we carry continents,
cross oceans,
traverse vast distances while still.

the scent of comfort,
is also longing.
what goes unsaid,
a kind of knowing.

how do elsewheres live in the body?
in dreams?
half-remembered tongues.
in what cannot be named.

Alize Zorlutuna, Curator
About the Exhibition

Bringing together photography, video, installation, and sculpture, the artworks in *The Breadth of Distance* shift across geographies, cultural perspectives, and time. Considering grief, longing, care, and resilience, they articulate how relationships to place, representation, and belief shape who we are and how we move in the present.

This exhibition asks us to reckon with how we came to be here on this land. Whether we are Indigenous, multi-generational settlers, or recent immigrants, our current moment demands we think through how we might build mutual understanding and empathy while recognizing our many differences.

About the Curator

Alize is an artist, poet, experimental cook, curator, intersectional feminist, committed pedagogue, and life-long learner. Working across disciplines, she investigates issues concerning identity and power, settler-colonial relationships to land, culture and colonial violence, as well as intimacy with the more-than-human, and technology. Her practice is informed by a critical engagement with historical narratives and their present-day impacts. Drawing on archival, as well as practice-based research, the body and its sensorial capacities are central to her approach.

Note for Faculty

This education guide is meant to be used in the classroom to facilitate discussions around these topics. It can be used in planning lessons around class visits to the exhibit, or can be used on its own after the exhibit has closed to engage students in discussions around art practices. It is meant to guide open dialogue about these issues and direct both faculty and staff towards relevant resources. The classroom exercises outlined can be adapted to suit your curriculum.

The works in this exhibition take up many intersecting themes: diasporic identity, colonialism and displacement, familial relations (adoption, intergenerational, ancestors), trauma, love and resilience, grief and death, traditional Chinese medicine, home remedies, language, connection to culture, the histories of photography and anthropology, representation and anti-Black racism.

Works discussed gather around four discussion points:

- Topic 1: Distance and Longing pg. 4
- Topic 2: Reclaiming and Identity pg. 9
- Topic 3: Healing pg. 14
- Topic 4: Ancestry and Relation to Culture pg. 19
Forced out
The spatial or geographic property of being scattered over
a range
a volume
an area
worldwide in distribution
On Turtle Island anyone who is not Indigenous
is part of some Diaspora

I wonder about language with its raw frayed fringes
delicately trying to express spirit
as each word drips from lips to rest in blank spaces
between us
Mangled by emptiness, the words are deflowered
When addressed this Diaspora
sometimes responds, debating,
educating, arguing, buying time,
stealing fifteen minutes from our space
this quarter hour so vital to our desire to regroup
profanes our peace


Shellie Zhang. I am Terrified / 我担心, 2017
Stories of migration and diaspora are central to the identity of millions of Canadians. Their stories might differ in timeline and characters but: “change the names and faces, substitute dates and places—and you have the portrait of millions of people who have come here, and are still coming to escape.” The journey to Canada is a challenge in itself for many, and these difficulties do not ease once an immigrant has landed. The larger hurdles are the ones experienced daily by immigrants, like racism, language barriers, difficulty adapting, and longing for a feeling, a homeland, and the people they left behind. However, a common thread between a lot of these barriers is memory. As Walid Joumblatt explains in *Human Flow*, without memory, we are nothing: memory is a part of our history and history is a part of our geography. The longing for places, people, and a sense of home is not just an immigration story. The experience of grief and loss is a longing for something across time and distance—something that can never be fully recovered, like a home to which one can not return. In order to recover loss, we look for things that can help us close the distance between what we once had and where we are now. Even if we are still in the same physical place, we look for a way back home.

As a class or individually, ask:

If we were to respond to Lee Maracle’s poem on the previous page, how might our identities as members of the diaspora or Indigenous people inflect those responses? Distance from and longing for belonging infuse relationships with language, customs and experiences of place. Whether we have been separated from our origins through forced assimilation or voluntary migration, elsewheres inform our experiences of the past and present.

---


Through this piece, we see distance manifesting itself in the form of a fear that is common to so many immigrants. Immigration brings new beginnings, but sometimes at the cost of losing threads that tie an individual to their culture. I am Terrified / 我担心 depicts the connection a person has with their culture in its purest form: language. The work focuses on the challenge of disconnecting with one’s culture when a native language is forgotten, and what that means when considering family and intergenerational knowledge sharing. The sign in English reads, “I am terrified that my mother will seem foreign to my children,” and the sign in Mandarin responds with, “I am terrified that my children will seem foreign to my mother.” The middle generation is on both sides, speaking both languages and fearing the cultural loss between their parents and children who might never understand each other.

Zhang says of her work:
“I am Terrified / 我担心 explores the transmission of language from one generation to another. Written in both English and Mandarin, the two neon signs speak to the cultural connections brought forth by language, and consequently, unveils the inherent loss experienced through linguistic assimilation. The piece examines the existential question faced by many non-English speaking individuals in Canada. By necessity, they must adapt and learn another language in order to function within contemporary society, most often at the detriment of losing their mother tongue. How do families navigate this change and how does it affect the ways in which they communicate with each other? As inevitable assimilation progresses, how do these communities navigate cultural loss and act as ambassadors of heritage to future generations?”

As a class or individually, ask:

What is at stake when a migrant assimilates into a new culture? How might the artist’s fears resonate with so many others? How do families navigate this shift and continue to pass on learning and culture?
In *Mother*, longing manifests itself through a series of photographs and a video. The melancholic longing in this work is for an unrecoverable person, place, and time. *Mother* is an artwork through which the artist comes to terms with her mother’s passing. Although the artist seeks out her mother’s family and friend connections in her homeland, her absence is very much present. It leaves one wondering about their own losses and how they are still present in memories and spirit, despite being physically absent.

**Dong says of her work:**

“*Mother* consists of 14 photographs and a video dedicating to my absent mother. Absence is a form of presence. Since my mother passed away, I went back to China where I was born and found 14 mothers who are my mother’s close friends and relatives. I bought a pair of floral embroidered traditional Chinese shoes to each mother as a gift, because my mother always loved the floral embroidered shoes. We took photographs together at each mother’s home where the mother wears the new shoes and I wear her cloth. After taking photos with each mother, I invited all mothers to come together for a group portrait.

This work seeks consolation and restores narrations of the past through visual expression of memories and loss, exploring relationship between life and death, human existence and universal emotions. I use re-enactment as a method of revisiting and re-imagining past to create scenarios of my mother visiting her birth place and meeting her childhood friends. Through using my own body to present my mother’s present, I reunite with my mother and become her. This work reveals how the mother/daughter relationship is experienced as a site of empowerment, and how memories cross time and space to create a new experience that not only transcends life and death, bridges past and present, but also transforms emotions and realities.”

**As a class or individually, ask:**

What role does ritual and clothing play in this work? How does community help to process grief? What does this work say about the nature of longing and distance?
EXERCISE

Distribute postcards to your students and invite them to write on them in response to the prompt, “How does elsewhere live in your body?”

Encourage students to think about what home means to them and invite them to write to someone or someplace. This exercise can be practical (for example, writing to a family member) or conceptual (such as writing to a place or time that has since disappeared, a former self, or a future place that has not yet been envisioned). The postcards can be mailed to this person or place (if practical) at the end of the exercise, connecting students to the “elsewhere” about which they wrote.

If you are accessing our LibGuides, we have postcards as a downloadable resource that you can print and use for this activity. Find them at https://libguides.humber.ca/humbergalleries/breadthofdistance

Further Reading:


Topic 2:

RECLAIMING IDENTITY

“This may not have been the only home reshaped by our before-selves”

– Canisia Lubrin

Amber Williams-King, preface i-iv (series), 2018
A consideration of representation is so vitally important because it is through representations and misrepresentations that we often form impressions of each other. They also inform how we understand ourselves in relation to larger social structures. Who has control or authorship over representations necessarily informs their content, including implicit biases, prejudices, and stereotypes. Self-representations are, therefore, often sites of reclamation and empowerment, allowing us to author images of ourselves that speak to the nuance and complexity of contemporary identities. Somewhere deep inside, we know who we are. Others can try to figure us out, but they’ll never know us like we know ourselves. Is your identity the labels you placed on yourself or the labels placed on you by others? How one presents themself and how we’re represented in our surroundings plays a key role in helping people understand our experiences—or at least try to.

Charmaine Nelson, a professor of Art History at McGill University, has made the argument that contemporary Canadian racism is the legacy of colonialism and slavery. These legacies lead to people in power imposing identities and perpetuating narratives which either demonize, exotify, or otherwise misrepresent individuals and their cultures more broadly. Art and popular culture are just two of the ways in which misrepresentations and stereotypes are maintained. The legacies of colonialism and slavery are complex and multi-layered, affecting people and their cultures, either from forced removal from their place of origin or forced assimilation.

Through re-situating representations of Black and Indigenous people, the artists in the show reclaim control of their own narratives. Art is a space for artists to explore their identities and where they come from, and to respond to oppressive forces. Resurgence and resistance have been practiced in many ways by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) throughout history—art is just one way.

Robin Maynard, a Black feminist writer, activist and educator from Montreal, writes in Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present, “If an anti-Black social order has attempted to impose a deviant uniformity and inter-changeability onto people of African descent in Canada—to collapse Black existence into a living, breathing embodiment of pathology and crime—actual Black communities have been multiple, plural and resistant. For this reason, resistant cultural practices have been enormously vast and diverse.”


RECLAIMING IDENTITY: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are the differences between self-representation and being represented?

How have BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) been misrepresented by outsider depictions?

How and why can art be one way of reclaiming identity?

What is the difference between reconciliation and resurgence?

How has colonialism affected identities and disconnected Indigenous people from their land and culture? How does resurgence support reconnection?

How do these works connect with other topics in this guide?
The central figures in this series of tapestries are taken from the backgrounds of photos from the civil rights era. The original photographs, taken by photojournalists, would have shown scenes of protest as captured by an outsider. Williams-King has selected scenes of love and care from the backgrounds of these photographs, and presented them in a way that underlines the significance of these moments. The photos are edited to resemble cyanotype photographs, and the tapestries around them reference traditional West African textile patterns. Williams-King’s work reframes an outside gaze by focusing in on these moments of care, resituating the outsider photojournalist or documentarian’s gaze. This suggests other perspectives, and recontextualizes the figures in another kind of space: one that is self-determined.

Williams-King says of her work,

“The sun-printed cyanotypes making up these tapestries reference a photographic history of categorizing and cataloging biological ‘specimens’ and the creation of architectural blueprints, while the hand-dyed indigo brings up Black cultural traditions of ritual and notions of wealth. Here, these processes are used to investigate a racist history of ethnographic otherism of Blackness and the ways Black communities subvert and co-create new maps of survival and existence. Isolating representations of intimacy within the archives of Civil Rights and Black Radical movements, these textiles play with the tensions of obscurity, illumination and surveillance.”

As a class or individually, ask:

How does Williams-King’s material approach reclaim/remake/reframe these photos from the archive? What emerges in the juxtaposition of the work’s material elements – i.e. archival photographs, textile dyeing techniques, Indigo blue, beading, stitching?
Vickers’ video Wauzhushk Onigum suggests a repairing of her relationship to place, and re-connecting spiritually through the gestures of her body. It is an act of care: the shadow caresses the other shadow’s shoulder, perhaps also repairing care across generations. In moments, the hands also cover the artist’s mouth, asking us to consider how much of the past silences us. The video presents a connection through time, complicating linear narratives into something much more circular.

Vickers’ work speaks to the history of displacement and dispossession of Indigenous people in Canada, while also asserting her ongoing presence in the here and now. Her body, silhouetted in relationship to archival and present-day images of the land, speaks to a resilient presence that stretches through time to the past, and forward into the future.

Indigenous relationships to land have been greatly impacted by colonial forces in Canada, which deliberately sought to strip people of their land, language and cultural practices. The forced relocation of communities, legal bans on ceremonial practices, and the enforced removal of children from their families to attend residential schools have had lasting impacts upon Indigenous populations within Canada. Despite this, Indigenous people have demonstrated an incredible and lasting resilience in the face of oppressive forces. Vickers’ work is a testament to this resilience, asserting her presence in relationship to her ancestral territory across time.

For video, please visit:


As a class or individually, ask:

How can Vickers’ work be an act of reclaiming identity? How does Vicker’s work speak to Indigenous relationships with the land under colonialism? How does Vickers’ work extend across time?
EXERCISE

Using reference images from the civil rights era and/or from present-day protests, have the class critically analyze white photographers’ depictions of BIPOC. Have classes break down how and why specific narratives have been formed by outsiders, and in what ways this frames or silences the voices of the people who are depicted.

Then, look closely at the work of Amber Williams-King. Consider how and why the artist has selected specific points from the backgrounds of photos to zoom in on and make the focal point of her work, and how these contrast with the focal points of the original images, which would show scenes of protest, perhaps framed as riots.

Some excellent sources to look for images can be found by accessing the archives of the Civil Rights Digital Library:

crdl.usg.edu

This article in TIME breaks down LIFE Magazine’s coverage of the Newark riots in 1957. The reproduced spreads from LIFE, showing photos along with the headlines used, point to a very specific depiction of black people and how they are contrasted against white law enforcement:

time.com/4848976/newark-riots-1967-photographer/

Further Reading:


Ask students:

Given what we’ve read about representation in journalism during the Civil rights movement, how might the original images have been encoded at the time they were created?

What does it mean now for a Black artist to be reclaiming them?

How can we think critically about our own subject-position and what that means for the portrayals we create?
Topic 2:

HEALING

“For centuries, community-focused care and ancestral healing knowledge have existed as practices of resistance and freedom for folks of colour. So, I wondered: What are the specific practices that keep us feeling protected and well? What does the gold in our communities look like?”

- Soko Fong Negash
Healing is a very personal thing, as our states of wellness are felt and understood only by us. The methods and practices we use to heal ourselves—the medicine we take, the rituals we follow—are often cultural and closely connected to our upbringings. The strong emotional component of healing is this connection it has to our pasts, our families, and our places of origin. In order to fully heal, we sometimes need to return to these places. Not always physically, sometimes we return in the form of intergenerational knowledge sharing, like a great grandmother’s cold and flu cure.

Healing can be physical or emotional/psychological, and sometimes scientifically proven medicine isn’t what the ailment requires. These other remedies can take the shape of familial care or traditional homemade ingredients. However, one component of all these healing methods is comfort. For some there is comfort in knowing that their medication has been tested and proven to work by science while for others, comfort presents itself in purely trusting their ancestor’s knowledge and what their distinct culture continues to offer them.

The debate of Traditional medicine vs. Western medicine has been long and arduous. The arguments usually made examine the source of the bias as taking root in how Western science is viewed as the only legitimate path to discovering the “truth” about the causes and cures for different diseases. Non-Western sciences are then “dismissed as worthless in almost every sense.”¹ Through this mindset, supporters of Western medicine dismiss all of the alternative forms of medicine such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) that are popular and trusted in non-Western cultures. However, in recent years, many Westerners began to consider Traditional Chinese Medicine to be the primary alternative to Western medicine.² This change might indicate that while Western medicine might address certain needs, other medicines are needed to fully remedy people’s ailments.

“When I think of what health and healing look like for me at home, I am reminded of the remedies, practices and elixirs passed down from my elders.”

– Soko Fong Negash


²Ibid., 116
Heirloom Facsimile is a tapestry replica of a faxed document that details cancer prevention from the point of view of Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Given how Western medicine is seen as superior to TCM in the west, over many years the information in the document has been combined with Western medicine in order to identify the remedies that work from the ones that do not.

Ng describes this work as a handmade cross-stitch embroidery tapestry that monumentalizes a document that asserts a wisdom about the prevention of cancer:

“A copy of this document was originally published by the Hong Kong government and was later emailed to my father, who received it as a fax from my maternal grandmother a number of years ago. The document is a list of facts about cancer, including methods to prevent the growth and spread of the disease. Most of the content would be considered unproven or suspect according to the knowledge systems of Western medicine.

Whilst passing through numerous generations and mediums, the original text degraded and accumulated image noise. Each digital pixel from the scanned text is rendered as a single cross stitch to create an almost exact enlargement of the original.”

In the tapestry, the artist has stitched traces of the fax—the paper’s edge, the date and time sent that would have existed on the original document—as it was reproduced and sent by fax multiple times. This disintegration of the text through copying suggests something about the translation of information across cultures, contexts, and perspectives.

As a class or individually, ask:

What does it mean to pass care from generation to generation, and how is this apparent through the many different forms this document has taken? What has each form added in terms of inter-generational connection? Why is it significant to the artist to reproduce these documents, especially in such a careful and labour intensive way?
Remedy in Practice weaves together three representations of traditional healing remedies, passed on by a grandmother or a great grandmother. At the heart of the three remedies lies the care that is passed on through family, culture, and ancestral knowledge.

Fong Nagesh says of her work, “When I think of what health and healing look like for me at home, I am reminded of the remedies, practices and elixirs passed down from my elders. Whether I was suffering from a common cold, a bruise or a stomachache, there was always some form of relief or comfort offered to me. Depending on the ailment, it might be congee (a Chinese rice porridge) waiting in the rice cooker; ghee (clarified butter popular in East African cuisine and beyond) wrapped in a towel, then placed on my head for detoxification; or another from a long list of homemade concoctions.

More often than not, it is knowledge carried from generations I have never had the honour of meeting. Frequently, the validity of these practices is questioned by folks who have not lived them. But, in reaction to my own troubling experiences within the Canadian health-care system— including my pain being neglected, as well as my health issues being misdiagnosed and overmedicated—I find myself reaching, again and again, for the wisdom and cure-alls of my predecessors, not to mention trusting my gut.

For centuries, community-focused care and ancestral healing knowledge have existed as practices of resistance and freedom for folks of colour. So, I wondered: What are the specific practices that keep us feeling protected and well? What does the gold in our communities look like?”

As a class or individually, ask:

What are some of the shortcomings of the standard healthcare system that are addressed by home remedies? What can healing teach us about care and the passing on of tradition? What home remedies do you carry? How do they support you in taking care?
EXERCISE

Have students find and analyze studies of traditional vs. Western medicine and the benefits of seeking traditional medicine. The book *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Heritage and Adaptation* is a good place to start, or students can search through journals or other internet resources through Humber Libraries. Encourage them to seek out sources that relate to healing within Indigenous cultures, as well.

This research can be used as the basis of a writing assignment or a class discussion. Have students connect to their own cultures and how ailments are treated within them: If they were raised with Western medicine, how are their opinions on non-Western medicine informed, and what biases might they have? If they were raised with traditional medicine, or a hybrid of Western and traditional, what are their attitudes and beliefs about each?

The discussion can also be brought beyond the topic of medicine to look at how different cultures heal grief, trauma, psychological pain, and loss through ritual, behaviour, spiritual ceremony, etc.

A broader question can be:

What heals you?

Further Reading:


“If we can be free, if this land can be free, perhaps we must consider to whom we might return to, rather than to where. could we reconnect with the land that housed our captivity, if it told us it witnessed all of what happened?”

– Melisse Watson

Amber Williams-King, un/ravelling (series), 2016
ANCESTRY & RELATION TO CULTURE: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do you define identity? What makes you who you are?

What does family mean to you?

How can one respond to and emerge from painful family legacies and ancestral trauma?*

In what ways does absence make itself present and how do you handle it?

How do these works connect to other topics in the guide?

Ancestry forms our memories, stories, experiences, trauma, our connection to the past, history, our relation to culture, and our identity. Who would we be without it and the culture that is entwined in it? Minds and hearts hold onto memories and stories so we never forget who we are and where we came from. Pleasant and troubling stories make a home inside us and ask us to reckon with the past.

The different stories and approaches to this engagement with culture are presented in similar yet different ways by three artists. Chun Hua Catherine Dong presents clothing as a symbol, Melisse Watson connects to ancestors and family archives, and Amber Williams-King unravels history to reconcile with the past. In each of these works, there is a common thread of the artist connecting with their ancestry and addressing the trauma, grief, and longing in their pasts.

While analyzing these works, consider how other pieces of art in this guide also connect with this theme, and explore these connections.

Strait of Gibraltar
Do you know they left their homes
One drought-filled morning, hearts soaring
Softly singing
Nakozonga mboka, mobembo ézali liwa téééé
But now, their hopes are gone
Their bodies unknowable
Washed ashore with the tide
Or floating to the rhythm of the waves
Disfigured or petrified
Could these be the bodies of my loved ones
In piles on the wharves of Gibraltar
Like fish caught forever in a net?


*Humber offers counselling resources free of charge to all students. To learn how you can access these resources, please consult the final page of this guide.
The artist says of her work: “Mother is an embodiment of a melancholic longing for an unrecoverable past and a memento mori: a reminder of the inexorable passage of time and the beautiful transience of human life.”

Mother is a re-enactment of the past, a time the artist can’t go back to but can reimagine. Proactively addressing grief and longing for an unattainable past is just as present as absence in Dong’s work. It is through this re-imagination of scenarios whereby her aunts and family friends wear the floral embroidered traditional Chinese shoes preferred by her mother that we see the artist connecting with their culture and reconnecting with their mother. It is also through this re-enactment that a definition of a broadened family is presented. Ancestry here doesn’t only stand for direct family, but also the individuals and traditions that surrounded those directly related to us.

For video, please visit:
Dong, Chun Hua Catherine. Mother. Filmed 2017. Video, 8:23. youtube.com/watch?v=QwMxFlpPtlU

As a class or individually, ask:
How does the artist address her grief through these works? How does she reconnect with her culture? In what way is the artist broadening her definition of family, and what is it that she could be seeking?
These works were created after the artist reconnected with their birth family, and explore the ways in which this reunion reconciled feelings of longing and displacement and brought the artist into relationship to their ancestral origins. Watson says of their work that Reunion is “an act of resistance to further generational removal and separation of Black families. This work speaks to a longing for and re-uniting with one’s history, familial ties, vernacular, food, land*, traditions, community – as displaced and removed peoples of the Black diaspora.” It documents the resilience of cultural practices in the face of oppression faced by the artist and their ancestors, including the forced separation of the artist from their family and culture. It is important to show that cultural traditions are still being practiced and handed down by their family, and this refutes a broader history of forced separation of Indigenous and Black families through systemic mechanisms like residential schools and slavery. The work defies loss and disappearance by asserting cultural resilience.

The piece in the middle is folded 14 times, which is the same way an American flag is folded when presented to the families of fallen veterans. This references the discovery made by the artist that their birth family had a military background. The folded hands in the piece echo the way their relative’s hands were positioned when sharing stories, and also recalls the way someone might hold themselves; a soothing gesture.

The feelings a person has in response to stories, experiences, and memories are what forges a strong connection between the listener and the teller. Yet stories sometimes need to be felt in different ways, in a more physical sense, for that connection to ancestry and culture to be sealed. The mixed-media images presented in this work all relate to family but allow the viewer to feel the audio of family histories through a subpac device. The act of bringing audio into the body is in itself a form of resistance to how stories are usually told, as we know the context of the stories and can experience them physically without knowing the content.

Watson says that their reunion is an act of self-determination, as, “To those removed or displaced, these stories and storytellers exist in our bones as well as the spaces outside ourselves we retreat to, even when we do not have their names or know their faces – even when they do not know ours. To those whom the longings reside and grieving takes place:

“I wrote like my grandmother before I knew of my grandmother, she taught me by my own hand. You do have a history, a people, a place, a community, ancestors.

It is not your duty to survive or carry any legacy, it is only necessary to be free.

You are here, by acts of all necessary means.”

As a class or individually, ask:

Why are resistance and self-determination so important in the context of the artist’s family history? How does this connect to other themes in this guide?
Amber Williams-King, *un/ravelling* (series), 2016

*Un/ravelling* is a series of five self-portraits through which the artist contends with the effects of intergenerational trauma. The series speaks to the complex histories of the middle passage, slavery and how these experiences of violent subjugation have ongoing effects for members of the Black diaspora. Reconciliation with the past through the un/ravelling of painful ancestral experiences is a reminder that pain doesn’t have to be physical for it to leave an intergenerational mark. By exploring intergenerational trauma the artist is able to begin processing it.

*Williams–King says of her work,*

“This series of self portraits takes the body as a site of exploration into personal and intergenerational trauma, transformation and healing. Using white cotton string and the Black body, the subject entwines various sites and experiences of intimate violence, cotton production in the Caribbean and wider issues of historical, systemic oppression and survival. The white lines (and the markings left behind) from this un/ravelling speaks to the ways non-physical violence can still be carried in the flesh, while the intricate patterns made also gesture towards the salt symbols of ritual and healing found in syncretic Caribbean religions. With this, the subject un/ravels meaning and memory, processing trauma through a coming a part and a holding together."

As a class or individually, ask:

How can trauma be passed down through generations? How can one engage with ancestral trauma? What is Williams–King suggesting about the process of art making as it connects to healing?
EXERCISE

With the input of your students, create a structure and timeline for a “Show and Tell” type activity or written activity to present artifacts or beliefs/habits that connect individuals to their culture or family.

Have students think about what connects them to their identity and origins, and how this can be communicated to their classmates. This could take the form of a presentation, in which each student shares with their classmates this object or concept, or can be modified into a writing assignment.

A good example to provide students with is the pair of embroidered slippers used in Chun Hua Catherine Dong’s photos, as they are an object that the artist used to connect to her mother, but what each student shares does not have to be something so concrete. In Melisse Watson’s work, as another example, they have presented the backs of family photos, their grandmother’s handwriting, and symbolic gestures as a way of exploring where they come from.

This activity could be directly tied to curriculum in social work or ECE programs, as students can use this sharing as a basis for developing empathy for each others’ personal beliefs, cultures, and identities. It would also work in the same way for international development and general education classes, or any class in which the instructor would like to build a basis of empathy and understanding to guide classroom learning.

Further Reading:


Feelings of grief can be difficult to sort through & healing is non-linear. Remember that you are never alone. Know that you can always reach out and talk to someone.

**Counselling @ Humber**

Counselling appointments are booked on a same day basis and on a first come, first serve basis. To book an appointment, you may visit the Student Wellness & Accessibility Centre (North) or Student Welcome Centre (Lakeshore) in person or by telephone:

416-675-5090 (North) or 416-675-6622 ext. 3331 (Lakeshore)

Counselling Services are FREE to all currently enrolled students of Humber College and University of Guelph Humber.