

# Stitching Stories

## Interpretations of Material Culture

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this publication each have their individual story and connection to the land and were brought together by the University of Manitoba through study and research.

Territorial Land Acknowledgement. We recognize that...

*...the University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.*

We thank the late Ulayok Kaviok from Arviat, Nunavut Territory, for passing down her Inuit-style mitten pattern. Ulayok Kaviok was a seasoned seamstress, community advisor, and knowledge keeper. It has been a privilege to work with her mitten pattern.

We thank Dr. Jill Oakes for her encouragement and assistance in orchestrating this collection of works and for sharing her expertise in Inuit style sewing and craft.



# AN ODE TO THE RABBIT

*Emily Rose Savoie*

An Ode to the Rabbit is an artistic representation of my gratitude towards the rabbit spirit. Rabbits are known in the Indigenous community as light-hearted trickster spirits who bring out the child in us. If you observe rabbits, you can find their playful personalities as they fool around with their kin. Rabbit fur is soft and warm and is commonly used in winter wear. I would like to use this piece to thank the rabbit spirit for helping us outrun the cold winters.

The x-ray lines in the rabbit show how the energy is radiated through their body. The rabbit radiates energy as does the stars who we are connected to as well. This piece aims to reveal how everything in our world is connected from the ground to the cosmos. The thread interweaves through the grass to the sky and through the rabbit until it meets itself again. The heart above the rabbit is a representation of the rabbit's abundant fertility. The center piece displays the balance of truth and lies that create harmony and tension in our world. This piece reminds us to express gratitude to everything around us as everything is connected.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my cousin Paityn Savoie for inspiring me, sharing her knowledge and being a listening ear as we both continue our journey in reconnecting to our Métis culture.

## PREFACE

*Amy Cherpako*

Our Sacred Lands class began in September 2022, which marked a unique point in time for many of us. After over two years of social isolation and remote courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes and events transitioned back to in-person on campus. Attending in-person classes again was daunting at first, after remaining safe from the virus behind a computer screen for so long.

However, after a few classes I began to remember what was missed by this detachment. One of the most important conditions of our mitten project was that all sewing had to be done in class. This was to try to recreate the social aspect of what it is like to sit together in a community, sharing not only spare needles and thread, but stories, lessons, and conversation. Sewing together created an inimitable experience of connecting with one another, seeing smiling eyes just visible over masked faces.

Therefore, this mitten project turned out to mean a lot more than stitching fabric together to complete an assignment. It served as a reminder of the importance of simply being together in an enriched learning environment, interwoven with a genuine sense of community that was greatly missed.