensory” things in the film. There are no spoken words, only visuals and music. That's it. Simple enough, right? But, while watching this simple film, ask yourself: What do I see?

Do you see a beautiful environment? A stunning landscape of mountains, rivers, lakes, and forests? Do dollar signs ring up in your mind's eye, focusing on the value of available lumber, gravel, and hydro power? Do you see the land as an empty office with no other furniture in it, save for a rock or two, when you arrive on your first day of work—or on your first day of exploring the region for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1808? Or when you plant the colonial flag staking out British Columbia in 1858?

Or do you see deeper than that, through the skin and beyond all those things on the surface? Do you see deeper into the heart of the land? Do you see the stone people, living geographic landmarks holding within them the laws of the land? Do you see their stories? Do you see the interconnections between peaks and places? And can you read them as inscribed chapters of a cultural landscape of meaning, an instruction manual on how to behave properly, how to live together in a good way?

If the cultural landscape of S'ólh Téméxw is invisible to you, you are not alone. This form of cultural blindness is, in fact, both very common and quite easily curable. If you care to, you can overcome this blindness and “see the invisible.” Learn. Expand your vocabulary. You can easily deepen your sensibilities to learn s̱wō̱x̱wiyám, to awaken to “another way,” and to bring a new layer of reality and meaning to what you see around you every day (if you are fortunate enough to live in beautiful S'ólh Téméxw).

Take Lhílheqey, for example. The profile of Lhílheqey can be seen from many locations throughout the Central Fraser Valley. She's huge. She's unmistakable. So is the profile of her dog, who faithfully followed her home as she and her daughters and sisters moved back from Nooksack, to be immortalized by X̱ex̱á:ls in living stone, captured sẖx̱welí. Her profile graces the Chilliwack City Council chamber and numerous business logos.

While you probably know her as Mount Cheam, see her and understand her now as Lhílheqey. After you see her once this way, you will forever awaken to that recognition. Learn her history, how she is connected to “Mount Baker,” where her sons went, why she was transformed to stone, what her role is, and what we have to learn from her in guiding our behaviour as good human beings. Open up. Acquire this knowledge. Learn it. Carry it. Share it. Respect it.

See how easy it is? You are already learning to see the invisible. A literal mountain materializes before your eyes—an entire landscape, for that matter. Repeat this process with other landmarks. For starters we suggest Echo Island (Harrison Lake), Mount Slesse and Mount McGuire (Chilliwack River Valley), Mount Hope (Hope), and Lady Franklin Rock (in the lower Fraser Canyon).

Continue to do this while watching the film over and over again. Ask yourself: Does what you see change through time? Are you making the invisible visible? Are you recognizing the living landscape of which we are all a part and to which we are all connected? Are you learning to live together in a good way? Or is your office still a vacant and unoccupied place, save for a few rocks and stones?

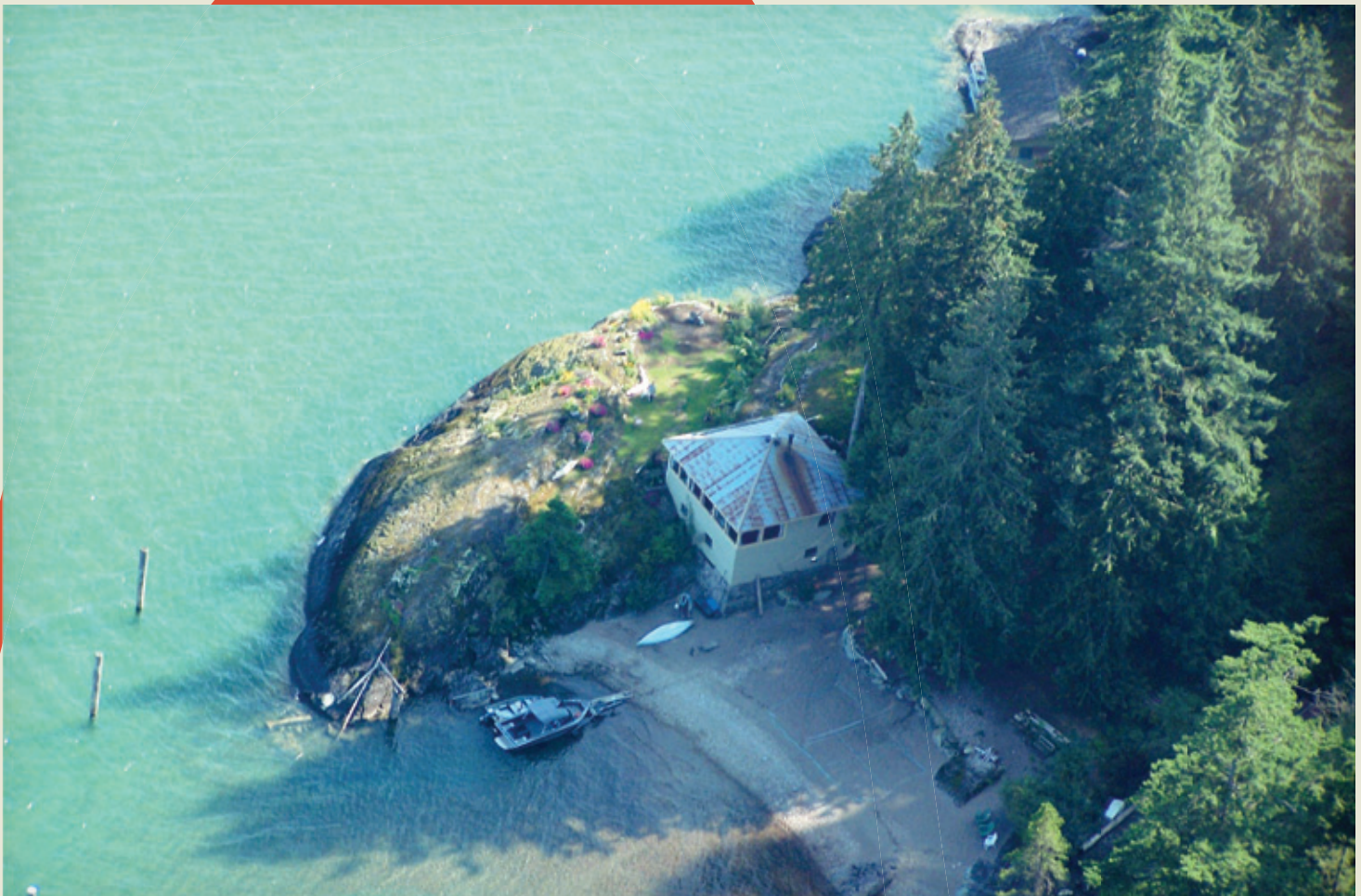


A map of the Fraser River region in British Columbia, Canada. The river is shown flowing from the north (top) towards the south (bottom), where it empties into the Gulf of Georgia. Key locations along the river include Burrard Inlet, Indian Arm, Pitt Lake, Alouette Lake, Slave Lake, Harrison Lake, Mission, Chilliwack, Sumas Lake, and Cultus Lake. The map also shows the border with the United States (bottom) and a scale bar in kilometers and miles.

Adapted from Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe, and Keith Thor Carlson, "Making the World Right through Transformations," Plate 1 in A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas, edited by Keith Thor Carlson, et al. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lō Heritage Trust; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 6–7.



We move through the landscape of transformed people and places following the path of *X̱ex̱á:ls* from Harrison Lake down to the *Stó:lō* (Fraser River) and upriver towards the sun—here moving south towards *Lhilheqey* (transformed woman; Mount Cheam in the background centre), *Óyewat*, *Séyewòt*, *Xomó:thiya* (the three daughters), *Sqwemá:y* (dog), and her sister peaks.



Qwél:es (“Whale Rock,” partially built upon), at the head of the Harrison River.



Chítmexw (“Horned Owl”).



Lhilheqey (Mount Cheam)—peak in foreground, left—overlooking the central valley.



Q'aw ("howl," the howling dog, centre).



Travelling above the village of Lexwts' ókw'em ("always skunk cabbage"), with what remains of Mómet'es (the Index Finger, partially destroyed by CN Rail blasting in 1999) on the ridge in the distance, marking the viewshed of the Stó:lō Five-Mile Fishery in the lower Fraser Canyon.



Standing at the entrance to the Stó:lō Five-Mile Fishery and lower Fraser Canyon are Xéylxelamós (an Indian doctor, island midriver; Lady Franklin Rock), Th'exlís ("gritting his teeth," west bank), and lightning bolts (east bank), resulting from the contest of power with Xexá:ls.



Slahal Players, gamblers playing the "bone game," at the upriver limit of Xexá:ls' travels through S'ólh Téméxw.

*For them, it was a country without legend or tradition . . .
A lake, however beautiful, was just a lake, a mountain a mountain,
waiting for some surveyor to give it a name and measurement.
A tree was just a tree—and probably in the way . . .
White people, finding the land was used only for hunting, fishing
and gathering, simply saw an empty wilderness,
awaiting the day when such as they would make it over
—as a matter of right—in their own image.*

—Imbert Orchard, historian

Xwelitem Transformations

Transformation is central to the story of Stone T’xwelátse both in the distant past of the Sxwōxwiyám and also in more recent history. In the distant past, Xexá:ls used their power of transformation to bring the people and land into harmony. More recently, in the last two hundred years, the arrival of European settlers—Xwelitem—brought transformations that threw the people and the land into chaos. The gold rush. The creation of reserves. Children sent to residential school.

It is within the context of the transformations unleashed by Xwelitem settlement that the next part of Stone T’xwelátse’s story unfolds. To evoke the impact of these transformations, Xwelitem artist David Champion chose the iconic landmark features of Lhílheqey and Semá:th Lake to speak to how European settlement both physically and imaginatively changed the landscape of S’ólh Téméxw.

You See Mount Cheam, Lhílheqey Looks Out Over Her People

Visible from afar, the striking face of Mount Cheam defines the landscape of the Central Fraser Valley and is a favourite subject of photographers and painters. For the Stó:lō, this mountain is Lhílheqey, a woman transformed by Xexá:ls and given the responsibility of watching over her people. This work was created to explore how Lhílheqey, a woman turned into a mountain, has been repurposed in the living rooms of the newcomers as Mount Cheam, a scenic backdrop for agrarian and industrial progress.

Well, Mount Cheam is a lady, and Mount Baker is a man. This is an old legend. So Mount Baker, he comes over and he looks for a wife, and he finds a nice-looking girl. So he takes her over to the state of Washington. They live there and they have three boys, Mount Hood, Mount Rainier—I can’t tell you what the other one is. And they have three girls, but the boys are the oldest ones. After the boys grew up and she had three little girls she says, “I had better go back home,” she says, “to my people, to the Fraser River.” So she comes back, and she says, “I’ll stand guard,” she says, “I’ll stand and guard the Fraser River, that no harm comes to my people, and no harm comes to the fish that comes up to feed them.” That’s the legend. And then she takes her three children and she stands up there. And coming down from up the road, there’s three little points, and those three little points are her children [Séyewòt—the oldest daughter and prominent peak in front of and below her mother; Óyewot—the second oldest daughter and smaller peak behind Séyewòt; and Xomó:th’iya—the youngest daughter, the small mountain at Popkum with Anderson Creek Falls, who cries because she cannot see the valley as her sisters can]. They say she holds the smallest one in her hand. And behind her, towards this way, is the dog head of the dog [Sqwemay] that followed her, and she told the dog to go back home, and it stood there, and stayed there. So I guess right now there, if the snow isn’t all off, you could see that dog head plain.

—As told by Óyewot (Amy Cooper), Stó:lō Elder, 1962
Th’ewá:lí / Soowahlie First Nation



You See Mount Cheam, Lhlheqey Looks Out Over Her People
David Campion, 2011, ink-jet prints, thrift store frames, dimensions vary

*When they drained the lake,
they drained the heart out of our people.*

—Xeyteleq (Ray Silver), describing Sumas Lake



Semá:th Lake Birds

This series explores the specific physical transformation effected on Semá:th Lake, a large lake between present-day Abbotsford and Chilliwack that was the home of the Semá:th people. The lake, as well as being a key part of the Stó:lō canoe-based transportation network, had a rich ecosystem that supported an abundance of fish, plants, and animals. Its wetland habitat was a destination for migrating birds and a breeding ground for waterfowl. Immense flocks of the now rare white-fronted goose as well as whistling swans and Hutchins geese spent part of their life cycle there. In the late 1800s, the lake drew the attention of various naturalists engaged in the work of cataloguing the flora and fauna of the “New World.” These naturalists collected specimens of the lake’s birds and waterfowl for museums in Europe and North America.

Sumas Lake, a colonial variation on the name Semá:th Lake, was vilified as a nuisance by local politicians who extolled the virtues of the rich farmland that would be made available by draining the lake. In 1924, after several attempts involving the largest pump in the Commonwealth, Sumas Lake was drained. Today the birds of

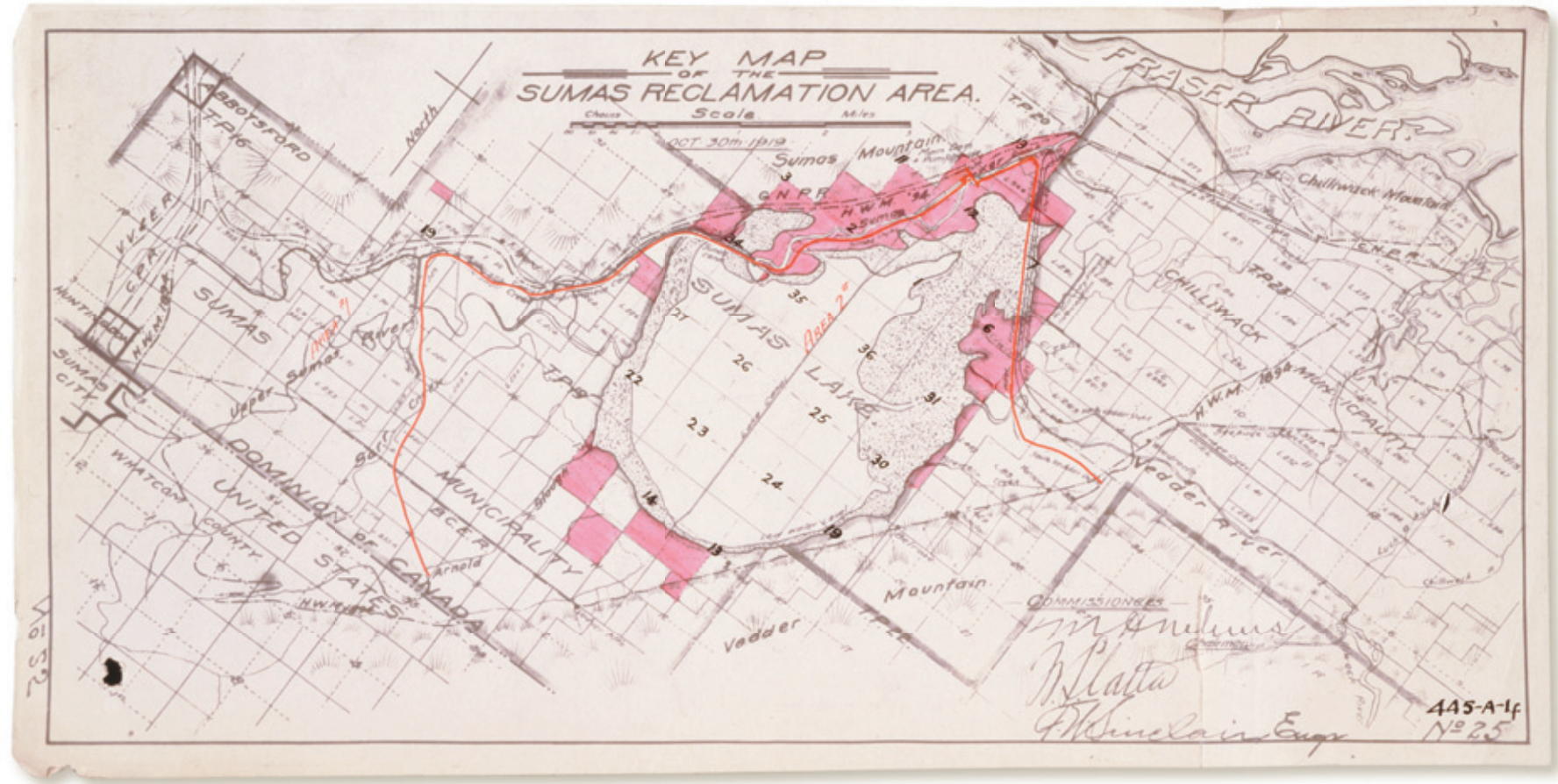
Sumas Lake are held in various museum collections, including at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, where the pictured specimens were photographed.

Sumas Lake, which once covered an area of some 3,600 ha, was dyked and drained by 1924 and is now called Sumas Prairie. In addition to the loss of the water volume from this area, an additional 8,000 ha of marshland and sloughs were eventually reduced to remnants and along with them, significant populations of ducks and geese disappeared.

—*The Birds of British Columbia*, Vol. 4,
Passerines, Wood Warblers through Old World Sparrows

Semá:th Lake Birds
David Campion, 2011, ink-jet prints, panel nails, dimensions vary





Sumas Reclamation Area, October 1919. Courtesy of the National Archives of Canada.

Sqwéłqwel

The Loss and Return of Stone T'xwelátse

In the mid-1800s, Stone T'xwelátse was moved across Sumas Lake from the Chilliwack Valley when a Ts'elxwéyeqw woman married into the neighbouring Semá:th (Sumas) Tribe. The marriage was arranged to resolve a dispute between the tribes. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Semá:th villagers retreated from the Sumas Prairie near the international border after vigilante groups from the United States attacked members of their villages. In 1892, T'xwelátse was “found” by local farmers living near the village who sold him to a “dime-store museum” in Sumas, Washington. Later, the Young Naturalists’ Society, founders of Washington State’s Burke Museum of Natural and Cultural History, purchased Stone T'xwelátse. In the early 1900s, he was moved to Seattle, where, for the next century, he was housed and occasionally displayed at the Burke Museum.

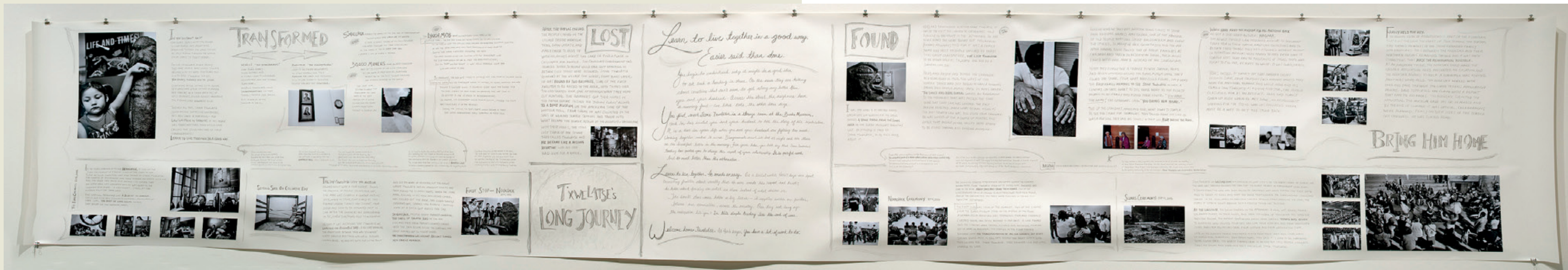
“His story was passed down through time—even after the man was lost,” said Herb Joe, a carrier of the name T'xwelátse from the Tzeachten First Nation in Chilliwack. After fifteen years of efforts, Joe and the T'xwelátse family, with help from the Stó:lō Nation, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, and many others, successfully repatriated their ancestor from the museum. In October 2006, after 114 years of separation from his extended family, Stone T'xwelátse was repatriated and journeyed home again.

Storyboard for a Repatriation

In the spring of 2006, Herb Joe, one of the living T'xwelátses, invited writer Sandra Shields and photographer David Campion to follow the T'xwelátse family through the final months of the repatriation of Stone T'xwelátse and the subsequent homecoming celebrations.

Storyboard for a Repatriation reconstructs the epic journey of Stone T'xwelátse on a twenty-one-foot scroll that was hung in the gallery. The scroll was part of an installation that included a desk on which sat documentation from the repatriation process, including David Schaepe's repatriation reports and a computer playing the film *T'xwelátse Is Finally Home*, contributed by the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre.

The scroll from *Storyboard* appears on the following pages sliced into pieces to fit within the confines of a book. Please note that when a paragraph is incomplete on one page, it is included in full on the preceding or subsequent page.



Storyboard for a Repatriation
Sandra Shields with David Campion, 2011, graphite on paper, ink-jet prints, 252 x 42 inches.
Colour photographs courtesy of Patricia Charlie.



IN THE DISTANT PAST
FOUR BLACK BEARS WITH THE POWER
TO TURN PEOPLE INTO MOUNTAINS
TRAVELLED THROUGH THE LAND KNOWN
AS S'OLH TEMÉXW TURNING THE WORLD
FROM CHAOS TO RIGHT ORDER.

IN THE CHILLIWACK RIVER VALLEY
THEY CAME UPON A MAN NAMED T'XWELÁTSE
ARGUING WITH HIS WIFE. THE BEARS TOLD
HIM TO STOP. T'XWELÁTSE SAID NO.
THE BEARS TURNED HIM TO STONE.

GENERATIONS PASSED, DEFINED BY THE RHYTHMS
OF A LANDSCAPE WHERE NATURE DISPLAYED
HER CHARMS IN A DOZEN VARIETIES OF
WILD BERRIES, EDIBLE GREENS UNDERFOOT,
THE FISHING LIKE NOWHERE ELSE.

THROUGH ALL THIS, STONE T'XWELÁTSE
STOOD BESIDE SUCCESSIVE LONGHOUSES,
HIS PRESENCE A TEACHING—THE
LAW WRITTEN IN GRANITE. IF HIS PEOPLE
HAD BEEN CHRISTIAN, THEY WOULD HAVE
CALLED THE STONE MAN ONE OF THEIR
COMMANDMENTS:
LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER IN A GOOD WAY.

TRANSFORMED

XEXÁ:LS "THE TRANSFORMERS"

FOUR BLACK BEARS—
THREE BROTHERS AND
A SISTER—BORN TO RED-HEADED
WOODPECKER AND HER HUSBAND
BLACK BEAR.

XEXÁ:LS PERFORMED MANY
TRANSFORMATIONS ON THEIR
TRAVELS THROUGH S'OLH TEMÉXW.
ALSO SPOKEN OF IN THE
SINGULAR AS XÁ:LS.

XWELITEM "THE HUNGRY PEOPLE"

USED TO DESCRIBE NEWCOMERS
TO S'OLH TEMÉXW AND THEIR
APPETITE FOR LAND AND RESOURCES.
STILL IN USE TODAY TO DESCRIBE
PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT ABORIGINAL.



SMALLPOX MARKED THE DAWN OF THE 2ND AGE OF TR
THE ONE WHERE THE WORLD WAS SET WRO
IT CAME 10 YEARS AHEAD OF THE FIRST EXP
WHO LATER FOLLOWED THE SAME TRADE ROUTE
IN THE WAKE OF THE DISEASE THAT HAD
CLAIMED 2 OUT OF EVERY 3 PEOPLE.

30,000 MINERS CAME ALMOST OVER
AND SET TO DIGGING UP THE RIVER FROM HOPE
AS FAR NORTH AS THEY COULD GO. BLASTING
THROUGH ONE OF THE BEST SALMON SPAWN
AND FISHING GROUNDS IN THE WORLD.

THAT SAME YEAR,
BRITAIN DECLARED THAT
HENCEFORTH THE LAND
NORTH OF THE 49TH
PARALLEL WAS A BRITISH
COLONY AND THE PEOPLE
LIVING THERE WERE
SUBJECT TO BRITISH LAW.



Before the white men came,
the people of the river regularly
travelled the trail that ran south from
Chilliwack through the home of their
cousins the Nooksack and down to the
shellfish grounds of what is now Bellingham Bay.

By the time thousands of miners
were using the route as a shortcut to
the gold rush, it was being called the
WHATCOM TRAIL after a Nooksack chief.

The trail hugged the southern reaches of the
floodplain carved into the land by the
great river that the white men were calling
the Fraser. The river no longer ran that way
but the lowland delta extended well into Washington state.

The people of the valley—Stó:lō to the north, Nooksack to the south—shared close relations.

THE BURKE CEREMONY: OCT 6, 2006

IN THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE **REPATRIATION**, IT TOOK ON THE
GIDDY EXCITEMENT OF A BIRTH. MANY OF THE STAFF AT THE
BURKE MUSEUM CONFESSED THAT THEY TALKED TO STONE T'XWELÁTSE.
THE CURATOR OF ARCHEOLOGY HAD ONCE SHARED AN OFFICE WITH HIM
AND THE STONE HAD MADE HIM UNEASY—HE SENSED THAT
THE LITTLE MAN WAS UNHAPPY AND HE WAS GLAD TO BE
SENDING HIM HOME. IT FELT RIGHT. OTHERS AT THE
MUSEUM FELT THE SAME WAY.

THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY WAS A BLUR OF TV CAMERAS,
STÓ:LÖ AND NOOKSACK COMMUNITY MEMBERS, POLITICIANS IN
DARK SUITS, THE BEAT OF HAND DRUMS HEARD
THAT NIGHT ON THE EVENING NEWS.



SETTING SAIL ON COLUMBUS DAY



THE DAY T'XWELÁTSE LEFT THE MUSEUM
DAWNED BRIGHT WITH A STIFF BREEZE. AMONG
THE HANDFUL OF PEOPLE SEEING HIM OFF,
ONE MAN WAS CLEARLY A LEADER AND HIS
VOICE, WHEN HE SPOKE, CONFIRMED IT. THIS
FORMER LOGGERS TURNED LAW STUDENT, THEN
JUDGE AND SOON TO BE APPOINTED FIRST IN
LINE AFTER THE QUEEN AS HER REPRESENTATIVE
IN BC, KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT TRANSFORMATION.

HE SAID IT WAS AUSPICIOUS THAT T'XWELÁTSE WAS
LEAVING ON COLUMBUS DAY—A HOLIDAY STRADDLING
THE FAULT LINE BETWEEN THOSE WHO 'DISCOVERED'
NORTH AMERICA AND THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY
LIVING HERE. HE AND HIS WIFE PUT ON THE PAINT

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THE TRANS
INTO FAM

SMALLPOX MARKED THE DAWN OF THE 2ND AGE OF TRANSFORMATION—
THE ONE WHERE THE WORLD WAS SET WRONG.
1782 IT CAME 10 YEARS AHEAD OF THE FIRST EXPLORERS
WHO LATER FOLLOWED THE SAME TRADE ROUTES
IN THE WAKE OF THE DISEASE THAT HAD
CLAIMED 2 OUT OF EVERY 3 PEOPLE.

30,000 MINERS CAME ALMOST OVERNIGHT
AND SET TO DIGGING UP THE RIVER FROM HOPE
AS FAR NORTH AS THEY COULD GO. BLASTING
1858 THROUGH ONE OF THE BEST SALMON SPAWNING
AND FISHING GROUNDS IN THE WORLD.

THAT SAME YEAR,
BRITAIN DECLARED THAT
HENCEFORTH THE LAND
NORTH OF THE 49TH
PARALLEL WAS A BRITISH
COLONY AND THE PEOPLE
LIVING THERE WERE
SUBJECT TO BRITISH LAW.



ail hugged the southern reaches of the
plain carved into the land by the
river that the white men were calling
Coeur d'Alene. The river no longer ran that way
the lowland delta extended well into Washington state.
valley—Sto:lo to the north, Nooksack to the south—shared close relations.

At the Canadian border, the Whatcom Trail skirted the shore
of a spreading lake that tripled in size with spring runoff.
Its waters sometimes crossing over into Whatcom county and
then withdrawing back into Canada as the summer progressed.
The village where Louie Sam lived lay on the shore of SEMA:TH LAKE
its waters a spawning ground for fish, a destination for migrating birds.

Sometime likely around the middle of the 1800s,
the South shore of Semá:th Lake became the home
of Stone T'xwelátse who had been moved from
his ancestral territory of the T'x'wéyegw people
(the Chilliwack) as part of a diplomatic gesture
restoring relations with the neighboring Semá:th.

1884
THE LYNCH MOB CAME ON HORSEBACK RIDING HARD UP THE
WHATCOM TRAIL. THE BOY THEY SEIZED WAS BEING FRAMED BY THE MAN WHO RODE
AT THE HEAD OF WHAT THE SETTLERS WERE CALLING THE NOOKSACK VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.
HE WAS THE SAME MAN WHO HAD BEEN SEEN GALLOPING AWAY FROM THE
BURNING STORE WHERE A NOOKSACK SHOPKEEPER LAY DEAD.
THE MAN'S BROTHER-IN-LAW WAS SLEEPING WITH THE SHOPKEEPER'S WIFE.
THE 3 OF THEM WOULD GO ON TO SPLIT THE DEAD MAN'S ESTATE,
BUT ON THAT WINTER NIGHT IT WAS STO:LO TEENAGER LOUIE SAM
WHO WAS MADE TO PAY.

IN HANDCUFFS, THE BOY WAS TAKEN TO A FIELD NOT FAR FROM HIS VILLAGE BESIDE
SEMA:TH LAKE AND THE LONGHOUSE WHERE HIS MOTHER, NO DOUBT, WORRIED HER WAY
THROUGH A SLEEPLESS NIGHT. A SPREADING CEDAR NEAR THE BORDER TOOK
THE ROPE. AMONG THE MEN DOING THE HANGING WAS ONE SOON TO
BE ELECTED TO THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
IN CANADA, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROMISE JUSTICE, UNCOVER THE TRUTH
AND THEN BURY IT IN THE ARCHIVES.
AMONG THE STO:LO, THE BOY'S DEATH WOULD BECOME A STORY
THAT LATER GENERATIONS KNEW SOMEHOW IN THEIR SKIN.

AFTER THE BOY WAS LYNCHED,
THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE
VILLAGE BESIDE WHATCOM
TRAIL GREW UNEASY, AND
MANY CHOSE TO MOVE IN
WITH RELATIVES ACROSS THE LAKE OR FIND A PLACE IN
CHILLIWACK FOR AWHILE. THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAD
PROMISED JUSTICE, SO PEOPLE WOULD HAVE LEFT EXPECTING TO
RETURN ONCE THINGS WERE RESOLVED. STONE T'XWELÁTSE
REMAINED AT THE VILLAGE SITE WHERE, EIGHT YEARS LATER,
HE WAS FOUND BY TWO BROTHERS, SOME OF THE FIRST
XWELITEM TO BE RAISED IN THE AREA, WHO TRIPPED OVER
THE ODD-SHAPED ROCK ONE AFTERNOON WHEN THEY WERE
OUT HUNTING. THE BROTHERS GOT THEIR NAMES IN
THE PAPER BEFORE PASSING THE 'INDIAN CURIO' ALONG
TO A DIME MUSEUM ON THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE
WHATCOM TRAIL. FROM THERE HE WAS COLLECTED BY THE
SONS OF WEALTHY SEATTLE SETTLERS AND TAKEN INTO
WHAT BECAME THE BURKE MUSEUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON.
WITH THESE MOVES, THE STO:LO
LOST TRACK OF THE STONE
THEY CALLED T'XWELÁTSE AND
HE BECAME LIKE A MISSING
RELATIVE WHO NO ONE
HAD SEEN FOR A WHILE.

LOST



LÁTSE LEFT THE MUSEUM
WITH A STIFF BREEZE. AMONG
PEOPLE SEEING HIM OFF,
CLEARLY A LEADER AND HIS
SPOKE, CONFIRMED IT. THIS
TURNED LAW STUDENT, THEN
ON TO BE APPOINTED FIRST IN
THE QUEEN AS HER REPRESENTATIVE
SOMETHING ABOUT TRANSFORMATION.

AS AUSPICIOUS THAT T'XWELÁTSE WAS
COLUMBUS DAY—A HOLIDAY SPREADING
BETWEEN THOSE WHO 'DISCOVERED'
AND THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY
HE AND HIS WIFE PUT ON THE PAINT

AND DID THE WORK OF BRUSHING OUT THE ROOMS
WHERE T'XWELÁTSE AND HIS ATTENDANT SPIRITS HAD
BEEN HOUSED FOR SO MANY YEARS. WHEN THE STONE
MAN, ROLLING IN HIS NEW RED CEDAR CANOE,
WAS PULLED OUT THE DOOR, THE CLOUD DIRECTLY
OVERHEAD WAS SHAPED LIKE A CANOE + HEADING
NORTH AT A BRISK CLIP ACROSS THE SKY.

IN NOOKSACK, PEOPLE WERE ALREADY GATHERING,
THE SMELL OF SALMON BBQ IN THE AIR.
KIDS AND THEN THEIR PARENTS CROWDED CURIOUS
INTO THE BACK ROOM BESIDE THE LOADING DOCK.
HANDS REACHED OUT TO TOUCH STONE.
THE TRANSFORMATION WAS INSTANT: ARTIFACT TURNED
INTO FAMILY MEMBER.

FIRST STOP—NOOKSACK
OCT 9, 2006



T'XWELÁTSE'S
LONG JOURNEY

Learn to

You begin to
to set such
about countries
you and your
a running feud

You first meet Sto
Herb Joe has invited
It is a time in you
Working together makes
on the breakfast table
teaching has pushed you to
but so much better than

Learn to live together.
Counseling families about
he talks about focusing
The small stone in
between our comm
the realization hits y

Welcome home T'xwel

Learn to live together in a good way.
Easier said than done.

You begin to understand why it might be a good idea to set such a teaching in stone. On the news they are talking about countries that can't seem to get along any better than you and your husband. Across the street, the neighbors have a running feud - one likes cats, the other likes dogs.

You first meet Stone T'xwelatse in a storage room at the Burke Museum. Herb Joe has invited you and your husband to tell the story of the repatriation. It is a time in your life when you and your husband are fighting too much. Working together makes it worse. Disagreements crawl into bed at night and are there on the breakfast table in the morning. Five years later, you both say that Stone T'xwelatse's teaching has pushed you to change this aspect of your relationship. It is painful work but so much better than the alternative.

Learn to live together. It sounds so easy. As a social worker Herb's days are spent counseling families about exactly that. He uses words like respect and trust; he talks about focusing on what we share instead of what divides us.

The small stone man holds a big lesson - it applies within our families, between our communities, across the country. One day not long ago the realization hits you: In this simple teaching lies the end of war.

Welcome home T'xwelatse. As Herb says, you have a lot of work to do.

FOUND



IT WAS 1991 WHEN A RESEARCHER NAMED GORDON WHO WAS WORKING FOR THE STO:LO NOTICED A STONE STATUE FROM THE SUMAS AREA IN THE BURKE MUSEUM'S INVENTORY LIST. HE FIGURED IT COULD BE STONE T'XWELATSE, SO HE TOLD HERB ABOUT IT.

It was 1976 when a road crew in the American mid-West uncovered the unmarked graves of a dozen settlers and one Indian woman and her baby. The white bones were put in caskets and buried at state expense. The woman and her baby were put in a cardboard box and sent to the state archeologist.

One of the guys on the road crew was married to a Lakota woman and when what had happened, it made her angry in a way that carried her through all the way to the passing of a law requiring museums across the US to give the bones and unlawfully acquired belongings of the land's Indigenous people back.



NOOKSACK CEREMONY OCT 9, 2006



THE DRUMMING STARTED AFTER EVERYONE HAD EATEN. WITHIN THE INDIAN TRIBE, STONE T'XWELATSE WOULD NOT BE HEADED HOME. HE CAME TO SEE HIM. MANY STOOD AND SPOKE THEIR HEARTS, LONGSTANDING PAIN OF HAVING SO MUCH TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM AND OF THE UNEXPECTED JOY THEY WERE FEELING IN THEIR ANCESTOR RETURNED.

THE FIRST HUG WAS SPUR OF THE MOMENT. TWO FROM THE BURKE MUSEUM STOOD IN THE MIDDLE. A WOMAN FROM NOOKSACK WAS THANKING THEM. SHE CLASPED THEM, ONE AFTER ANOTHER TO HER CHEST AND THE CURATORS WERE PASSED, FLUSHED AND GIVEN A SET OF ARMS TO ANOTHER. THE ENERGY IN THE ROOM WAS BUOYANT WITH THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN OLD MAN INTO A STRONG YOUNG MAN IN BALL CAPS. THEY DROVE THEM OFF THEY CREATED FOR STONE T'XWELATSE. THEY DROVE THEM OFF UNABLE TO STOP.

early 1930s

ERED WITH THE NAME T'XWELATSE AT
G LONGHOUSE GATHERINGS HELD
ALLEY IN THE 20th CENTURY. HE HAD
NAME BEFORE BUT TH'ELAHYTEL
) TOLD HIM IT WAS A FAMILY
RECENTLY CARRIED BY HERB'S
ND FATHER, THE LAST T'XWELATSE
AS T'XWELATSE AND NOT BY A

HAD JOINED THE LONGHOUSE
IN 1969. THE WAYS OF THE
HAD JUST BEGUN TO GAIN A FOLLOWING
LE AGAIN. UNTIL 20 YEARS EARLIER,
EN ILLEGAL UNDER AN AMENDMENT
THAT WAS PASSED THE SAME
SAM WAS LYNCHED. THE FIRST
UNDER WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS
LAW WAS BILL USLUK FROM CHILLIWACK.
FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS AND
LE IN THE VALLEY WERE AFRAID
ING AND DANCING ANYMORE.



HERB HAD HEARD THE STORY OF HIS ANCESTOR TOR BEING TURNED TO STONE
FROM AN ELDER NAMED AMY COOPPOPER, ONE OF THE HANDFUL
OF OLD PEOPLE WHO STILL SPOKE LE HALQ'EMEYLEM AND KNEW
THE STORIES, SO MANY OF HER G^l GENERATION AND THE ONE
AFTER HAVING BEEN PULLED OUT OF THEIR FAMILIES AS
CHILDREN AND TAKEN TO RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, THEIR MINDS
FILLED WITH HAIL MARY. INSTEAD OF THE SXWÖXWYAM.

WHEN THEY FINALLY GOT A CHANCE TO VISIT SEATTLE, HERB
AND HELEN WANDERED AROUND THE BIE BURKE MUSEUM UNTIL THEY
FOUND THE STONE. FROM WHAT THⁱ THEY COULD FIGURE, THEY WERE
THE FIRST FAMILY MEMBERS TO SEE SE STONE T'XWELATSE IN OVER A
CENTURY. UNSURE WHAT TO DO, Hⁱ, HERB WENT TO THE ELDEST
WOMEN IN HIS FAMILY AND ASKED FOR THEIR ADVICE. "YOU HAVE
THE NAME," THE GRANDMAS SAID. "Y. "YOU BRING HIM HOME."

TWO OF THE GRANDMAS, NANCY AND ROS ROSE, WENT DOWN TO SEATTLE
TO SEE THE STONE FOR THEMSELVES. TS. THEY TALKED ABOUT HIM LIKE HE
WAS A PERSON. THEY SAID HIS SHKWELWELI OR SPIRIT WAS ALIVE INSIDE THE ROCK.



WHEN HERB ASKED THE MUSEUM FOR HIS ANCESTOR BACK
HE GOT A ONE-WORD ANSWER: NAGPRA.
THE NEWLY PASSED LAW REQUIRED MUSEUMS TO DOCUMENT
EVERY ITEM IN THEIR NATIVE AMERICAN COLLECTIONS AND TO
RETURN THOSE THINGS THEY HAD ACQUIRED WITHOUT PAYMENT
OR PERMISSION. MUSEUMS WERE HAVING TO HIRE EXTRA STAFF TO
COMPILE LISTS THAT RAN TO THOUSANDS OF PAGES. THERE WERE
FORMS TO FILL OUT, REPORTS TO WRITE. IT WAS COMPLICATED.

YEARS PASSED. IT TURNED OUT THAT NAGPRA DIDN'T
RECOGNIZE CLAIMS FROM CANADIAN FIRST NATIONS UNLESS THEY
WERE FOR ANCESTRAL REMAINS AND WHILE HERB AND HIS
FAMILY SAW T'XWELATSE AS A LIVING ANCESTOR, THE MUSEUM
CLASSIFIED HIM AS AN ARTIFACT. HERB HAD ALMOST
GIVEN UP HOPE WHEN HE MET DAVE, AN ARCHEOLOGIST
WORKING FOR THE STO:LO WHO WAS CONVINCED THERE
MUST BE A WAY TO GET THE STONE BACK.



by: One of the guys on the road crew was married to a Lakota woman. And when he told her
what had happened, it made her angry in a way that carried her through a decade of protest
all the way to the passing of a law requiring museums across the US to give back
the bones and unlawfully acquired belongings of the land's Indigenous inhabitants.

NAGPRA

NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT

The law, enacted in 1990, required public museums in the US to make an inventory
of their Native American human collections. At the Burke Museum, the inventory included
a 'Prehistoric Stone Figure' that had been collected in the Sumas area around 1900.
In the spidery hand writing writing of the old catalogue, Stone T'Xwelatse was described as Artifact #1152.

THE DRUMMING STARTED AFTER EVERYONE HAD EATEN. WITHOUT THE NOOKSACK
INDIAN TRIBE, STONE T'XWELATSE WOULD NOT BE HEADED HOME. HUNDREDS HAD
COME TO SEE HIM. MANY STOOD AND SPOKE THEIR HEARTS, TOLD OF THE
LONGSTANDING PAIN OF HAVING SO MUCH TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR PEOPLE,
AND OF THE UNEXPECTED JOY THEY WERE FEELING IN SEEING THIS
ANCESTOR RETURNED.

THE FIRST HUG WAS SPUR OF THE MOMENT. TWO OF THE CURATORS
FROM THE BURKE MUSEUM STOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR.
A WOMAN FROM NOOKSACK WAS THANKING THEM AND SUDDENLY
CLASPED THEM, ONE AFTER ANOTHER TO HER CHEST. A LINE FORMED
AND THE CURATORS WERE PASSED, FLUSHED AND GRINNING, FROM ONE
SET OF ARMS TO ANOTHER. THE ENERGY IN THE ROOM TURNED
BUOYANT WITH THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN OLD WRONG SET RIGHT.
STRONG YOUNG MEN IN BALL CAPS ENDED THE NIGHT WITH A SONG
THEY CREATED FOR STONE T'XWELATSE. THEY DRUMMED LOUD AND LONG,
UNABLE TO STOP.



SUMAS CEREMONY: OCT 14, 2006



STONE T'XWELATSE WAS WELCOMED HOME IN A LONGHOUSE ON WHAT USED TO BE THE NORTH SHORE OF SEMA:TH LAKE.
THE LAKE WAS DRAINED AROUND THE TIME THAT THE OLDEST PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE WERE BORN.
"A SECOND EDEN," THE LAKE HAD BEEN CALLED BY SURVEYORS WHO WERE AMONG THE FIRST WHITE
MEN TO SHOOT ITS DUCKS AND HUNT THE DEER THAT GRAZED THE SURROUNDING LONG GRASS
PRAIRIE. IN THE 1920s, WHEN THE XWELITEM STARTED TALKING ABOUT DRAINING THE LAKE, THE
PEOPLE OF SEMA:TH DIDN'T BELIEVE SUCH A FOOLISH THING WAS POSSIBLE.

AT THE LONGHOUSE, THE DRUMS STARTED IN THE AFTERNOON. A MEAL WAS SERVED, PEOPLE
BALANCED PLATES ON THEIR KNEES, AND THEN THE WORK OF WELCOMING THIS LONG-LOST
ANCESTOR BEGAN. THE ANCIENT SXWÖ:YXWEY MASKS WERE DANCED. THANKS WAS GIVEN
TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED. RELATIVES HAD COME FROM NOOKSACK AND FROM VANCOUVER
ISLAND. XWELITEM POLITICIANS CAME FROM VICTORIA AND FROM WASHINGTON STATE.

LATE IN THE EVENING PEOPLE CONTINUED TO RISE FROM THEIR SEATS AND SPEAK WORDS
OF REFLECTION. SO MUCH HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY, THEY SAID, IT IS GOOD TO SEE SOMETHING
BEING GIVEN BACK. THE WORDS FINALLY CAME TO AN END BUT STILL PEOPLE LINGERED.
STICKS HIT DRUMS AND DANCING FEET ENCIRCLED STONE T'XWELATSE.





FAMILY HELD THE KEY.

THE REGION SOUTH OF ABBOTSFORD IS PART OF THE FLOODPLAIN THAT RUNS THROUGH THE HEART OF SÖLH TĒMEXW. THE BORDER HAD TURNED MEMBERS OF THE STO:ŁƏ EXTENDED FAMILY INTO AMERICANS. TIES BETWEEN THE NOOKSACK AND THEIR NORTHERN COUSINS REMAINED STRONG AND IT WAS THESE CONNECTIONS THAT MADE THE REPATRIATION POSSIBLE. AS AN AMERICAN TRIBE, THE NOOKSACK COULD MAKE THE NAGPRA APPLICATION. HERB PRESENTED THE SITUATION AND THE NOOKSACK AGREED TO HELP. A COMMITTEE WAS FORMED. MEETINGS WERE HELD. THE NOOKSACK WORKED WITH HERB AND DAVE THROUGH THE LONG TEDIOUS APPLICATION PROCESS. DAVE SUPPORTED THE CLAIM WITH A REPORT THAT RAN TO 100 PAGES. THE NOOKSACK SUBMITTED THE APPLICATION. THE MUSEUM GAVE ITS OK IN MARCH AND BY THE END OF SUMMER IT WAS OFFICIAL. CELEBRATIONS WERE PLANNED. FAMILY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER GOT INVOLVED. HE WAS COMING HOME.

BRING HIM HOME



Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse

Stan Greene once told me he asked one of his elders - 'Where is our culture and history?' His elder replied - 'Our culture and history is all around us. You are just too weak to take it all back all at once. You can only take a little bit back at a time, but each time you take a little bit back it makes you stronger so that you can take more back.'

—Naxaxalhts'i (Albert 'Sonny' McHalsie)



Voices of Repatriation

Just as T'xwelátse and his wife stood on the riverbank, those individuals and institutions dealing with repatriation face each other and engage in a dialogue with an uncertain end. Conflict resolution lies at the heart of a positive outcome. The following quotes come from interviews in the film *T'xwelátse Is Finally Home*. They are from community members and researchers who were some of the many people directly involved in the return of Stone T'xwelátse from the Burke Museum to the Stó:lô in 2006. They represent a harmony of voices and perspectives on the values and importance of repatriation—the act of restoring or returning to a place of origin, of going home again. Listen to what they have to say.

The name T'xwelátse belongs to our family and all of the descendants of the original T'xwelátse and there are many, many of us.... Shortly after the families left that [Semá:th] village, two white farmers—two brothers, the Ward brothers—were probably out hunting, taking care of their families, and they came upon our ancestor. Because there happened to be nobody around at the time, because they left for fear of getting hung, in their culture if no one is watching it they assume it's been abandoned. In our culture, he was still in our territory, he was still in our care, he was still in our possession... but not to the people who came from Europe. So they took him and they sold him to a dime-store museum.... One of the things that our grandmothers made very clear to us is that we need to follow some of the old ways.... We believe with all of our hearts that he is the embodiment of our ancestor T'xwelátse, the man who was turned to stone. His shxwelí, his soul, his spirit is very much alive in our ancestor.... We know he is real. We know he's alive.

—*T'xwelátse (Herb Joe)*

The citizens of Washington State own the collections of the Burke Museum, collectively. Therefore, even if ethically we believed it was a good idea to return the stone figure, without an explicit legal mandate we couldn't return it to the Native community. So until we had that NAGPRA [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act] claim filed on behalf of the Nooksack Tribe with the support of the Stó:lô Nation, the Burke couldn't really take any action to return the stone figure. [In] October 2005, we received a very thorough claim that laid out how the stone figure met one of the definitions of the law, which is object of cultural patrimony, and that's a pretty unique category within the law. There are fewer than three hundred objects of cultural patrimony nationwide that have been repatriated to date [2006], and this is the first case where the Burke Museum has repatriated an object of cultural patrimony....

In 1992, the Stó:lô Nation were first interested in receiving this object back. At that time we didn't have a vehicle. Since they were a British Columbia First Nations group, it wasn't possible to directly repatriate under NAGPRA.... This has been one of the most unique NAGPRA repatriation cases that I've worked on, and I've been happy to be a part of it and really enjoyed getting to know the communities that we've been working with... and I think that just on a personal level I really believe that ethically it's the right thing to do. Until there was a legal vehicle we couldn't legally transfer this object, but I think ethically NAPGRA is a civil rights issue and I think that Native American communities should have the say of where their most sacred and central objects go.... If they are needed in the communities that they are serving, they should probably be in those communities rather than in a museum and subject to research.

—*Meagan Noble, repatriation expert*
Burke Museum of Natural and Cultural History

It's been quite a few years and it's in Seattle, like I was saying, it's a happy occasion but it was a sad occasion just because my mother is not here.... My other aunties they're gone as well... and so that's the sad part. But what the happy part is, T'xwelátse is finally coming back to where he belongs.

—*Qwatasolwit (Sandra Joseph)*
T'xwelátse family
Nooksack Indian Tribe Executive Council Member &
Cultural Committee Member

When I came here in 2000, the stone was in my office.... It was actually the only thing in my office when I arrived here. There was no other furniture, there was just this stone. So he greeted me on my first day of work at the Burke Museum... we were reconfiguring our storage areas, but eventually we found a new spot for him in one of our storage rooms down in the archaeology collections.... It was about two years after I started here I first met Herb Joe, who was the Stó:lô tribal member who came to visit and was making a request [originally started in 1992] to have the stone returned. At the time, I believe it was either his grandmother or someone on his mother's side of the family had told Herb that we should be putting the stone to sleep every night and waking him up in the morning because he's a person. So we talked about this with him and we agreed that we would put a muslin sheet over him when we left work in the evening and turn off all the lights, and in the morning we'd take that sheet off and turn on the lights and wake him up. As I've learned more about his story over time from Herb and other folks, I think I've gained this whole new understanding of the stone and I'm actually going to be really sad to see him go.

—*Peter Lape*
Curator of Archaeological Collections / Archaeologist
Burke Museum of Natural and Cultural History

I had doubt that this would happen with the government bureaucracy. I figured that we'd get led on a little ways and the door would close on us, but I believe this was amazing how the doors kept opening up for a way to... bring him back home. There is a lot more stuff down there in the different museums that really needs to come back to us, to our people.... I couldn't go down there because it's like going to a hospital, someplace where your people can't leave there, and they cry out and they want to come home with you... and it hurts.

—*George Swanaset Sr.*
Nooksack Indian Tribe Executive Council Member &
Cultural Committee Member

“This is our land, we need to take care of everything that belongs to us.” So when you look at that statement, it’s not only a statement about our Aboriginal rights and title to everything that’s around us, but also there’s an obligation there that we need to take care of everything that belongs to us. So now you start looking at different elements of our culture and our history; what are those elements? What are those things that are out there that we need to take care of? We always listen to our Elders... and they tell us s̓xwō̓xwiyám, we need to take care of those s̓xwō̓xwiyám, we need to take care of our sqwelqwel, we need to take care of our shxwelí, take care of our language. It’s all these different things that we need to take care of. So to me that was a big part of today’s ceremony as well, is that we’re taking care of something... something that left us. You know we were probably remembering it in our hearts, like the family members and Elders still remembering it in their hearts, and finally it’s brought back and they’re taking care of it. So to me it’s like a big step for our own self-government reasons as well.

— *Naxaxalhts’i (Albert “Sonny” McHalsie)*
Historian and Cultural Advisor
Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre / Stó:lō Nation

One of the parts of repatriation that sometimes people don’t understand is what an incredible boon it has been for the museum. For the first time members of Native American communities have felt that not only was it okay for them to come in to the museum and... see the collections... but it was appropriate, necessary, and part of the law [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act—NAGPRA].... For the first time we had Native Americans coming regularly into the museum and... talking with archaeologists about the meaning of objects and how they should be stored. It was an unanticipated, wonderful outgrowth of the law, and this museum, the Burke Museum, is a better place because of the repatriation laws.

—*Julie Stein*
Director / Archaeologist
Burke Museum of Natural and Cultural History

Nooksack, Lummi, Tulalip, you know, you’ve got them separated because of the name. This is something that wasn’t our way. We’re all one people. That border doesn’t exist to us. T’xwelátse was found out there in Sumas, but here 114 years later... there was a reason for this.... He’s there for teaching. He’s there for our people to remember. And now he’s doing this again, bringing everyone back together.

—*George Swanaset Jr.*
Nooksack Indian Tribe
Cultural Committee Chairman

This is really a heartfelt release that this is finally happening.... I know Grandma is feeling really good that this is coming home.... My grandmother was charged with being one of the individuals responsible for the stone to come back home. She was also one of the ones that was responsible for taking care of T’xwelátse.... It’s undefinable how significant this is. It lifts a big cloud or a big uneasiness that something is still missing within the family. Now it’s back. Now he’s home.

—*Bill Coleman*
T’xwelátse family
Nooksack Indian Tribe Executive Council Member &
Cultural Committee Liaison

Repatriation is something that’s happening more and more... and resulting in more success... as First Nations engage in this process. The significant part of that is the filling of gaps that have happened in the communities over the last 150 years, here. And returning a sense of balance, restoring to balance elements of the communities that are currently not in balance and directly tied into the loss of those things... and the loss of the responsibilities that go along with those things... the loss of self-governance over themselves and what belongs to them.

—*David Schaepe*
Director and Senior Archaeologist
Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre / Stó:lō Nation

You grew up with the transformation stories. You grew up with stories about how these items would come back to us one day. So there were prophesies that those that were taken away would come back to our people.

—*Shóyshqelwet (Her Honour Gwendolyn Point)*
Skowkale First Nation

Ye Selsí:sele: The Grannies; Grandmothers

When T’xwelátse was turned to stone, it was his wife who was given the responsibility of caring for him. From that time onward, the responsibility of caring for Stone T’xwelátse was given to the women of the T’xwelátse family and was passed on to their daughters or granddaughters, who became the caretakers for that generation.

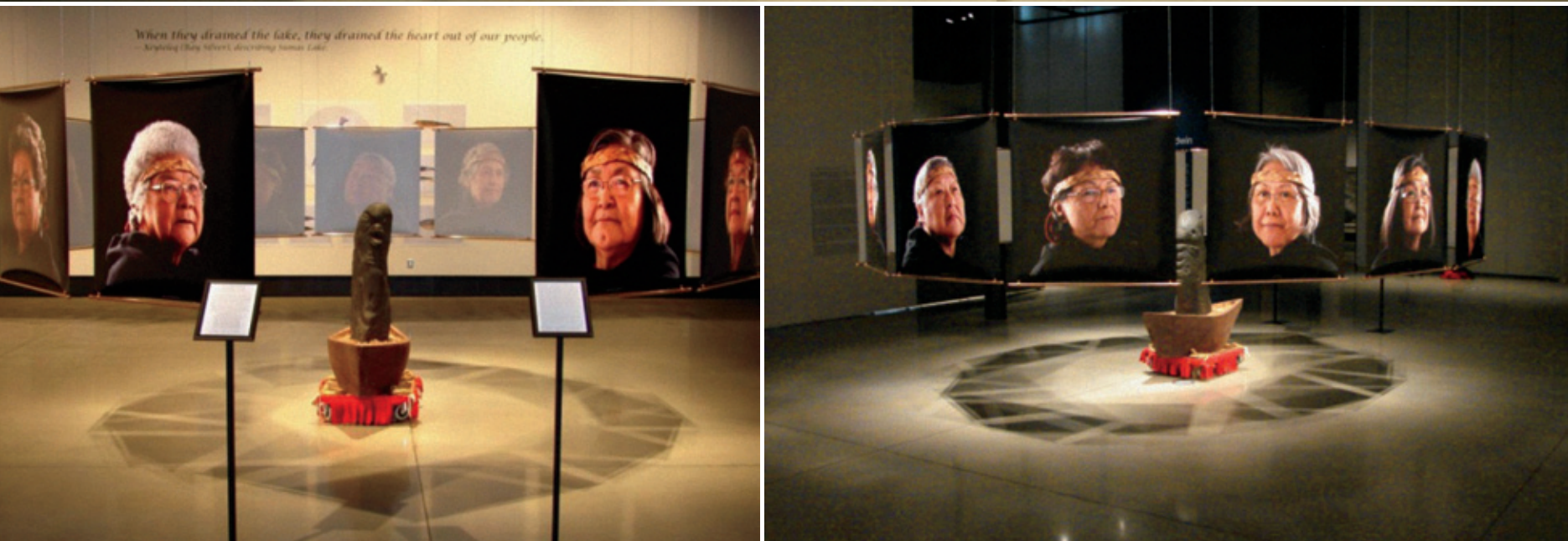
The Grandmothers’ Portraits

These Stó:lō women surround Stone T’xwelátse as his current caretakers. Descendants of T’xwelátse and members of the T’xwelátse family, they carry the responsibility of looking after their ancestor, a responsibility they inherited from their mothers and grandmothers before them. They are practising the Stó:lō principle “S’ólh Téméxw te it kwela. Xyólhmet te mekw’stám it kwelát.”

We find ourselves today—two Nations, two societies—interconnected in our occupation and use of the land and resources of S’ólh Téméxw, without the benefit of recognizing each other and generally blind to the meaning and significance of the Stó:lō landscape that surrounds us.

Each Nation has its laws, beliefs, and ways of doing things. How do we get along? How do we reconcile our existence, our histories, our voices? How do we learn to live together in a good way? These are questions that we all face today, each and every one of us living here in this shared world. Coming up with an answer to this question is our challenge, one that promises to reward future generations with a better world of mutual understanding and respect. Learning to live together in a good way... it isn’t easy, but it can be done if we put our minds and hearts to it. The first step lies in learning, the next in acting on what we’ve come to understand, respectfully, in a good way, and together.

Ye Selsí:sele: The Grannies; Grandmothers
David Campion, 2011, ink-jet prints, copper pipe, 40 x 40 inches





Swetathe • Dorothy Good, Ch'iyaqtel First Nation



Seliselwet • Bibiana Norris, Matsqui First Nation



Siyamthala • Dorothy Francis, Sts'a'iles First Nation



Selyaal • Patricia Charlie, Sts'a'iles First Nation



Qwetóselswet • Mary Malloway, Yakweakwioose First Nation



Tsetosiye • Georgina Kelly, Soowahlie First Nation



Siyamex • Virginia Peters, Sts'a'iles First Nation



Quetosiya • Millie Silver, Semá:th First Nation



Siyamthetala • Muriel Roberts, Ch'iyaqtel First Nation



Qwatasela • Jan Cooper, Nooksack Indian Tribe



Yamaté • Joan Silver, Semá:th First Nation



Qwatasolwit • Sandra Joseph, Nooksack Indian Tribe



Wee láy láq • Laura Wealick, Ch'iyaqtel First Nation



Eyl'thot • Char Roberts, Nooksack Indian Tribe



Tutowll'wit • Rosalda Roberts, Nooksack Indian Tribe

Xyólhmet te
mekw'stám it
kwelát



Experiments in Visual Art, Alternative History, and Community Collaboration

Scott Marsden, Curator, The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford

This essay explores how the exhibition *Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse* recontextualized contemporary visual art, history, and community collaboration as a process of creative inquiry. Through the exhibition, The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford was transformed into a public space that stimulated social interaction, dialogue, debate, and exploration of community issues relevant to the people of the Fraser Valley, in southwestern British Columbia. The exhibition informed visitors about the practices and traditions of the Stó:lō people. It helped to articulate the mission of T'xwelátse as a living teaching icon who carries the message that we must learn to live together in a good way. His message contains stories that are valuable educational tools for contemporary society.

Alternative historical narratives

The *Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse* exhibition offered an alternative version of the history of the Fraser Valley, in which a dominant social hierarchy is both questioned and subverted. It offered another way of seeing and understanding different belief systems, in which the past and the present are both presented and re-presented. *Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse* was a catalyst for dialogue between communities with a focus on both specific historical and contemporary contexts. It gave expression to both human agency and life experiences in and around specific social and cultural changes over time.

The exhibition challenged visitors' understanding of a dominant version of history and encouraged multiple narratives and representations that reflect everyone in the community. It did this partly by presenting a story from the past juxtaposed with the dominant historical narrative of white settler culture. In doing so, it provided for gallery visitors an example of what the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin calls "words of others." The voices of others, their discourse, are central to Bakhtin's theory of how people develop their ideologies. He posits that we learn and grow as we interact with and assimilate into our consciousness the voices of those who surround us.

The "words of others," by revealing other potential meanings and the ideology behind the dominant discourse, make possible a space for new interpretations, and change becomes possible. Bakhtin (1981) argued that "dialogical" discourse—any cultural expression built on multiple, even conflicting voices in conversation with each other—can reveal deeper social truths and contradictions precisely because it rejects a single, absolute authoritative voice. For Bakhtin, dialogue comes out of a mixing of many social voices, ideas, and worldviews.

Community collaboration in action

Recent developments in current contemporary curatorial practice explore the idea of community collaboration, particularly in the formation of community advisory groups that work at various levels of gallery operations. The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford, the T'xwelátse family, and the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre agreed on a collaborative approach in the development of *Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse*. The curatorial work in this exhibition was an attempt to mediate between the gallery, the T'xwelátse family, the Stó:lō community, and the larger non-Native community. The exhibition was about weaving together stories, using subjective narratives to enable other voices to have a prominent place in what art galleries communicate.

All of the key exhibition elements were developed in collaboration with Stó:lō community leaders and Elders and the T'xwelátse family. Their consensus is that the exhibition elements were not only appropriate but also innovative and an exciting development in terms of telling the T'xwelátse story and relating it to the larger context. The Stó:lō community leaders and Elders who helped to develop this exhibition are widely respected and have long experience sharing cultural perspectives both within the Stó:lō community and with non-Aboriginal audiences.

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse explored historical, cultural, and spiritual elements of the T'xwelátse transformation narrative to reveal the fundamental Stó:lō relationship to land and resources, and to begin a dialogue about the Stó:lō worldview. The exhibition offered a unique opportunity to invite the kind of participation and dialogue through which First Nation and non-Native communities can engage in the ongoing construction of social meaning. This exhibition mediates between the history, codes, and culture of the Stó:lō Nation and their neighbours, between Campion's photographs and the gallery space, and between the visitors and the exhibition. Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse shows that a range of practices is possible, that a language of possibilities can be explored, that different groups can be involved in pushing against the bounds of dominant cultural practices.

For the Stó:lō, Stone T'xwelátse is a spiritual being who contains the living spirit of the human being T'xwelátse, their beloved ancestor. As a sign of respect for Stó:lō protocols, Stone T'xwelátse was addressed as "he" and also covered by a specially made "coat" each night of the exhibition. Stone T'xwelátse, a transformed being, depicts the work and teachings of beings called the Transformers. The stone statue is an ancestor of the Stó:lō—a man named T'xwelátse who was born thousands of years ago.

As punishment for mistreating his wife, T'xwelátse was transformed into a four-foot-high granite statue. His wife was given the responsibility for his care, and for generations the women of the family looked after an ancestor who was a lesson inscribed in stone about how to live and act properly. The responsibility of caring for T'xwelátse was passed on to daughters or granddaughters of the T'xwelátse family, who became the caretakers for that generation.

In the exhibition, Stone T'xwelátse is surrounded by portraits of the women who are the current caretakers. As descendants of T'xwelátse and as members of the T'xwelátse family, they have inherited the responsibility of looking after their ancestor from their mothers and grandmothers before them. As part of the cultural narrative articulating T'xwelátse, photographer David Campion reflected on the physical and imaginative transformations wrought on the landscape by the shared history of colonization. The story of the repatriation that brought T'xwelátse home was reconstructed in a text-based installation that incorporated photographs, a handwritten narrative, reports, and correspondence.

The exhibition also presented a film of the landscape of the Fraser Valley with its many transformation sites, *Written in Stone*. The Stó:lō traditional dance group Semoya, in a work called *The Sxwóxwiyam of T'xwelátse* that was projected as part of the exhibition, interpreted the birth and transformation of T'xwelátse through dance—where and how the Transformers encountered T'xwelátse and turned him to stone.

Art process as dialogue

Work by photo-based artist David Campion was an integral part of this exhibition, demonstrating how visual art can be a critical form of creative inquiry. Campion utilized his own visual vocabulary in a form of engaged social documentary to weave together multiple transformation narratives focused around T'xwelátse from the recent era of colonization by white settlers looking for land and resources.

The art practice of Campion involves a type of social engagement where the artist collaborates with the Stó:lō community. He asks provocative questions concerning the role of the artist, their relationship with the subject, and the demands of the audience. Central to this process is the exploration of the concept of dialogue as a form of engaged visual art practice.

Campion's photo-narratives recontextualized the landscape and were meant to document not so much the Stó:lō as the forces that created the conditions in which they now work and live. Campion sees the power of communication resulting from a process of production. His work explores the different kinds of collaboration that exist between the photographer and photographed, to ensure that the person behind the camera is not appropriating the identity of the person in front of the lens. Campion's art practice is situated within vernacular photography and the development of realism as a photographic practice.

In the realist photographic tradition, each photograph is related to a specific cultural experience and how the photographer at a particular moment frames a subject. Campion's photographic works for this exhibition further the exploration and development of realism by utilizing the power of photography to reshape stereotypes of the Stó:lō community. They help to create a retelling of the Stó:lō worldview, offering the viewer other ways of seeing.

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse provided the most comprehensive account yet assembled of the significant historical, cultural, and spiritual elements of the story of T'xwelátse and presented a core understanding of the Stó:lō people. The exhibition offered the unique challenge of how to present Stone T'xwelátse, the embodiment of a living being, containing the soul of T'xwelátse, a shxwlá:m or "Indian doctor" who was transformed to stone. This exhibition provided Stó:lō Nation with an opportunity to share private memories and stories and reveal other versions of history with the intention of community building through a dialogue in the form of an exhibition.

The contested gallery space

Art galleries are often seen as contested public spaces where social hierarchies are questioned and subverted, marked by the expression of a range of different convictions and beliefs, in which the past and the present are both represented. Art galleries are sites where dominant discourses can be critiqued by juxtaposing them with competing voices and exhibiting diverse points of view. The concept of conflicting voices and assimilation of the "words of others," and conscious and unconscious thoughts, can situate art galleries as sites to explore how through visual art possibilities exist to

resist the dominance of a single monologist perspective, allowing numerous points of view and systems of belief to be articulated in the form of exhibitions.

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse provided The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford an opportunity to function as a "contact zone" and space for dialogue between different identities, people, artworks, and living beings such as T'xwelátse. This exhibition was meant to provoke a dialogue with the viewer in an attempt to understand the form, theme, and context of each artwork and help make connections with the photographs that tell the story of T'xwelátse, Man Turned to Stone.

By presenting Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse, The Reach temporarily became a space for dialogue in the sharing of stories and multiple versions of history. Hooper-Greenhill (1994) asserts "that the role of the museum in the process of meaning-making entails understanding the museum as a site for negotiating cultural borderlands and a space to create contact zones where different identities, people, art works and artefacts can discover new possibilities to develop a cultural re-mapping, to re-write cultural borders and empower the museum visitor" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, pp. 12–13).

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse was a catalyst for dialogue between communities with a focus on both specific historical and contemporary contexts. It enabled an expression of both human agency and life experiences in and around specific social and cultural changes over time. This exhibition helped to reconstitute the function and purpose of the gallery as an open space to stimulate active and collaborative social interaction, dialogue, debate, and exploration of contemporary issues.

As public spaces, art galleries can facilitate the sharing of individual memories and stories—multiple versions of history offered in the public sphere with the intent of building community. Carol Duncan (1995) writes, "[T]o control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truth" (p. 8). Duncan goes on to say, "[E]xhibitions in art museums do not of themselves change the world.... But, as a form of public space, they constitute an arena in which a community may test, examine, and imaginatively live both older truths and possibilities for new ones."

Within Bakhtin's concept of dialogical discourse that consists of multiple and conflicting voices and can reveal diverse ways of seeing, galleries have the potential to become community spaces for sharing private memories and stories. Bakhtin further views dialogue as a process of personal transformation. By engaging in a conversation through what we see in the museum, we can enter into a subjective dialogue and exchange and examine how we can connect with others and create community. Learning in a museum is a process of making meaning and drawing connections, creating storylines based on who we are and on the world around us as part of a transformational process.

The role of The Reach in the process of meaning-making entails understanding the gallery as a site to create contact zones where different identities, people, and artworks can discover new possibilities to develop a cultural remapping, to rewrite cultural borders, and to create experiments in visual art, history, and community collaboration.

Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse offered access into the cultural heritage of the Stó:lō—from the events that led to the loss of Stone T'xwelátse to his subsequent recovery by the Stó:lō and the message he has to share with the community at large. That message—that we must all learn to live together in a good way—is relevant today as we attempt to bridge intercultural divides and unite communities.

In a world where negotiating the difficulties posed by profound individual and cultural differences is critical to civil society, the exhibition Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse offered an opportunity for people to explore their own identities in relation to others, to reflect on how people are different and how they are the same.

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Stó:lō Nation website—
www.stolonation.bc.ca

Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre website—
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For more information about
Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse
scan the code above to link to our website or go to
www.srrmcentre.com/StoneTxwelatse.html



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