



Aboriginal Women's Access to Justice Video Project Report



Woman Warrior
Artist: Angela Sterritt



Aboriginal Women's Access to Justice Video Project Report

September 2011

Background and further information to accompany the videos:
Don't Need Saving: Aboriginal Women and Access to Justice and
A Message To You From the Hearts of Aboriginal Women

By Audrey Huntley, Wolf Dog Productions



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METRAC is a community-based not-for-profit that prevents violence against women and youth.

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This report reflects the views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the views of METRAC.

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Video Resources

Don't Need Saving: Aboriginal Women and Access to Justice

Six minutes, 30 seconds

A Wolf Dog Production

Director/Producer: Audrey Huntley

Camera/Editor: Mike Barber

Includes artwork by Aboriginal artists (artist descriptions are provided on page 16).

View video: <http://youtu.be/e5bqUjdbzls>

A Message To You From the Hearts of Aboriginal Women

Eight minutes, 15 seconds

A Wolf Dog Production

Director/Producer: Audrey Huntley

Camera/Editor: Mike Barber

View video: <http://youtu.be/Ti4RrePXuL0>

Note from the Filmmaker

As co-founder of Wolf Dog Productions and director/producer of a feature-length documentary and several shorts, I was excited to take on the Aboriginal Women's Access to Justice Project to support METRAC's legal information work for women in Ontario and those who support them.

Working in television, I learned the importance of brevity and clear messaging. Understanding our target audience, I conveyed to METRAC the importance of keeping it short – less than 30% of viewers make it through a five-minute piece.

The *Don't Need Saving: Aboriginal Women and Access to Justice* video used motion graphics and text to visually reinforce narration and interview clips and to enhance video as an educational tool. When working with video, it is important to remember that this medium can't cover every fact or issue related to the subject matter. Unlike a comprehensive essay or book, video does not tell the whole story. Above all, it is meant to spark interest, move the viewer to care and impart important themes. For that reason, this report has been created to give service providers a range of information and deepen their educational experience.

Attempts to access justice in the current legal system are seen by many Aboriginal people as futile. They often prefer to seek solutions in their own systems of governance and law and in the traditional teachings that value women. It is hoped that these videos will help service providers to better understand Aboriginal women's experiences of colonization, where the roots of violence against Aboriginal women are located. They also give suggestions for how service providers can better relate to their clients. Our goal is to contribute to a much needed process of reconciliation between Aboriginal people and all Canadians.

The project has been promoted extensively through my work with No More Silence, a group dedicated to raising awareness about the high rates of violence and disappearances of Indigenous women (www.nomoresilence-nomoresilence.blogspot.ca).

I thank Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director of METRAC, for initiating this project, and the Law Foundation of Ontario for funding this important work.

All My Relations,

Audrey Huntley

Aboriginal Women Leading the Video Project

“If we look hard at the oppression of Aboriginal people in this country, we will see that all of the oppression we have faced, from residential schools, to section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act, from the removal of our children through child welfare practices to the exemption of the Indian Act from the purview of the federal human rights legislation, from the prohibitions of our ceremonies, to the ban of lawyers representing us – all share in common one fact. All oppression of Aboriginal people in Canada has operated with the assistance and the formal sanction of law.” (Patricia Monture [1958-2010], Thinking about Aboriginal Justice: Myths and Revolution Research and Development)

A focus group was held to gather input for the video project from members of the Aboriginal community. Seven women, all working as service providers in community organizations, participated:

- Bridget Perrier, Sex Trade 101;
- Christa Big Canoe and Valerie John, Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto;
- Evonne Wright, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres;
- Krysta Williams, Native Youth Sexual Health; and
- Sarena Johnson and Bonnie Matthews, Native Canadian Centre and Toronto Missing and Murdered Women’s Committee.

Individual conversations were held with Darlene Ritchie of Atlohsa Family Healing Services in London, Ontario and members of No More Silence in Toronto, Ontario.

On-camera interviews were conducted with Rebeka Tabobondung, Crystal Melin, Nicole Tanguay, Darlene Ritchie, Nadia Fordham, Krysta Williams, Erin Konsmo, Tanis Desjarlais and Shallen Murray.

Focus group participants were very clear in their desire that the tone of the videos should not be about garnering pity or asking for help.

“We should be saying this stuff happened for reasons that are systemic; it’s not about some people being mean but rather the system at work and we are awesome because we are still here.”

“We don’t want to foster a helping-saving mentality ... We want the video to come from a place of empowerment – we should use it as a way to capture our resilience and strength and to say we deserve this and we will keep fighting for this and we are not going away!”

Participants also requested “use of statistics that are transparent and useful”.

Fragmentation of identity, with its roots in the *Indian Act*, was foremost on the minds of focus group participants. It was discussed in the context of the racism Aboriginal women encounter in their daily lives and the prevalence of the stereotypes they encounter when seeking services.

For instance, women relayed being asked if they had been drinking during pregnancy at routine check-ups. They described other incidents of racism they experienced from medical professionals and other service providers.

Participants asked that the videos not reproduce the misrepresentation of Aboriginal women that so often occurs in film and television.

“Either you’re the bad squaw or you are the beautiful pure Indian princess and you die.”

When addressing missing and murdered Aboriginal women, participants asked that mug shots not be used.

Participants pointed to the continuity of genocidal policies and cited Duncan Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, and his intent to do anything possible to eliminate Indians. It is a strategy reflected in the fact that more Aboriginal children are in care today since the so-called “sixties scoop”. Recently, First Nations leader John Beaucage, hired by the Government of Ontario to examine Aboriginal Child Welfare, coined the term “millennium scoop” to describe the ongoing forced separation of Aboriginal parents from their children.

A participant in the focus group asked us to think about moving away from a woman-centric definition of gender and think about using an Indigenous understanding of life-giving. This understanding recognizes many ways of giving life – “not just pushing babies out of our vaginas.” It also includes Two-Spirit and Trans people.

Participants discussed Patricia Monture’s understanding of the law and how it works to undermine Aboriginal self-determination. Participants pointed out that the over-incarceration of Aboriginal people should come as no surprise since the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other police and military forces were originally created to remove Aboriginal people from their land, stealing the land to allow settlers to take it.

The launch of the videos was held at Native Women’s Resource Centre in Toronto, Ontario on September 27, 2011.

Thematic Analysis

The primary theme recurring in focus group and in on and off-camera interviews was that Aboriginal women's experience of violence is based in the systemic context of colonization. Racism was cited over and over again as the outstanding factor that prevents Aboriginal women from seeking assistance from government institutions – not only due to fear of re-victimization but most often connected to fear that their children will be apprehended. Aboriginal women we interviewed want less government involvement and more empowerment to create their own pathways to healing.

The following excerpts illustrate where Aboriginal women we worked with locate the roots of their disempowerment.

Impact of the *Indian Act*

Over and over again, Aboriginal women we interviewed cited the *Indian Act* as a root cause of their disempowerment. Women who once held positions of power lost property rights and were excluded from band council systems and treaty negotiations as a result of the *Act*.

Until 1985, Aboriginal women's identity and rights were tied to their husbands. If they married someone who wasn't considered a "Status Indian" as defined by the *Act*, they lost their own rights and membership in the band. This was remedied to some extent by Bill 31 ("An Act to Amend the *Indian Act*", 1985) but flaws of that legislation have been the subject of many studies. Aboriginal women are still not treated equally as transmitters of status. A constitutional challenge to the law mounted by Sharon McIvor in 1994 did not result in a systematic remedy. She continued to fight, saying:

I contested this discrimination under the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms]. It took twenty years in Canadian courts, and I achieved only partial success. Now I will seek full justice for Aboriginal women under international human rights law. Canada needs to be held to account for its intransigence in refusing to completely eliminate sex discrimination from the Indian Act and for decades of delay (Sharon McIvor Takes Her Fight to the United Nations, www.newswire.ca/en/story/657971/sharon-mcivor-takes-her-fight-to-the-united-nations).

The Aboriginal women we interviewed had this to say.

"Violence against Aboriginal women is rooted in Canadian legislation, the Indian Act, the Indian Act pure and simple. The Indian Act allowed and promoted the residential school system. The Indian Act allowed and promoted the sixties scoop. The Indian Act to this end promotes violence against Aboriginal women."

"What was said in that Indian Act is that Indian women don't have an identity; they take on the identity of the man that they choose to marry and that's absolutely sick and absolutely against our law. Our great law was run by our matriarch, where women make the decisions in our governance, where women determine, where women own the land, where women own the food, where women make those decisions because they impact totally our children. That's our law and what was imposed on us way back in the eighteen hundreds was imposed on us because Europeans didn't have any power over First Nations people."

“As soon as that Indian Act was signed ... it went downhill after that. Women lost their power, basically; it was given over to the men where it shouldn't have been and from that it went to destruction of their livelihood, their power, their roles in society throughout Canada.”

Spousal Abuse versus Stranger Violence

A 2009 Statistics Canada study on violent victimization of Aboriginal women found that the rate of violent incidents reported by Aboriginal women is triple that of non-Aboriginal women (*Violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the Canadian provinces, 2009*, www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11439-eng.htm). Statistics Canada noted that 223 of every 1,000 Aboriginal women reported incidents of violence, while the rate among non-Aboriginal women was 84 in 1,000.

Nearly 67,000 (13%) of Aboriginal women aged 15 or older reported they were the victim of one or more violent crimes – sexual assault, robbery and physical assault – in the 12 months prior to the survey. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Aboriginal victims were between 15 and 34 years old.

The proportion of Native women who reported violence by a current or former spouse was about two-and-a-half times higher than the proportion of non-Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal women locate spousal violence in what is often referred to as the “intergenerational cycle of violence” stemming from a legacy of residential school trauma. Survivors of this experience returned to their communities broken-spirited and often turned to alcohol and drugs to numb their pain. Not only had they not had a chance to learn to parent in healthy ways – many had also experienced beatings and sexual abuse and might have subsequently enacted that violence against their own loved ones.

“I think that Native women experience a lot of violence because many of us have experienced violence in our homes from such a young age and we've been raised in residential school survivor homes because those are our parents and they were encountered with violence and victimized as children and as they grew up. They didn't have that family that would show them [how] a whole beautiful family looks.”

“They were abused as they were raised as children so unfortunately that has the effect for generations to come. So when you are raised in a family like that, that becomes your norm, you don't know anything else. You don't know healthy relationships, what a healthy family looks like, and as you grow up and especially if you are around other people and nobody is counterbalancing these ideals that are placed in your family, you learn to accept that as the norm.”

“I think it has to do in part with trauma in the past and what's happened to not only my mother but my grandparents and I don't know beyond that because so much of our records have been misplaced. But I have experienced violence my entire life whether it's against me or I'm a part of it when I was younger or against a family member, and I think it just comes from anger and hurt.”

“With Aboriginal women it is something that they have experienced all of their lives so I can't stress how much it's important to change policy and recognize how this government involvement has been the catalyst for the violence that we experience and have experienced.”

“One of the first things that comes to mind is government involvement and systemic racism because without that the experiences that I have had and that my family have had – a lot of things wouldn't have happened ... I think about

women who have lost their children due to the sixties scoop; I think of kids who have gone through children's aid and that loss of culture, that loss of connection to your family."

Many Aboriginal women we worked with believe that men who have been abused as children – either by their own parents who may have been through residential school or foster homes – will often become abusers as adults.

"I guess the one important piece I think really needs to come through strong in this message around Aboriginal women and violence is that a lot of that violence is specifically attached to the youth and to the children and to our next generations as a specific strategy and that and if we're going to address either the issue of violence against women or violence against children in state custody and forced adoption, those issues need to be intimately connected when we talk about solutions."

"Currently, I think that violence has become normalized in that it's very everyday and we see it a lot and that gets confused with something that's traditional, with something that's historic and so it came to understanding how violence has become an everyday thing but that doesn't mean that it's part of our culture our traditions."

"And with the long history of residential schools, the reservation system and because our lands have been used and we have had no access to our resources over the last two three hundred years. There's been so much poverty and the repercussions of colonization so that's just led to destructive forces, to destructive lifestyles."

"I think that Aboriginal women aren't seen as human beings and I think that we're seen as lower-than. And not only from society and societal laws and stuff but even from our own brothers; I think that they've bought into the whole concept that women are 'other'. Instead, we're supposed to be beside them and not behind them."

Some studies have demonstrated that not only do Aboriginal women experience spousal abuse at higher rates, they also experience violence at the hands of strangers more often. The women we interviewed understood this to be part of the overall racism they experience in their daily lives. It is also what deters them from seeking help.

"My ex-boyfriend was harassing me and following me all over Yonge Station and I was saying: leave me alone, leave me alone, and there were so many people (but no one helped me) so I finally pushed him, like a small push. I didn't hurt him and then that's when they intervened when I pushed him because they see a young Native girl and my boyfriend is older and he's a white man and they want to stop the Native girl from hitting the poor white man. That's what I felt and he was harassing me and calling me names in front of everybody."

"And I do think it has to do with Western culture and worldview and belief systems and this notion of white supremacy. That there is a deep ingrained hatred towards Indigenous people and I would argue towards People of Color as well and that expresses itself in different forms of violence."

"Well, I think one of the things that I've always found disturbing is how the legal system treats Aboriginal women way differently than it does the other population and it's back to that whole systemic racism to keep us under control and to keep us down."

"The stereotype is that a lot of Native women do live on the street, that they prefer to live on the street, perhaps that they are promiscuous, they take risks and they will be drinking and doing drugs which puts them in vulnerable situations, so there's this idea that perhaps they deserve any sort of violence that they come across, they are easily

addicted to alcohol and other drugs and perhaps prostitution. Those are the stereotypes that I think people have of Native women at least in urban areas.”

“I think that also growing up in this society, in this racist society, that you know from the time that we were little Aboriginal women have always been looked down upon – we’ve always been the sluts, the whores, the drunks and I was told that I was going to grow up just like that from my foster parents and that was from their idea of what Aboriginal women are.”

Criminalization of Women Reporting Abuse

One of the women we interviewed relayed an experience where she herself was charged and convicted of assault when reporting abuse. She had defended herself from harassment and now has a criminal record. A victim services worker confirmed this to be a disturbing trend.

“Yes, there is an increasing trend. My sister had a similar incident: her husband was trashing their house and threatening her. She called the cops and was arrested and charged. She spent the night in jail and had never been to jail before. Another woman was attacked by her spouse, the police came and he said she was fighting him so they were both charged her [charges] were later dropped but she had to go in for the mug shot and prints. I have heard many such stories from women.”

So, fear of the police and ending up in jail is another reason why Aboriginal women hesitate to report abuse.

“It comes along the line of not asking for assistance or help from police for fear of being re-victimized as this young woman. Correct me if I’m wrong, but if women call police and have children, child welfare [might be] involved and so they are at risk of losing their children from domestic abuse, which then leads them to be more silent from fear. I had seen a few cases through domestic where the woman is charged from defending herself or the man will even lie.”

The Way Forward

Women we interviewed pointed out that many Canadians, not just service providers, lack an understanding of colonization and the deep pain Aboriginal people feel as a result of displacement from land and culture.

“I think that maybe in order to help Native women – not only Native women but any woman – you should learn their past and maybe their people and their past and what happened to them and find out why they are letting their abusers do this to them because a lot of us feel like we don’t have a lot of self-worth. We just feel like we don’t deserve but I know that we do and I just wish that we could realize how important we are and I just want people to know and every woman to know that, especially our Native women, that we deserve better and that we need to stop the cycle of abuse because we don’t want our daughters to be getting hit by their men and even family abuse. I see brothers hitting sisters and it’s not right and it’s not our way so in order to help us, I guess we need to learn to help ourselves.”

“They have to develop a relationship, a meaningful relationship, and I believe that’s very much based on reconciliation and beyond service providers, the larger society needs to put time into learning about Indigenous history, learning about Canadian history but that includes Indigenous voices within that history and really understand, try to understand and empathize with what communities have undergone in the last three hundred years.”

“I would want a room full of court workers and lawyers and anyone who is to come into the pathway of a Native woman who has been victimized as an adult to understand that they will not ever know what her life has been like or how young she has been victimized from and that she has experienced a whole life probably of hardships and being told no and being victimized since she was a little child and that if she’s reaching out for help that might be the first time she’s ever reached out for help and that she needs someone to be supportive of her and tell her yes and show her a way out of the perpetual cycle of abuse and victimization.”

“I expect that they understand the historical context. I also expect that they understand what it is like to be an Aboriginal woman, living in this society, whether they educate themselves or they have other people educate themselves or get in touch with their own internalized stuff that keeps other women down. I expect them to be kind and gentle and respectful to treat Aboriginal women the same that they would non-Aboriginal and European women in particular.”

What Aboriginal women request from service providers is to be treated as individuals and with the same respect accorded to any client seeking assistance.

“I would say just respect who you are working with, treat the women that you are working with as individuals, treat the children that you are working with as individuals – we are the experts – they are the experts and you have to recognize that you can’t treat everybody under one umbrella that’s what the government did. Oh, you are Aboriginal, this is what your culture is about – this is what you have experienced ... listen to their stories.”

“I think they need to recognize that violence isn’t okay no matter what race, what background and that they should listen to us because we are just as important as everybody else.”

“That every Aboriginal woman that walks into their service is different and unique and they come from different places; they might be rural, remote or urban. Different life experiences will impact how they perceive service providers so they have to be very aware that they may most likely have a history of service providers that may have harmed them in some way.”

Aboriginal women often find strength and healing by reconnecting with cultural and traditional teachings. Openness on the part of service providers to integrate such practices into the work they do with Aboriginal women would be welcomed.

“Many women want to get back in touch with their culture, so that becomes very important to them and that you are willing to be open to integrating their cultural perspectives into what their major challenges and issues are and just be treated as individuals.”

“I think that Aboriginal women are now starting to get their power back I think that we’ve picked up our medicines and are starting to walk that road.”

“Going to ceremonies, participating in cultural activities and events – what gives me hope is participating in ceremonies and different cultural activities.”

Most importantly, Aboriginal women we interviewed stated that they want to foster their own self-empowerment. They have the solutions and want to find ways to implement them within their nations and traditional systems.

“We don’t need saving – that’s kind of how we got here in the first place; people trying to save us, people trying to change who we are to fit their own needs, to fit their own whatever. And so we get to define who we are, we get to say who our women are, we get to say who our children are, who our Two-Spirit people are; we get to define that and nobody else.”

“... we live this reality every single day and so we are the expert on the solutions that we need and the changes that we need to see and so when we are actually in a space where we can make those decisions, it’s really, really amazing.”

“I would want people to know that the strength lies within the hearts of the people, the resistance lies in the hearts of the people and that we have solutions, we have the compassion and the experience – we have hundreds of years of the experience of dealing with things within our families, within our homes, within our communities. That what we need assistance with, if we need any assistance, is breaking down the structural barriers that have been built up for hundreds of years and that we are the ones that understand them better than anybody. And that we don’t need to be told by experts what they are and that those layers, whether it’s government policy, whether it’s state institutions like education that have perpetuated certain images of Aboriginal women and violence, that those usually aren’t coming from us and that those solutions aren’t usually coming from us. So if things aren’t community-based and they don’t address the larger structural barriers like those institutions, then we are not going to change violence against women in the many different forms and experiences that it comes in.”

“I think it’s just about deconstructing their own racism, the internalized racism that allows these stereotypes to exist and then to challenge them and to name them and to challenge themselves and see themselves in that system. And then, who knows? Maybe one day we’ll get to a point where we will not need any of the social services and that these types of services will again be offered within the context of our own traditional systems because of course they have always been there as well. Our communities have taken care of each other historically and been very successful at doing that and that’s what I would like to see happen: to consider Indigenous approaches to providing services.”

Additional Resources

Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto

This organization strengthens the capacity of Aboriginal communities to deal with justice issues and provides Aboriginal-controlled and culturally-based justice alternatives.

Website: www.aboriginallegal.ca

Family Law Education for Women (FLEW)

FLEW provides information about family law and its impact on diverse women, including Aboriginal women. METRAC currently manages the FLEW Project and works with an Advisory Council on the campaign's content.

Website: www.onefamilylaw.ca

Final Report Strengthening the Circle to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women

This report provides a summary of “Summit III: Strengthening the Circle to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women” held in Hamilton on February 17-19, 2009.

Website: www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Strengthening-the-Circle-Report-Final-July09.pdf

First Voices: An Aboriginal Women's Reader

Editors: Patricia Monture-Angus and Patricia Mcguire

“Learn about the great diversity across Aboriginal nations in Canada, and the diversity of women within those nations. The articles in this collection present many of the struggles Aboriginal women have faced in Canada: struggles with the criminal justice system, with inclusion in self-government and constitutional reform, and with issues of membership in bands and matrimonial real property” (www.ucrdstore.ca/first-voices-an-aboriginal-women-s-reader.html).

Website: www.inanna.ca

I am a Kind Man

This website is directed at Aboriginal men who wish to speak out against woman abuse and supports abusers to change their behavior. It includes a list of resources for men and is a special project of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

Website: www.iamakindman.ca

The Implications of Restorative Justice For Aboriginal Women and Children Survivors of Violence: A Comparative Overview of Five Communities In British Columbia

Authors: Wendy Stewart, Audrey Huntley and Fay Blaney

“This paper is intended as a comparative overview of five Aboriginal communities in British Columbia and the possible implications of initiating Restorative Justice reforms in cases of violence against women and children in these communities. This document examines the ways in which Aboriginal women’s experience of colonization is mediated by gender and attempts to locate the effects of violence against women and children within this trajectory.”

Website: www.publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2008/lcc-cdc/JL2-53-2001E.pdf

Journeying Forward: Dreaming First Nations’ Independence

Author: Patricia Monture-Angus

“Activist and scholar Patricia Monture-Angus examines her own intellectual and personal colonization as a way to share ideas about what she, as a Mohawk woman, sees as the next steps on the path to finding a solution to the continued oppression of First Nations people. She is dissatisfied with the circuitous progress with which Aboriginal claims and issues are being dealt with in both Canadian courts and Canadian politics. As well, because many current day First Nations political institutions are framed within and defined by the Indian Act, the author also questions the ability of these organizations to assist in fully eradicating the oppression their citizens. She rejects the idea of ‘self-government’ (a goal too narrow and overly inundated by colonial meanings to provide a full solution) in favour of a much larger idea-independence. *Journeying Forward* is readable, challenging, personal and passionate.”

Website: www.fernwoodpublishing.ca/Journeying-Forward-Patricia-Monture-Angus

Kanawayhitowin Campaign

This campaign addresses woman abuse in Aboriginal communities across the province of Ontario. It provides resources and strategies for women experiencing abuse and for families, communities, and front line workers. This campaign was launched by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and adapted from the “Neighbours, Friends and Family” initiative to reflect a traditional and cultural approach to community healing and wellness.

Website: www.kanawayhitowin.ca

Ontario Women’s Justice Network (OWJN)

OWJN, METRAC’s legal information website, promotes an understanding of the law with respect to violence against women and contains information on relevant legal issues, including written law (legislation) and case law (court decisions). It has information for diverse women, including Aboriginal women.

Website: www.owjn.org

A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Authors: Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and Ontario Native Women's Association

Website: www.oiath.ca/assets/files/.../Strategic_Framework_Aboriginal_Women.pdf

Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks

Author: Patricia Monture-Angus

“This book contains the reflections of one Mohawk woman and her struggles to find a good place to be in Canadian society. The essays, written in enjoyable and accessible language, document the struggles against oppression that Aboriginal people face, as well as the success and change that have come to Aboriginal communities. It speaks to both the mind and the heart.”

Website: www.fernwoodpublishing.ca/Thunder-in-my-Soul-Patricia-Monture-Angus

Featured Artists in Don't Need Saving: Aboriginal Women and Access to Justice Video

Angie Sterritt

“I am a visual artist who belongs to the Gitksan Nation of the Gitanmaax band. I apprenticed Northwest Coast carving under Nisga’a master carver Henry McKay as a teenager and received a BA in Visual Arts from UBC in 2009. I meld contemporary and traditional art that both honor my Gitksan culture and convey a message about Native cultural, social and economic resilience. From 2010 until late 2011, my piece ‘Wards of the Court’ was exhibited in several museums across Quebec in a tour called The Indian Act Revisited. I am consequently featured in a CBC Television Documentary in which ‘Wards’ was discussed and I was interviewed. Recently I was granted an Aboriginal Arts Development Award to conduct an intense exploration of advanced Northwest Coast formline design and exhibit my work at a solo show in British Columbia.”

Website: www.flickr.com/photos/angesterritt/sets/72157627651598668

Erin Konsmo

“The artwork for the Don't Need Saving: Aboriginal Women and Access to Justice video included themes that stress self-determination for Indigenous women and its connections to ending violence. Within discussions of self-determination the pieces included in the film address historical structures, such as continued colonial violence of Indigenous land, our identity and bodies, and the borders placed on us through justice systems. As an Indigenous artist these works were created from a specific lens that centers Indigenous Feminism as key to many of the issues Indigenous women face.”

Website: erinkonsmo.blogspot.com