

The Moon Circles of *shelkem*  
shísháhlh Women's Use of Aesthetic Production as Place-Making

By

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## **Dedication**

To the women of the shíshálh Nation, who are so strong in their culture; may you continue going up the mountain to know yourselves and learn who you are from one another.

## **Abstract**

On the summit of the tallest mountain in Pender Harbor, B.C, known to the shíshálh as *shelk'em*, numerous circles made of boulders and cobbles can be found. These 'Moon Circles,' built by shíshálh girls during their puberty rites, denote a Women's Place central to shíshálh women's identity. Although these Circles were one of the first cultural sites acknowledged by the European visitors on shíshálh land, minimal research has been conducted on these petroforms and more broadly, on shíshálh women's puberty traditions and relationship to Land. In collaboration with three generations of shíshálh women, this thesis compiles a contemporary written record of this important site. This work illustrates how shíshálh women create Place through aesthetic production and how such Places, used for their puberty rites, continue to inform the identities of contemporary shíshálh women.

This thesis adds to the growing body of literature which rectifies the absence of Indigenous women's culture and history within archaeological and ethnographic narratives by acknowledging Salish women's place-based aesthetic traditions. This study of the Moon Circles highlights the role of aesthetic production in shíshálh women's identities, the connection between Place, Salish women's puberty traditions, and their 'art'. In doing so, this research underscores the necessity of redefining dominant perspectives on Indigenous women's 'material culture', art, and ritual.

Relying on shíshálh knowledge, and original archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork, the dynamic nature of living traditions is acknowledged, as the importance of this Women's Place is not solely due to its antiquity but to its continuous and active role in the lives of shíshálh women today.

## **Preface**

This thesis is the product of my three-year long partnership with the shíshálh Nation as a member of the shíshálh Archaeological Research Project (saRP). I became a member of saRP in 2015, while working as a research consultant at the Canadian Museum of History (CMH). It was here that my research interests shifted from Bronze Age Greece to the Northwest Coast of Canada. Since then, I have returned to Sechelt every summer as field supervisor, researcher, and house mom.

I came to the topic of the Moon Circles during my first summer as a guest on shíshálh Land. One weekend during the field season, we hiked one of the coastal mountains. While resting during the steep climb, I was told how shíshálh girls used to hike this mountain as part of their puberty rites and that they built circles under the Moon as part of this tradition. After our hike, I proceeded to find out what I could about this mountain and shíshálh women's puberty traditions; I have always had an interest in women's traditions and this Place connected my love of archaeology, women's culture, and hiking. To my disappointment but also excitement as a researcher, there was very little on both subjects. When I asked people in the shíshálh community about this mountain, many of them would say, "It's a Women's Place. Did you see the Circles?" The widespread attribution of this mountain to women paired with the silence in the scholarly record only intrigued me more.

Steven Feschuk (shíshálh Nation Rights and Title Department) and I worked with three generations of shíshálh women, to develop a project that did not focus on recording sacred knowledge but that spoke of shíshálh women's presence on their land and the importance of this mountain to their people. This thesis is the final product of our collaborative efforts which

conveys the continued, contemporary importance of this Place to shíshálh women, strongly supporting its status as an active traditional site.

I had the opportunity to work with many wonderful people in the shíshálh community during my summers in Sechelt. I must personally thank Margaret Joe Dixon, Yvonne Joe, Raquel Joe, and Corinna Julius for speaking where I could/should not. I am so grateful to Jasmine Paul, Steven Feschuk, Syd Quinn, Raquel Joe, the shíshálh Nation's Rights and Titles Department, Kenzie Jessome and the In Situ crew, and to everyone in the shíshálh community. You welcomed me so warmly, shared your culture and history with me, and put your trust in me to complete this work. I do not take this honour lightly and am humbled and grateful for all you have taught me. I am a better archaeologist, woman, and Canadian because of your friendships and your love and teachings will be with me always. My hands go up to you, ʔúl-nú-msh-chálap.

I would also like to thank Dr. Terry Clark for taking me under his wing; I am indebted to you for all I have learned and had the chance to experience over the past three years. I am so grateful for your mentorship, support, and friendship; thanks for pulling me out of Greece and helping me make my work truly meaningful. Thank you to my Carleton supervisor Dr. Ruth B. Phillips, for her eloquence, kindness, and guidance during this process despite our busy schedules. Thank you to my defense committee, my cohort of intelligent, supportive women who inspire me in all they do, and my sARP achievers, proud we are of all of them.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering love and support; knowing you were cheering me on enabled me to complete this feat. I love you, thank you.

And of course, to Ehren: my rock, my editor, devil's advocate, and partner. Thank you for being there for the highs, the lows, and the uglies and loving me through it all.

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## Introduction

On the summit of the tallest mountain in Pender Harbor, British Columbia, known to the shíshálh<sup>1</sup> as *shelkem*, numerous circles made of boulders can be found. Some directly on the bedrock, others found amidst the trees, these creations vary in size and ovoidal shape. They are easy to miss if you are unaware of their presence and meaning, able to disguise themselves amidst the rocky summit and thick moss. To contemporary hikers, they look like New Age constructions, nineteenth century ethnographers mistakenly took them for burial cairns. Yet to the shíshálh, the people who have lived on this Land since time immemorial, they indicate an important Women's Place. These 'Moon Circles,' built by shíshálh girls during their puberty rites, are central to shíshálh women's history and identity.

Aesthetic production is a central aspect of Salish women's puberty traditions. The products of this practice are acknowledged in studies of Northwest Coast art and ritual, yet the Places<sup>2</sup> created through women's aesthetic actions have not. Through the process of aesthetically producing a Moon Circle, shíshálh women created and marked a Place to complete their transition from girl to woman. This transition was central to shíshálh girls' ontologies, their way of 'being' shíshálh women within their metaphysical world. The process of creating Place during and for their puberty rites coincided with their ontological transformations, deeply integrating Place within their identities as women. Therefore, Place is formative to Salish women's identities and traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the grammatical rules of shashíshálhem (the shíshálh language), 'shíshálh' is not capitalized. See *The Sechelt Dictionary* (2011) for more details.

<sup>2</sup> Place and Land are capitalized within this thesis to acknowledge the active role they have within the shíshálh social network. Instead of passive settings where events and relationships occur, the Land and Places are active 'non-beings' (Thom, 2005) who participate in those events and relationships. As witnesses and participants in these histories, they hold memories of them; through reciprocal relationships with such Places, the shíshálh are able to access this knowledge, which ontologically orients them and defines their identity as shíshálh.

*Shelkem* and its Moon Circles are an example of this: shíshálh women shaped their identities and imbued their experience and knowledge through the aestheticization of their Land, through the creation of Place.

Although these Circles were one of the first cultural sites acknowledged by European visitors on shíshálh Land, minimal research has been conducted there and more broadly, on Places associated with Coast Salish women's puberty traditions and cultural identity. Scholarship pertaining to Salish women's puberty rituals focuses largely on material objects or ritual action, not on Places within the Land where such actions and goods are created and given meaning. Yet Place is formative in the ontological orientation and identity of Indigenous peoples; their ongoing and longstanding relationships to the Land and Places connect them to their histories, shape their identities, and orient them within their communities and world.<sup>3</sup> The role of puberty rites is similar in their purpose, aiding initiates to navigate their change in identity and inform them of their new role within society. Yet why is the connection between women's puberty rites and Place within the scholarly record so scarce?

This absence is largely due to ethnographic practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the imposition of Western gender roles upon Indigenous communities through colonization. Western concepts of gender and womanhood deemed this important time in a woman's life to be unclean and shameful, something to hide and keep secret. "Our Ancestors wouldn't talk about that; they were forbidden by the priests."<sup>4</sup> This mentality was one that festered within European cultures long before its arrival in North America yet was quickly exported and enforced upon Indigenous cultures through colonial religion and education.

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<sup>3</sup> Carlson, Keith Thor (2003) 'Mountains that See, and that Need to Be Seen: Aboriginal Perspectives on Degraded Visibility Associated with Air Pollution in the BC Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley.' *Traditional Knowledge Study for Environment Canada*: 9

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

In naturalizing European gender roles, anthropological literature on Salish women's knowledge, experience, and cultural practices is largely limited to the interior, domestic sphere. The seminal ethnographic works reinforce this bias, as they focus on masculine experience through Indigenous male perspectives and an androcentric lens. This silence has marginalized women's active role in shaping Place and ignored the unique ways they interacted with their landscape.

Due to this marginalization, the presence of women within the archaeological record, and upon the Land, remains largely unacknowledged. To date, an extremely small percentage of archaeological reports attribute puberty features to women yet Salish women's traditions and knowledge provide evidence of their existence and abundance. Within the British Columbia Archaeological Archives less than five reports compiled from 1960 to 2016, note a site being related to women.<sup>5</sup> Three are in the Salish region. By not acknowledging the presence of these sites, women are at risk of losing access to them and of continuing to use and create them.

Although Women's Places are underrepresented within the academic and archaeological fields, the growing ethnographic research by, and in collaboration with, Indigenous women from all over the world demonstrates how women actively shape the landscape through their own traditions and practices. Places shape their identity, record their knowledge, and enable them to economically support themselves and contribute to their communities.<sup>6</sup> For these reasons, acknowledging them within the archaeological record and academic narratives is paramount to accurate, ethical scholarship. Furthermore, recognizing the formative, continued role of Place in the identities and cultures of Indigenous women supports them in reclaiming and accessing such

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<sup>5</sup> BC Archaeological Assessment Reports 1978-0008, 1991-0012, 2001-061 (Accessed September 2016)

<sup>6</sup> Altamirano-Jimenez, Isabel and Parker, Leanne (2016) 'Mapping, Knowledge, and Gender in the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua'. *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place*. Edmonton: AU Press

Places whose omission from previous academic, historical, and legal records and narratives threatens and limits their ability to access or protect such Places.

The shíshálh nation requested that I compile a detailed, up-to-date record of the Moon Circles and their cultural significance, acknowledging the importance of this Place and its significance to the shíshálh. *Shelkem* is currently designated as a BC Park and is a widely advertised hiking trail. Because it is accessible to the broader public, this important Place is largely unprotected, and its significance remains formally unacknowledged by Canada and non-shíshálh. Many of the Moon Circles have been vandalized, destroyed to build fire pits and ‘inukshuks’ or kicked about. This lack of respect, even unknowingly, is a blatant disregard for shíshálh culture and a continuous display of colonial ways we have only too recently begun to rectify. The way in which Canada perceives the Land and understands Indigenous peoples’ relationships to it, is a consequential factor in the reconciliatory efforts taking root within Canada. Without incorporating their perspectives into dominant narratives of current Canadian legal, legislative, and cultural issues, Indigenous knowledge, methodologies, and cultures will continue to be omitted and undermined by Eurocentric ideas and Places such as *shelkem* will continue to be at risk.

Through the recording of the current state of the Moon Circles and the experiences and voices of shíshálh women, this thesis aims to provide a detail record of this important Women’s Place and demonstrate its contemporary and historical value to shíshálh women. The archaeological record ensures any further degradation may be physically rectified, and the voices of contemporary shíshálh women illustrate the cultural significance and continued living tradition of *shelkem* and the Moon Circles.

## The shíshálh

Throughout this thesis, I use the categorizations of ‘Northwest Coast’, ‘Salish’, and ‘shíshálh’. I strive to be as specific as possible, using the specific nation or region when that knowledge is available. In the marginalized and underrepresented anthropological studies of Northwest Coast women’s cultures, a side-streaming approach is useful to inform and bolster this shíshálh-specific study. References to ethnographic records and oral histories of the Nlaka’pamux (Thompson), Secwepemc (Shuswap), and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) neighbours of the shíshálh are useful in this fashion. The shíshálh, also known as the Sechelt, are a Salish-speaking people of the central Northwest Coast, in the region now known as the Sunshine Coast (fig 1).

The Land of the shíshálh people extends from Roberts Creek in the south, to the end of Jervis Inlet in the north, west to Powell River, and east to Howe Sound.<sup>7</sup> The present concentration of the shíshálh population is roughly 40 kilometres northwest of Vancouver in the town of Sechelt (*cha’atlich*), located on the narrow isthmus between the Georgian Strait and Sechelt Inlet, where they were relocated to in 1868 by the Oblate missionaries.

Before the arrival of Europeans in the 1860’s, the shíshálh lived throughout this broader region, with main villages acting as central hubs for each of the four tribes: *xenichen*, with their principal village located at the head of Queen's Reach in Jervis Inlet; *ts'unay*, with their main village located at Deserted Bay; *tuwankw*, located at the head of Narrows Inlet; and *kalpilin*, with the main village located in Pender Harbour (map 2).<sup>8</sup>

During the warmer months, small family units travelled throughout their Lands, hunting, fishing, and collecting resources to eat, clothe, and heal themselves and their families. Through this

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<sup>7</sup>Kennedy, Dorothy and Randy Bouchard (1990) ‘Northern Coast Salish’ in: Suttles, Wayne ed. 1990. Northwest Coast. Vol. 7. *Handbook of North American Indians*. Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution: 442

<sup>8</sup> Kennedy, Dorothy and Randy Bouchard (1990) ‘Northern Coast Salish’: 443

season, they would disperse and regroup with other shíshálh to make the most efficient use of the available resources. As winter approached, they made their way to the main village of *tsxwaman* in *sexw?awin* (Garden Bay), to live alongside their extended families during the colder season. A longhouse belonged to the chief of each tribe in which he lived alongside his extended family.<sup>9</sup> These longhouses were important centres, serving as “a primary location for winter dances and ceremonials”.<sup>10</sup>

Although busier during the winter months, *tsxwaman* was an occupied village year-round, surrounded by various other settlements and camps. Due to its location, it served as “the gateway to transportation corridors on *sinku* (Georgia Strait and Malaspina Strait), and *lek'emin* (Jervis Inlet) via *lilkw'emin* (Agamemnon Channel).”<sup>11</sup>

In social, political and economic terms *sexw?awin* could be considered the center of the *shíshálh* universe. Located at the heart of the most populous region in the territory, it dominated *kalpilin* (Pender Harbour) and the surrounding area. Together with the villages of POKE-POKE-UM (Bargain Harbour), *salalus* (Madeira Park), *smishalin* (Kleindale) and KWAY-AH-KUHL-OHSS (Myer's Creek), it shared well protected home sites and productive harvest locations with varied marine and terrestrial resource opportunities.<sup>12</sup>

Rising 1443 feet above sea-level directly behind this important shíshálh centre, *shelk'em* is the tallest mountain on the Sechelt peninsula. As a physically significant presence within the landscape its cosmological importance is evident to the shíshálh, who know it as a Women's Place. When speaking to various members of the shíshálh community over the past two years, everyone I have spoken with regarding this mountain stresses its connection the women of their community.

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<sup>9</sup> Peterson (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*: 34

<sup>10</sup> Merchant, Peter (2001) 'An Archaeological Impact Assessment of a Proposed Recreational Trail on Mount Daniel Near Garden Bay on the Sunshine Coast, in Southwestern B.C.' Report 2001-061. *Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks*. Vancouver: Peter Merchant Consulting: 5

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Peacock A. (1998) *shíshálh (Sechelt Band) Traditional Use Study*. Report prepared for the Aboriginal Affairs Branch of the Ministry of Forests. Sechelt, Global Village Research Consultants: 49-50

## What's in a Name?

In shashíshálhem, the shíshálh language, *shelkem* means ‘to separate’ or ‘be secluded.’<sup>13</sup> This name cites the central aspect of shíshálh girls’ puberty rituals, supporting this mountain’s main purpose as a Women’s Place. Because the traditional name of this important Place in the Land also denotes its traditional use, using its proper name is a necessary form of recognition. Language is a vehicle of knowledge; it holds so much information. Indigenous communities, including the shíshálh, recognize this and efforts to teach and reclaim their Ancestral languages are a key aspect of strengthening their cultures.

This clarification of *shelkem*’s name is discussed here because the name *khwiss cham* has also been used to identify this mountain. In Lester Peterson’s publication, *The History of the Sechelt Nation*, he claims *khwiss cham* translates to ‘Hill of Gold’<sup>14</sup>, named after the sphagnum moss that covers the mountain’s slopes. This seems logical, and even relates to one way this mountain was used: as a source of this moss, which was used by shíshálh women for menstrual pads and baby diapers. Yet many of Peterson’s explanations of shíshálh words and names, and the way he wrote them down, are inaccurate, as may be the case for *khwiss cham*. Elders Margaret Dixon and Yvonne Joe, two of fluent speakers of shashíshálhem, offered insight into this alternative name for *shelkem*: “*khwiss cham*...it’s a question. “What is it you’re saying?” in our language. It’s a question.”<sup>15</sup> They clarify that the translation of this alternative name appears to not be a name at all but rather a miscommunication between researcher and knowledge keeper. Because this inaccurate name is repeated throughout subsequent archaeological survey reports and research (Merchant, 1999, 2001; Iselmoe, 2016) and because language is central to cultural

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<sup>13</sup> Shared with me by Raquel Joe in October 2017, after consulting traditional place name maps created by the Elders.

<sup>14</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*. Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing: 38

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon and Yvonne Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

knowledge, worldview, and memory, it is important to acknowledge an error affecting subsequent discussions and research pertaining to this culturally significant Place.

### **Ethnographic Sources**

There is extensive scholarship relating to Indigenous women's puberty and puberty traditions. It is widely understood that puberty is a socially constructed event, that in many cases, is not related to biological age or procreative abilities (Boas, 1890; Drucker, 1955). It was only after the completion of certain ceremonies, rituals, and tests that initiates were acknowledged by their community to have reached the age of maturity. Anthropologist Arthur van Gennep's theorizations of the tripartite structure of coming of age rites are useful in the study of puberty (van Gennep, 1909); the three stages formally acknowledge and enable an initiate to navigate the transition from one identity to another, conveying and enforcing socially constructed roles and ontological definitions shared by the rest of the community. The first stage (rites of separation), separates the initiate from all that currently informs their identity (Places, people, objects). This is often framed as a metaphorical 'death' and within Coast Salish women's traditions manifests as seclusion for a number of days. The second stage (liminal rites) occurs during this seclusion and follows a strict, prescribed sequence of ritual actions overseen by an authoritative figure. The actual transition from one identity to another takes place during this stage and the strict adherence to ritual is paramount to safely and properly navigate it. The third stage (rites of incorporation) re-incorporates the initiate back into their community with their new identity. Applying van Gennep's theorization, we can identify the phases of separation, liminality, and return within shíshálh women's puberty rites:

- In the separation phase, the initiate sheds her former identity as child, being physically and conceptually removed from the community for 7-10 days.

- In the liminal phase, the initiate completes tasks employing newly acquired knowledge, such as basket weaving, and aestheticizes her body as a means of communicating and adopting her new identity.<sup>16</sup> The creation of a Moon Circle is part of this process, ritually creating an access point to the liminal space (and powers) necessary to complete her shift in identity.
- In the incorporation phase, the initiate reintegrates into her community as an adult woman, communicating this new identity through her aestheticized body at her potlatch.

In completing these stages, shíshálh initiates acquired knowledge or abilities needed to adopt their new status and privilege and to carry it out in their day to day lives as women (Levesque, 2011; Weisfeld, 1997).

Although the transition to adulthood is socially constructed, female puberty and its accompanying traditions are deeply intertwined with the biological marker of fertility: the beginning of menstruation. Fertility and motherhood are important aspects of most women's coming of age rituals yet extensive studies of puberty traditions illustrate that the socio-cultural element of women's puberty goes beyond a woman's reproductive capabilities and identity, instilling the roles of economic producer, resource manager, community protector, and knowledge keeper (Markstrom, 2008; Marucci, 1996). This is especially true within societies of the Northwest Coast, where the role of women and concepts of gender differ from European concepts previously assumed to be biologically controlled. Although this change in social role and status is initiated by the beginning of menstruation, the earliest accounts of these traditions note that a girl was not a woman until she completed clearly defined puberty rites, further supporting the constructionist view of puberty (Boas, 1890; Hill-Tout, 1978; Barnett, 1955).

Similar to many Northwest Coast cultures, material wealth and social hierarchy organized shíshálh society, which was divided into three classes: elites, commoners, and slaves. However, "since the Sechelt were not, generally, the perpetrators of raids, a slave caste played little part in

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<sup>16</sup> For more details on shíshálh women's use of the Moon Circles, see chapter 2.

their society.”<sup>17</sup> The distinction between elite and commoner was permeable and largely dependent on behaviour, ability, and wealth. Puberty customs reflected these distinctions while enforcing an initiate’s place within the community. For example, having a potlatch held in your honour at the end of your seclusion was only possible for a girl whose father (or in some cases, maternal uncle) could afford it. In other instances, certain rites, ceremonies or knowledge were only completed by a select group of girls. The tradition of constructing a Moon Circle for example, was only completed by certain shíshálh girls; shíshálh Elder Yvonne Joe explained this to me in our interview.<sup>18</sup> The specific rites an initiate completed thus conveyed and reinforced her social standing, while incorporating her within the shíshálh social and metaphysical world.

Through my ethnographic work, I bolster this constructivist perspective on gender and puberty with a voluntarist approach. The constructivist approach assumes “that human action is constrained by the given social and cultural order (...structure)”<sup>19</sup> while the voluntarist approach holds “that human action *makes* ‘structure’- reproduces or transforms it, or both.”<sup>20</sup> Understandings and experiences of gender, in other words, both shape and are shaped by puberty traditions. The multifaceted relationships between shíshálh women and the Moon Circles support this voluntarist approach, as shíshálh women continue to reproduce and transform the ways they understand and experience shíshálh womanhood through this Place.

Additionally, puberty rites acted as cultural regulators of a young girl’s psychological and social development (Markstrom, 2008). As puberty is a time of great transition and upheaval, these rituals aimed to reduce anxiety, and offered assurances for the unknown future. They enabled the

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<sup>17</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*. Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing: 36

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 2 for details on the elite status of Moon Circles

<sup>19</sup> Ornter (1996) *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press: 27

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

safe and successful shift from girl to woman while reinforcing beliefs, customs, and social roles of their culture.

This shift and associated rites are also deeply spiritual, informing girls of their place within their society's metaphysical understanding of the world, their community, and the Self. As Markstrom writes:

Coming-of age practices are embedded in broader belief systems of cosmological constructions, which include origin stories, explanations for the cyclical nature of creation and patterns of life, and the complex relationships between humans and the spiritual realm. Not only is proper adherence to puberty customs believed to ensure the well-being and longevity of initiates, but those positive impacts are extended to her group and to all of creation.<sup>21</sup>

The metaphysical nature of this transition made it empowering as well as potentially dangerous when not properly navigated. Within the context of Northwest Coast traditions, including those of the shíshálh, this power is mediated through the seclusion of the initiate for a lengthy period of time. Food taboos, restricted or required activities, and limited interaction with a few specially trained older women, all mediate the initiate's powerful state, teaching her how to channel it for the good of herself and her community (Barnett, 1955).

While feminist scholarship stresses that seclusion for Indigenous women during menstruation is not a form of 'menstrual shaming' but a means of positively harnessing a woman's new abilities, most ethnographic records of Northwest Coast women's puberty traditions misinterpret this empowerment (Barnett, 2015; Hobson, 2016). They interpret practices of secrecy and concealment through misogynistic European perspectives of menstruation that mystify this normal bodily function in women (Lee and Sasser-Coan, 1996; Barnett, 2015). Ethnographic accounts of shíshálh women's puberty rites are based on this assumption, including the seminal

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<sup>21</sup> Markstrom (2008) *Empowerment of North American Indian Girls: Ritual Expressions at Puberty*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 82

records on shíshálh culture. Both Homer Barnett's *The Sechelt of British Columbia* (1955) and *The Salish People, Vol. 4: The Sechelt and the South-Eastern Tribes of Vancouver Island* (1978) by Charles Hill-Trout provide details pertaining to shíshálh puberty traditions practiced in the early twentieth century yet employ this inaccurate framing of puberty seclusion. As no shíshálh women were consulted in the creation of these accounts, these misinformed narratives were solely based on what these men observed, what they gleaned from shíshálh men who would have held minimal knowledge on the matter, and previous formative scholarship on Northwest Coast cultures (Boas, 1890; Levi-Strauss, 1982). Although this is problematic in the way these important traditions are understood and framed within the literature, they are the earliest and only records of these practices. The only other ethnographic record of shíshálh women's puberty traditions is found in Lester Peterson's *The Sechelt* (1990). Building on his own relationships with shíshálh individuals and earlier ethnographic works, Peterson provides an extensive record of the shíshálh puberty traditions and their associated Places. His close relationship to members of the shíshálh Nation has enabled his publication to include extensive oral histories relating to shíshálh understandings of puberty, although a structuralist attempt to identify universal cultural truths undermines his interpretations.

These ethnographic records are the only published resources for early shíshálh traditions, but James Teit's *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia* (1900) is an important resource, as it is the most extensive ethnographic resource for Northwest Coast women's cultures. Teit does not speak about the shíshálh specifically, but his work is useful in gaining a general understanding of Salish women's puberty rites and is heavily relied on by many contemporary anthropologists (Daly, 1993; Wright, 2003; Barnett, 2015; Marucci, 2008; Hays-Gilpin, 2004). It acts as a comparative narrative since many puberty rites and practices of 'Nlaka'pamux [Thompson]

women are similar to those of shíshálh women, including ritual seclusion, certain taboos or food restrictions, and aesthetic production. Annie York's (Zex'tko) collaborative ethnographic publication with Chris Arnett and Richard Daly provides further evidence of shared women's puberty traditions between the shíshálh and the 'Nlaka'pamux, putting rock paintings, mountains, and stones in relation to female puberty rites (York, Arnett, Daly, 1993).

### **Indigenous Ontologies and Relationships to Land**

Indigenous people's relationships with Land shapes their worldview and ontological orients them in the world. Ontology is a philosophical "term denoting the study of being or becoming. In gender research it refers to the study of gendered identities and subjectivities, to how women and men come to be and are what they are."<sup>22</sup> Just as this definition notes a gendered difference in senses of being, so, I argue in this thesis, must cultural differences in ontologies also be acknowledged. How an individual conceptualizes her sense of Self, her reality and the metaphysical world, and her place and purpose within it is shaped by her society and culture. There is no overarching Indigenous ontology common to all Indigenous peoples but rather a plethora of local Indigenous knowledges and senses of being. However, a predominant element common to many, including the shíshálh, is their conceptualization and relationship with Land. This is especially important for the study of shíshálh women and their relationship with *shelkem*. Indigenous relationships to the Land "are reflective of a distinct epistemology or worldview"<sup>23</sup> that perceives all beings (humans, animals, plants) and non-beings (Places, features in the landscape, spirits, and meteorological phenomena) as active members within Indigenous social networks.<sup>24</sup> Within this worldview, Land is an active, 'non-being' which participates in

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<sup>22</sup> Griffin, Gabriel (2017) *A Dictionary of Gender Studies*. Oxford University Press online (Accessed May 4, 2018)

<sup>23</sup> Carlson, Keith Thor (2003) 'Mountains That See and Need to Be Seen': 9

<sup>24</sup> Thom, Brian David (2005) 'Coast Salish Senses of Place': 20

reciprocal relationships with other beings and therefore actively involved in historical and current events. Through this participation, Places become imbued with meaning, knowledge, and in some cases, spiritual power. Natural features, like mountains, rivers, and rock faces, are understood to have witnessed and participated in historical events while also being physical evidence of those events.<sup>25</sup> Through this understanding, the Places on the Land can be considered ‘knowledge keepers’ whose experience and knowledge may be learned or accessed through a person’s interaction or experience with them.

In Coast Salish cultures, relationships with the Land and other non-beings are “foundational to communities’ social organization and ontological orientation.”<sup>26</sup> Shíshálh women rely on these relationships to inform them of their identities and orient them in the world. Understood as active members of the shíshálh *swiya* (world), *shelk̓em* and the Moon Circles have on-going, reciprocal relationships with shíshálh women. In ‘knowing’ this Place, shíshálh women participate in these relationships which inform their identities. Keith Basso, former professor at New Mexico University and leading scholar on Indigenous Place-making, speaks to the importance of ‘knowing Places’ as a method of acquiring wisdom.<sup>27</sup> By experiencing and imbuing a Place with meaning, the Place is integrated into the social network.

Experiencing Place is a method of accessing knowledge formative to one’s identity and is acknowledged by shíshálh women as an important part of their relationship with *shelk̓em*: “cuz we don’t know really, until we see it, you know.”<sup>28</sup>

“To be part of the social/cultural continuum – ie. to participate in the region’s social, economic, spiritual, and political sphere – requires knowledge of the local and the

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<sup>25</sup> Thom, Brian David (2005) ‘Coast Salish Senses of Place’: 21

<sup>26</sup> Thom, Brian David (2005) ‘Coast Salish Senses of Place’: 7

<sup>27</sup> Basso, Keith (1997) *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

<sup>28</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

regional stories, and knowing stories involves knowing where on the landscape they are anchored”<sup>29</sup>

Places are defined locations where such stories are anchored, acting as access points to this knowledge. Therefore, knowing a Place as an Indigenous person, is taking part in one’s culture and history, placing oneself within that narrative and participating in the relationships that shape it. This is influential to peoples’ identity as an Indigenous person and ontologically orients them in the world.

Through this perspective, Place and Space as powerful tools that enforce social order and identity.<sup>30</sup> Within Salish women’s puberty traditions, these tools convey concepts, definitions, and ideals of womanhood. They also mark Places where these rites are carried out and acknowledge the Land’s role and power in these rites. My research demonstrates how shíshálh women’s identities are deeply connected to their Land, and to Places meaningful to their Ancestors.

The Women’s Place on the summit of *shelkem* enables shíshálh women to access knowledge by seeing and experiencing the Moon Circles. Therefore, the Moon Circles are a Place for shíshálh women to be and feel a part of the ‘social/cultural continuum’ of the shíshálh world, fostering their shared identity as shíshálh women.

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<sup>29</sup> Carlson, Keith Thor ((2003) ‘Mountains that See, and that Need to Be Seen: Aboriginal Perspectives on Degraded Visibility Associated with Air Pollution in the BC Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley.’ *Traditional Knowledge Study prepared for Environment Canada*: 23

<sup>30</sup> Lowe, Setha (2014) “Spatializing Culture: An Engaged Anthropological Approach to Space and Place’. *People, Place, and Space*. Eds. Jen Jack Giesecking, William Mangold, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, Susan Saegert. New York: Routledge.

## Methodology

We cannot discount the thoughts, memories, interpretations, and instincts of descendant communities regarding the meaning of the archaeological past; after all it is theirs.<sup>31</sup>

As shíshálh women use the Moon Circles as access points to their knowledge and history, this thesis also uses these aesthetic products as an entry point to this study. My focus on aesthetic objects orients it within the field of Art History, but also extends to seemingly ‘unrelated’ areas of research, including Indigenous metaphysics, ethnobotany, and concepts of Place necessary to provide a culturally accurate view of the Moon Circles and shíshálh women’s relationship to *shelkem*. The Moon Circles are not simply constructed features on a mountain but rather active members of the shíshálh social network, with which shíshálh women have continuous relationships formative to their ontologies. They are physical markers upon the Land that both create and acknowledge this Women’s Place. Nevertheless, limiting this thesis to examining the Moon Circles as material objects enforces an arbitrary, Eurocentric boundary that can undermine and misrepresent the significance of the Moon Circles, *shelkem*, and shíshálh women’s culture.

To avoid a Eurocentric perspective, I employ a holistic, Land-based approach, drawing from Indigenous world views, resource management practices, feminist anthropology, studies of aesthetics, and Place-making. As Land is a form of knowledge keeper within an Indigenous context, (as it is both witness, recorder, and participant in history and events) the use of both archaeological and ethnographic sources seems only logical. Within the field of Anthropology, ethnography and archaeology are conceptualized as separate categories. Although many anthropologists have preliminary training in both, choosing one to ‘focus’ on in their career is expected. As an art historian, former Greek Bronze Age scholar, and current Northwest Coast

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<sup>31</sup> Barnett, Kristen (2016) ‘Indigenous Feminist Approaches To Archaeology: Building A Framework for Indigenous Research in Pre-Colonial Archaeology’. PhD diss., *University of Montana*: 17

archaeologist, these categorical separations of anthropology were introduced rather late in my training and perhaps this is why I find them arbitrary and limiting. The separation of human and Land is, once again, a European approach. This research attempts to break free of these categorical limitations. In employing both archaeology and ethnography, this thesis privileges the voices and perspectives of all shishalh knowledge keepers, including shishalh women and shishalh Land. Ethnographic interviews with shishalh women ensure that human knowledge keepers shape and frame this research, while archaeological field work includes the ‘voice’ of the Land in this discussion as well. Although theoretical approaches to art, ritual, and shíshálh womanhood inform this project, an Indigenous methodological approach to this research requires that both shishalh knowledge keepers (both human and non-being) orient the project.

An Indigenous methodological approach is a process whereby research is not undertaken for the academic institution of the researcher alone, but for the research subjects as well. To do so effectively, the project must be built in collaboration with those whose culture and traditions are being researched to ensure their worldview, ways of seeing, knowledge, and protocols are not just respected but also central in analyzing and interpreting the research. My research model thus moves beyond merely assuming an Indigenous perspective on non-Indigenous research paradigms. “An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational, is shared with all creation, and therefore cannot be owned or discovered.”<sup>32</sup> As a settler researcher and guest on shíshálh land, I consider this approach to be essential to my work and this thesis.

From its inception, this project has been shaped and completed to benefit and be useful to the shíshálh nation. I worked closely with Steven Feschuk from the shíshálh Rights and Title

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<sup>32</sup> Wilson, Shawn (2001) ‘What is Indigenous Research Methodology?’ *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 25, 2. ProQuest Central: 175

department to develop a project that did not extract knowledge or to primarily benefit an outside source. It is a collective project completed by, with, and for the shíshálh nation and every part of it is theirs.

As a researcher of settler descent, my knowledge of shíshálh history and culture are those of that of an outsider. Furthermore, understandings of womanhood and gender are culturally structured and shift over time. I do not assume that discussions of shíshálh womanhood align with my understandings of womanhood as a twenty-eight-year-old Graduate student of French-Norwegian descent. As Marisa Lazzari has written, gender is “part of a relational field of practices and the intersection of gender with other axes of difference should be explored, rather than assumed, in different social contexts”<sup>33</sup> (Meskell, 1999; Ortner, 1996). This thesis strives to conceptualize womanhood and gender within the shíshálh context, relying on the accounts and perspectives of shíshálh women. Within shíshálh culture, women’s puberty was traditionally understood as the point when a girl became an adult woman able to contribute to her community economically, marry, have children, and be part of the “backbone of the community”<sup>34</sup> as a culture keeper.

Although I do not assume that contemporary shíshálh women’s concepts of womanhood remain exactly the same as their Pre-Contact Ancestors, I show how one way they shape their identities remains the same; through their relationship with the Moon Circles on *shelkem*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Lazzari, Marisa (2003) ‘Archaeological visions Gender, landscape and optic knowledge’ *Journal of Social Archaeology*. Vol 3(2): 195

<sup>34</sup> Raquel Joe; Interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 13, 2016

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 3 for discussion of contemporary shíshálh women’s use of the Moon Circles.

## Reading On

In the following pages, the significance of this Women's Place and the ways in which shísháhlh women created and use the Moon Circles as access points to their cultural identity and history will be described and discussed. The first chapter speaks to the ways shísháhlh women employ aesthetic production to navigate their shifting identities during puberty and create Place. In doing so, the connection between aesthetic production, Place-making, and the importance of Place within shísháhlh women's puberty traditions will be highlighted. The second chapter presents a detailed description of the Moon Circles and shísháhlh women's puberty traditions, orienting this important site within the shísháhlh *swiya* (world) and explaining its cultural significance. In doing so, it becomes clear that *shelk̄em* -- the whole mountain-- is a Woman's Place, shaping the identity of a shísháhlh women throughout her life. In the final chapter, accounts of three generations of contemporary shísháhlh women demonstrate the active, continuous traditional use of *shelk̄em* and the Moon Circles in shaping shísháhlh women's identities. Through these accounts I demonstrate the importance of 'knowing this Place' in shaping their identities as shísháhlh women and the necessity of ensuring that *shelk̄em* is maintained and accessible to them.

## Chapter One: Aesthetic Production and Place-Making

Aesthetic production is a central aspect of women's puberty traditions throughout the Northwest Coast. But while the creation of baskets, jewelry, and clothing have been categorized as art, the aestheticized nature of other women's practices associated with puberty traditions, such as culturally modified trees, the creation of architectural structures, and—in particular—the creation of Moon Circles, have not. To support this statement, I survey the range of art forms and aesthetic practices initiated and engaged with during puberty rites and review the problematic aspects of their categorization of 'art'. Both shíshálh data and comparable data from neighbouring Salish peoples will be discussed. The last section will turn to the Moon Circles themselves as both aesthetic and ritual expressions that mark and create ritual Places.

### Women's Puberty Arts

Various forms of material culture associated with women's puberty are acknowledged as 'puberty art' within Northwest Coast scholarship, most notably rock paintings and stone sculptures. Rock art from all over this region has been the subject of extensive anthropological and art historical studies since the late nineteenth century (Teit, 1900; Smith, 1923; Drucker, 1955; Lundy, 1969; Chippindale and Taçon, 1998; Arnett, 2016). Although these paintings fit the more 'traditional' definitions of art, they are studied by anthropologists whose focus has been on the deeply spiritual nature of these paintings and attempts to connect iconography and images to cultural practices. Rock art is generally attributed to shamans and boys who painted them during their vision quests. Yet many of these ochre paintings were created by girls during their puberty seclusion.<sup>36</sup> Teit provides a list of women's puberty-associated imagery which include

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<sup>36</sup> Teit, James (1900) 'The Thompson Indians of British Columbia.' *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*.

fir branches, lines that signify trenches, basket weaving patterns, female figures, and menstrual huts. These rock paintings are clear examples of aesthetic production associated with women's puberty rites, yet that which the icons represent are in themselves aesthetic objects, further demonstrating the significance of aesthetic creation within these traditions (fig. 2).

The most well-known form of art related to Salish women's puberty are the Seated-Human Figure Bowls (fig 3). These distinctive steatite carvings are found throughout the Northwest Coast region, dating back 2,000 years and more, their use in Salish women's puberty rituals noted by multiple nineteenth-century ethnographers (Boas, 1955; Hill-Tout, 1978).

Anthropological and art-historical scholarship on Seated-human Figure Bowls has focusing on carving techniques and the development of artistic styles, clearly demonstrating their presence within the realm of art.<sup>37</sup> There is no evidence of girls producing these carvings. However, their direct connection to puberty seclusion and their use by female shamans highlights the role of aesthetic products within women's puberty traditions. Furthermore, their prominence in the discussion of 'Salish women's puberty art' sheds light on the problematic nature of European preferences that shape definitions of art within the scholarly record: while sculptures have been acknowledged as art, other objects such as baskets and clothing have only recently been included in this discussion with the rise of feminist narratives. This reflects the problematic imposition of the categories of 'art' versus 'craft'. Many women's art practices across cultures have been categorized in the latter division. Within the Northwest Coast context, this bias omits evidence of other important forms of aesthetic production in puberty rituals and undermines the contributions of women as artists.

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<sup>37</sup> Duff, Wilson (1975) *Images, BC: Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Indian Sculpture*. Toronto: Oxford University Press; Hannah, Jonathan (1993) 'Seated Human Figure Bowls: An Investigation of a Prehistoric Stone Carving Tradition from the Northwest Coast'. *MA Archaeology thesis: Simon Fraser University*.

Feminist archaeologist, Mary C. Wright, speaks to the role of basket-weaving within the puberty traditions of 'Nlaka'pamux women of the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Women learned the art of making ornate, decorative baskets which they then sold to support their communities. Wright's research not only highlights the centrality of art-making within Salish women's puberty traditions but also highlights the powerful economic role of menstrual lodges and women within their communities. Being an economic producer was one way women expressed their identities as women; further demonstrating the dynamic and multifaceted nature of Salish women's identity.

Basket-weaving was an artform of which shíshálh women were renowned. There are many baskets within the Tems Swiya collection that illustrate their skill (fig 4). Raquel Joe, curator of the Tems Swiya Museum, identified basket-weaving as a woman's activity taught by one generation to another. Within this contemporary context, the extended period of time shíshálh women spend together weaving is similar to former seclusion practices; with aesthetic production remaining at the center.

Weaving was also a skill employed to make garments out of cedar bark. This too, was a form of aesthetic production taught and used within women's puberty rites. Teit notes that cedar aprons, dresses, and arm bands were worn by 'Nlaka'pamux women during their puberty seclusion which they then ritually left in caves or rock crevices to ensure the powers imbued within these objects did not harm anyone upon their return (fig. 5).<sup>39</sup> Shíshálh's northern neighbours (see map 1), the Kwakwaka'wakw, required a puberty initiate to wear a cedar breast strap, which she could

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<sup>38</sup> Wright, Mary C. (2003) 'The Woman's Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest Plateau.' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 24: 1, 1-18.

<sup>39</sup> Teit, James (1900) 'The Thompson Indians of British Columbia': 311

only remove once she had taken the necessary amount of cleansing baths required to complete her puberty rites (fig 6).<sup>40</sup>

Fringed headbands worn by Athabaskan Ingalik girls or cedar hats worn by Kwakwaka'wakw girls during seclusion ensured their potent powers did not accidentally harm any beings they came in contact with (fig. 7).<sup>41</sup> The parallels among these practices demonstrate unique but widespread common aesthetic traditions amongst women of the Northwest Coast and Interior regions.

Most of these puberty traditions also aestheticized the initiate's body during her seclusion. This included the use of accessories and clothing which initiates either wore to their puberty feast or left in a spiritually potent place upon completion of their rites. Necklaces and cedar armbands are examples of these aesthetic puberty objects used to visually convey a girl's new status as woman. A necklace made by a Thompson River artist currently residing in the Portland Art Museum speaks to this tradition (fig 8).

Tlingit women were also adorned with jewelry after their seclusion, to be worn during their puberty feast.<sup>42</sup> These wearable forms of art altered the way a girl would look, aestheticizing her body and visually communicating her new identity to others.

Body modification was another form of aestheticization related to women's puberty traditions of the Northwest Coast. Tattoos, body piercings, change in hairstyle, and the use of makeup are all methods of aestheticizing an initiates' body. During shíshálh women's seclusion, she was bathed daily and,

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<sup>40</sup> Markstrom, Carol (2008) *Empowerment of North American Indian Girls: Ritual Expressions at Puberty*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

<sup>41</sup> Osgood, Cornelius (1940) *Ingalik Material Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Publishing.

<sup>42</sup> Markstrom (2008) *Empowerment of North American Indian Girls: Ritual Expressions at Puberty*: 147

after each bath her face was painted with red ochre, her hair was braided with goat wool, the part in her hair was painted red, her eyebrows were penciled with charcoal, and her hair was sprinkled with down.<sup>43</sup>

The initiate's hairline was raised, and her eyebrows plucked with tweezers, in the style of grown, shísháhlh women (fig 9). Aesthetically altering the body enabled the ontological transformation from child to woman to be manifested through a powerful indicator of identity: physical appearance. This alteration of one's appearance not only conveyed this shift to the initiate but displayed and communicated this change to all who would see her. After her period of seclusion, she returned to the community looking like an adult woman; through anesthetization of the initiate's body, her new identity was reinforced and visually communicated to the rest of society.

The central role of aesthetic production in women's puberty traditions of the Northwest Coast may seem obvious in light of this discussion of baskets, rock art, and body modification. Yet there are other aesthetic products of Salish women's puberty traditions yet to be acknowledged as 'art'. Culturally modified trees (CMTs), petroform features, and architectural structures are archaeologically identifiable examples of this tradition, however their association with women and puberty has yet to be acknowledged in the broader scholarship.

During their puberty seclusion, Salish girls split and tied fir tree saplings to create living arboreal sculptures (fig 10). Secwepemc (Shuswap) girls practiced this modification, tying a fir tree's growing top branches in knots and 'Nlaxa'pamux girls also modified trees during their puberty rites. They would:

split small fir trees in two from top to bottom, so that she might be strong of muscle and body. Somewhat larger ones she bent over or twisted around, sometimes tying the ends of the trees into knots.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Barnett, Homer (1955) *The Salish of British Columbia*. Westport: Greenwood Press: 151

<sup>44</sup> Teit, James (1900) *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*: 312

Entwined ponderosa pines found in southern British Columbia were recorded as symbols of “friendship of the US and Canada” in 1857, yet this type of modified tree is also noted to be the product of a “ritual associated with puberty training”<sup>45</sup> and the presence of small, painted rocks placed within the cavity made by the underside of the knot, also connect CMTs to women’s puberty traditions.<sup>46</sup> The aesthetic alteration of trees was also employed to mark a significant location and used throughout shíshálh women’s lives: For example, CMTs were a way to record a new birth: “It’s marker for a birth...we used to bend a tree, put their umbilical cord and plant it there and make a knot so it’d be a marker.”<sup>47</sup>

Oral histories of the shíshálh, Squamish, and Spahomin speak of the ritual construction of petroforms at high elevations, such as rock piles or Moon Circles, within women’s puberty traditions.<sup>48</sup> A 1991 inventory project of archaeological sites (BC Permit 1991-12) on the Land of the Spahomin (Upper Nicola Band, Okanagan) near Merritt, BC notes a series of boulder piles located on a prominent hill (fig 11). Herb Manuel, a Spahomin knowledge keeper, attributes these petroforms to the women of his nation who built them during their puberty rites: “women place[d] a rock on their back, and carr[ied] it to the highest mountain before setting it down.”<sup>49</sup> These accounts are very similar to the shíshálh tradition of building Moon Circles<sup>50</sup> and illustrate a connection between Coast and Interior Salish women’s traditions yet to be fully acknowledged in the related scholarship.

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<sup>45</sup> (2001) ‘Culturally Modified Trees of British Columbia.’ *Resources Inventory Committee*: 84

<sup>46</sup> Teit, James (1900) *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*: 317

<sup>47</sup> Margaret Dixon; Interview with Leah Iselmoe and Stephen Feschuk, October 12, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> Barnett, Homer (1955) *The Coast Salish of British Columbia*; Oliver, Lindsay (1991) ‘Spahomin Archaeological Inventory Project: Phase One’; Carlson, Keith (2003) ‘Mountains that See, and Need to Be Seen’; Iselmoe, Leah (2016) ‘Women’s Places: Salish Women’s Relationship to Land’. *Canadian Archaeological Association Conference Presentation*. May 12, 2017, Ottawa.

<sup>49</sup> Herb Manuel quote: James, Malcolm A. and Oliver, Lindsay (1991) ‘Spahomin Archaeological Inventory Project: Phase One’. *BC Report: 1991-12*. British Columbia Heritage Conservation Branch. Malcom A. James Heritage Resource Consultant: 26

<sup>50</sup> See Figures for images of Moon Circles.

Architectural structures were built by initiates to stay in during their coming-of-age rites. These buildings vary from large lodges used collectively by women in the community<sup>51</sup>, to personal cedar mat huts placed in a spiritually-charged Women's Place in the woods<sup>52</sup>, or a cedar mat cubicle raised above the initiate's bed within her family lodge.<sup>53</sup> Such structures were often temporary, as they fulfilled a specific role for a specific time. Furthermore, as a shelter used by a woman when she is spiritually potent, they were often destroyed to ensure any residual power did not harm anyone or anything.

It was within these structures that women spent their puberty seclusion. Seclusion was a central part of Salish women's puberty practice. As menstruation was perceived as extremely powerful, a girl removed herself from the rest of the community and was "restricted by taboos and encouraged to perform tasks believed to make her industrious in later life."<sup>54</sup> Shíshálh initiates were secluded within the home, separated "from the rest of the household for the space of ten days in a cubicle (*kowitl*), built over the family bed in the interior of the dwelling."<sup>55</sup> This cubicle was constructed of woven cedar mats, further illustrating the use of shíshálh women's aesthetic practices.

During this time, the initiate only had contact with one or several older women who acted as attendants and teachers, "passing on women's lore and wisdom."<sup>56</sup> Learning this knowledge was

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<sup>51</sup> Wright Mary (2003) 'The Woman's Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest Plateau'

<sup>52</sup> Marucci, Georgina Elizabeth (1996) 'Lake Babine Women's Rites of Passage: An Archaeological Inquiry.' MA Gender Studies thesis: *University of Toronto*.

<sup>53</sup> Barnett, Homer (1955) *The Sechelt of British Columbia*.

<sup>54</sup> *Handbook of North American Indians*. vol. 7: Northwest Coast. eds. Wayne Suttles. Washington: Smithsonian Institution: 496

<sup>55</sup> Hill-Tout. Charles (1978) *The Salish People Vol. 4*: 32

<sup>56</sup> Wright, Mary (2003) 'The Woman's Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest Plateau.': 3

imperative in the transition from girl to woman and enabled one to navigate this important and spiritual phase safely and prepare for your new role as an adult woman.

The construction of architectural spaces or specific Places within the Land was one way Salish women attained seclusion. Seclusion is a physical and conceptual concept defined relationally; being outside of or apart from are methods of defining seclusion. The creation of Place ensured initiates could attain this state to effectively complete their puberty rites.

### **Moon Circles as Aesthetic Production**

As constructed features produced within this tradition of aesthetic creation, the Moon Circles may be considered ‘art’. Contemporary art historical definitions of ‘art’ have opened up in an attempt to include non-Western cultures yet continue to impose a Western dichotomy of ‘art’ versus ‘non-art’. This is especially true of historical Indigenous art. The need for a discussion of whether the Moon Circles warrant the title of ‘art’ is in itself demonstrative of Art History’s continued struggle with its Western scaffolding. Historically (and in many ways still), Indigenous and non-Western cultures do not categorize or conceptualize objects in the same fashion as Western culture.<sup>57</sup> Cultural categories of art, religion, politics, agriculture, and commerce cannot be assumed to be separate institutions within non-Western and Indigenous societies in the same ways they are within those of Europe. Therefore, the limited focus on a culture’s ‘art’, is insufficient as its parameters are an arbitrary imposition on that cultural context.<sup>58</sup> With that said, the working definition of art within this thesis has been shaped by a number of theoretical approaches, including those of the shíshálh, art historians, philosophers,

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<sup>57</sup> Berlo, Janet C. and Phillips, Ruth B. (1998) *Native North American Art. Oxford History of Art*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>58</sup> Plattner, Stuart (2003) ‘Anthropology of Art’. *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*. Eds. Ruth Towse. Glos, UK: Edgar Elgar Publishing Limited.

and anthropologists. I argue that because shísháhlh Moon Circles are cultural material made within the context of performative ritual, we must include both the process and product as components of ‘art.’.

Kant defines art as “a kind of representation that is purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication.”<sup>59</sup>

This definition acknowledges the representational or ‘symbolic’ nature of the Moon Circles, as it expresses a longstanding tradition and presence of shísháhlh women within their Land. It also touches on the continuous role they play in shísháhlh women’s culture and in shaping their identities. Yet Kant’s definition fails to acknowledge that art is not only representational, but in many contexts becomes an active agent in itself. This is especially true within Indigenous worldviews, where people, animals, objects, and places are all distinct beings in themselves.<sup>60</sup>

There is a vast body of theory within anthropology focused on the study of art that acknowledges its active role and impact on societies and culture. Cultural anthropologist Warren D’Azevedo and social anthropologist Alfred Gell’s approaches acknowledge and address the affective ‘power’ of art on social structures and ontologies, which is imbued within the aesthetic object but extends beyond it as well, through the process of creating said object. D’Azevedo states that, “art could not be confined to artifacts or things, but resided in the thinking, feeling, and productive activities of the members of a culture.”<sup>61</sup> The feelings and thoughts associated with the Moon Circles enhance their memorability and ritual efficacy, through the aesthetic actions of shísháhlh girls when they create or experience these artworks. The powers and experience required to

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<sup>59</sup> Kant, (1793) *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. 2nd ed. Trans. Paul Guyer, 2000. New York: Cambridge University Press: section 44

<sup>60</sup> Carlson, Keith (2003) ‘Mountains that See, and Need to Be Seen’; Thom, Brian David (2005) ‘Coast Salish Senses of Place’

<sup>61</sup> D’Azevedo, Warren L. (1991) ‘Whatever Happened to Primitive Art?’ *Anthropology and Humanism* 16:3: 103

successfully create a Moon Circle defines it as an aesthetic object within the Land, rather than any advanced skill required to construct it.

A concept of art restricted to consideration of its formal results cannot comprehend its manifold expressions in society, where it is properly to be discovered in specific social situations and cultural responses.<sup>62</sup>

Gell's definition also speaks to process as a necessary component of art, although he also stresses the importance of skill: "Art acts as a physical mediation between beings, as evidence of process and the achievement of a skilled technical feat."<sup>63</sup> In the case of the Moon Circles, the skilled feat is conceptual; it is the successful navigation from girl to woman. This process, the aesthetic transformation of the Land to manifest one's own transformation from girl to woman, is an important aspect of the Moon Circles that explains their purpose and significance and orients them within shísháhlh women's traditions of aesthetic production. The features themselves are important to this research, yet the process of creation, and the relationships they mediate and provide access to must be included to sufficiently contextualize and define them as forms of art. Theorizing art as process focuses on the experience obtained through the process of making art, as opposed to the final product (Sartwell, 1992). Art is "the product of a process in which, to an exemplary degree, some aspects of the process itself are pursued for their own sake, and not merely for the sake of the end for which the process is undertaken."<sup>64</sup> This understanding of art includes an important aspect of ritual art objects of Indigenous and non-Western cultures, because the context is central to the significance of such art forms. The Moon Circles are simply boulders placed in a geometric shape without an understanding of why they were constructed and how that process impacted their creator.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Gell, Alfred (1992) 'Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology'. *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*. eds. J. Coote and A. Shelton: 41

<sup>64</sup> Sartwell, Crispin (1992) 'Process and Product: A Theory of Art'. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, New Series, 6: 4: 303

All tasks performed by a shíshálh girl during her puberty rites were “believed to make her industrious in later life.” Being productive, in all senses of this word, was an important defining quality of shíshálh womanhood. This quality was instilled in girls through experiencing productivity during their puberty rituals and important in considering the context of the Moon Circles. The goal of initiates’ art making was not to obtain the final product, a Moon Circle or basket, but to ensure they understood the significance of their productive abilities and gained confidence, skill, and identity through the experience of creation. It is the *process* of these aesthetic traditions that is valuable.

Within the Northwest Coast context, then, this aesthetic production works in partnership with performance.<sup>65</sup> Performance is a process widely acknowledged as an aestheticized mode of expression and a fundamental dimension of Northwest Coast cultures, used to convey spiritual beliefs, enforce social order, and celebrate important events.<sup>66</sup> During such performances, performers/initiates act as conduits through which spiritual and social structures or ‘truths’ are expressed.<sup>67</sup> Within the context of puberty rites, these ‘truths’ inform an initiate of their new identity and their place within society and the broader metaphysical world. The creation of a Moon Circle is an example of this type of performative process that shaped shíshálh women’s identities, instilling and enforcing definitions of womanhood and their roles within shíshálh society.

The Moon Circles fit within these theories of art, for they are material structures that are evidence of both process and skill. They hold a ‘power’ closely associated with ritual, enhance

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<sup>65</sup> Larsen, Kjersti (2009) ‘Ritual, Performance and Bodily Transformation.’ *Performance, Art et Anthropologie*.

<sup>66</sup> Benedict, Ruth (1934) *Patterns of Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; Barnett, Homer (1955) *The Coast Salish of British Columbia*.

<sup>67</sup> Turner, Victor (1987) ‘Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage.’ *Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*. Eds. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, Meredith Little. La Salle: Open Court Publishing.

the memorability of *shelkem* as an important Women's Place, and mediate relationships between shíshálh women, their cultural identity, and the Land.

## **Conclusion**

The reviewed literature highlights the role of aesthetic production within the coming-of-age traditions of Northwest Coast women, focusing on shíshálh and Coast Salish rites. Productivity is an important aspect of female identity, which is taught through creative process. Ritually performing productivity enables girls to experience and embrace their new identity as creators, as women, and connects them to other women in their community through shared experience.

Furthermore, these identities are imbued within and accessed through Places like *shelkem*. Such Places are important members of the shíshálh social network, that mediate the relationships between shíshálh girls and their Ancestors, imparting knowledge integral their transition from girl to woman. This role in formulating shíshálh women's identity and metaphysical orientation illustrates the importance of Place within women's puberty traditions and the role of aesthetic production in their acknowledgement and creations.

The significance and role of the Moon Circles are lost when you attempt to study them as solely aesthetic objects and separate them from Place, tradition, and shíshálh worldview and economy. To effectively study the Moon Circles, one must study the people and culture that created them, perceiving art, objects, people, and places as all active members of a community's social network.<sup>68</sup> Employing a more holistic approach combats the limitations of European studies of these historical Indigenous works.

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<sup>68</sup> Fogelin, Lars and Schiffer, Michael Bryan (2015) 'Rites of Passage and Other Rituals in the Life Histories of Objects'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 25:4

## Chapter Two: A Portrait of *shelkəm*

Mountains are significant aspects of the landscape, culture, and spirituality throughout Northwest Coast cultures. They provide protection from both weather and warring neighbours, are sites abundant in food and medicines, and are spiritual sites of great power. Home to, or in themselves Spirits or Ancestors, mountains are understood to have been brought into being through events recorded in oral histories and act as evidence of that history.<sup>69</sup> As non-beings who witnessed and participated in such events, mountains are sites where such powers can be accessed; in a sense they are knowledge keepers. They remember this knowledge but also transmit it to others who build a relationship with them.

“The powers that still reside in these transformed places...may act on people with important physical and social consequences.”<sup>70</sup> One’s presence in these powerful, liminal places was strictly regulated and not accessible to anyone at any time. For example, *shíshálh* boys were forbidden to go on mountains until a specific stage in their puberty training. Johnny Joe, a *shíshálh* elder, speaks to this practice: “when [boys] are training like that, you know, they never go up a mountain.”<sup>71</sup> Yet there comes a point when the higher elevations of become the very places where “young boys go...to get a power”, as noted by Sarah Silvey.<sup>72</sup>

Mountains were also important to Salish women. Girls hiked to their summits to construct petroforms where they spent their puberty seclusion, the slopes of mountains grow medicines, food, and materials to make their baskets, and were also where they went to deliver their

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<sup>69</sup> Thom, Brian David (2005) ‘Coast Salish Senses of Place’: 21

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Johnny Joe; *shíshálh* Interview Transcripts. TS 228: 50

<sup>72</sup> Sarah Silvey; *shíshálh* Interview Transcripts. TS 226: 29

babies.<sup>73</sup> These Places, removed from everyday life and difficult to access, offered secluded, quiet places and acted as access points to the spiritual powers they embodied and held. Travelling “up the mountain”<sup>74</sup> to complete such tasks enabled shíshálh girls to access the knowledge such Places hold to ensure they successfully navigated the powerful stage or activity they had to complete safely.

As knowledge keepers and access points to shíshálh history and spiritual power, shíshálh women’s relationships with such Places were formative to their identity. The following pages will elaborate on the ways in which shíshálh women accessed this knowledge through the aesthetic production of the Moon Circles. This will include a detailed description of the Moon Circles and convey their cultural significance, through shíshálh oral history and ethnographies, to contextualize this Woman's Place within Salish women’s puberty traditions.

### ***Shelkem* and the Moon Circles**

The summit of *shelkem* is recorded in the Borden system as DjSa-10. This pre-contact petroform site has been surveyed four times, first in 1976 and again in 1999, 2001, and 2017. The Moon Circles were first noted by Acheson<sup>75</sup> and then formally recorded by Ray and Beth Hill, who learned about the site from Howard White’s issue of *The Rainforest Chronicles* where he called it, ‘the shíshálh Stonehenge’.<sup>76</sup> The Hills’ report identified and roughly mapped five features, circles made of boulders. It noted two modern cairns constructed by hikers, likely from boulders of a former Moon Circle. They also replaced stones of Feature C that had been moved to spell

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<sup>73</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

<sup>74</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

<sup>75</sup> Acheson, Steve and Riley, Syd (1976) Report 1976-007. *Gulf of Georgia Archaeological Survey Powell River and Sechelt Regional Districts*

<sup>76</sup> DJSA-10 Detailed Site Report. *BC Provincial Archaeological Report Library*

out the initials, CW. Luckily, this vandalism was recent and the deep holes within the moss left by the Moon Rocks had not yet overgrown, so this Moon Circle could be reconstructed.

In 1999, when Mount Daniel became a Provincial Park, the shíshálh nation worked with Peter Merchant to conduct a survey “as part of a traditional use assessment and site protection plan”<sup>77</sup> prepared for BC Parks. This assessment recorded and mapped the five circular features and identified a sixth; a linear boulder feature in the southwestern portion of the site. Working with Keith Julius, Sid Quinn, and the shíshálh Nation Band Council, Peter Merchant surveyed the site once more in 2001, to record their current state and propose a new hiking trail. The current trail went directly through one feature (Feature E) and ended in the middle of the site, leaving the Moon Circles unprotected and subject to further destruction and interference (fig. 13).

Although the updated records of the state of the Moon Rocks aimed to ensure that knowledge of their compilation and location was not lost, the maps are vague. Field surveys were conducted for this thesis in August of 2017, by myself, Dr. Terence Clark, and Kenzie Jessome of In Situ Consulting. We reached the conclusion that many more features located in this site remain unrecorded. This hypothesis was reached based on the sheer number of loose boulders and rocks present on the summit; as naked bedrock, small to medium-sized boulders would not naturally litter its surface due to the geological methods which formed this mountain. The ‘unnatural’ presence of numerous boulders suggests that their arrival on this summit was orchestrated and intentional; someone must have carried them up. This is in line with the cultural practices of shíshálh girls, further supporting the presence of more puberty features. For this reason, in August and September of 2017, In Situ Consulting conducted the most recent assessment report

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<sup>77</sup> Merchant, Peter (2001) ‘An Archaeological Impact Assessment of a Proposed Recreational Trail on Mount Daniel Near Garden Bay on the Sunshine Coast, in Southwestern B.C.’ *Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks*. Report 2001-061. Vancouver: Peter Merchant Consulting: 3

on DjSa-10, which includes a new site map and two more recorded features. Based on the number of boulders, at times in small piles, rough lines or strewn about, it is likely that many more petroforms were once present on *shelkem*'s summit. However, due to time, natural exposure to the elements, and hiker interference, further features cannot be conclusively recorded. I have compiled the following description of the *shelkem* Moon Circles from various survey reports, supplemented by the my own field notes.

Site DjSa 10 is a large (120m N-S x 250m E-W), pre-contact, petroform site located in the plateaued mountain top overlooking *kalpilin* (Pender Harbour) and the surrounding area, where Texada Island can be seen just behind the ocean mist (fig 12). Throughout the various rocky levels of this summit and back into the moss-covered woods, numerous small and medium-sized boulders cover the ground. Upon closer examination, some appear clustered in small piles and others create large oblong circles of varying sizes. *shíshálh* oral history indicates that this mountain was used by the *shíshálh* for puberty rites, marriage ceremonies and as a lookout,<sup>78</sup> and that the stone rings were constructed and used in these puberty ceremonies.

Eight distinguishable features (A to H) and two modern cairns have been recorded within the site boundary (map 3). One cairn is likely the remains of Hill-Tout's investigation during his 1904 fieldwork and can be found in the southeastern part of the site near to Feature G, on a lower rocky shelf of the sloping summit. The other is farther south on the lower slope and has been identified as a modern construction.

Feature A is the largest and most prominent feature, sitting directly on a relatively flat, clear space of bare bedrock on the southeast cliffside (fig 13). It is a large, oblong circle measuring 13

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<sup>78</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*. Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing: 39

by 20 metres, made of small boulders neatly aligned side by side. The majority of this circle is unaltered, except for small sections of the north and west sides which the former hiking trail used to cross directly through.<sup>79</sup> Rocks from these disturbed sections were taken to build a large two-way arrow north of the feature but have since been returned to complete the circle. Kenzie Jessome (In Situ Consulting), Nick Weber, and Corinna Julius, daughter of Keith Julius who previously surveyed this site, replaced three sections of Feature A at the southwest, and eastern sides (map 4). In the middle of this circle is a medium-sized boulder. Its distinct placing suggests it had a specific role; upon further examination, Jessome noted its prominent red colouring (fig. 14) and it therefore may be connected to the menstruation and puberty rites that built these circles. This colouring seems to be the colour of the actual rock, not a pigment added such as ochre.

Located southwest of Feature A, partially on the rocky promontory overlooking *kalpilin*, is a 7.5 by 26-metre-long, narrow oblong feature. This petroform is Feature B (fig 15). Only portions of this feature are well defined, as it has been greatly disturbed by the former hiking trail and the juniper bushes growing along its northern side is quite large. Jessome, Julius, and Weber replaced portions of this heavily damaged feature on its south, west, and east sides.<sup>80</sup>

Feature C is located at the highest point of *shelkem*'s summit, west of both A and B on a naturally raised, moss covered platform amidst the cedars. Although replaced to its original shape in 1976 (fig 16, no scale given), the 1999 survey records how a rock pile had been formed from the boulders of this feature. During my first visit to the site in 2016, Feature C was a neat, clearly defined 8 metre circle (fig 17). Although this circle is a contemporary construction by

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<sup>79</sup> Merchant, Peter (2001) 'An Archaeological Impact Assessment of a Proposed Recreational Trail on Mount Daniel Near Garden Bay.' Report 2001-061: 16

<sup>80</sup> Correspondence with Kenzie Jessome, shíshálh Archaeologist. In Situ Consulting (January 4, 2018)

unknown individuals, the prominent location at the highest point of the mountain suggests the feature originally built here was an important one, used by high status shíshálh girls. Furthermore, its proximity to the unique and complex Feature D (located west of A and B and south of C) supports its high-status affiliation.

Feature D is the most elaborate petroform on *shelk̄em*, consisting of three different formations: a 8 by 9 metre rock circle, a cairn on the northeastern side of this circle, and a small ring of 20 long, narrow rocks on the southern boundary of the circle (fig 18).<sup>81</sup> The latter petroform's stones create the illusion of a pointed star shape, unique to the site. The eastern side of the large circle has an opening, with two lines of boulders from either side, creating the illusion of a path leading out to the space between Feature D and A. This elaborate feature may speak to the ritual activities conducted in relation to these features, but no oral history or ethnography speaks directly to this construction. Unfortunately, the previous hiking trail went directly through this complex feature, causing extensive damage to large portions. A shovel test within the cairn revealed it contains an old stump.<sup>82</sup> The state of Feature D remains in the same state since its 1976 report.

Feature E is the farthest feature on the western side of the summit, located northwest from Feature C. The 1976 report recorded this feature as being a ring with a diameter of 12 metres, consisting of 24 large stones.<sup>83</sup> However, the 1999 survey indicated that most of the smaller rocks had been removed to make a small fire place in the middle of the original formation (fig

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<sup>81</sup> Merchant, Peter (2001) 'An Archaeological Impact Assessment of a Proposed Recreational Trail on Mount Daniel Near Garden Bay.' Report 2001-061: 19

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Merchant, Peter (2001) 'An Archaeological Impact Assessment of a Proposed Recreational Trail on Mount Daniel Near Garden Bay.' Report 2001-061: 20

19)<sup>84</sup>. The 2017 survey notes Feature E's location, but due to this destruction of the original feature and forest growth, this feature can no longer be identified definitively.

Feature F is identified as a linear feature, first recorded in the 2001 survey report. Located along the southwest cliff edge approximately 30 metres from Feature D, this line of 19 small to medium-sized boulders runs along the edge of the bedrock outcrop (fig 20).<sup>85</sup> Based on the lichen and moss growing on the boulders, Merchant hypothesizes the age of the feature to be roughly the same as Features A and B. Although not a circular formation, it is possible that this linear feature is the remnants of a former circle; its location on the edge of the steep, rocky cliff edge and proximity to both old and new hiking trails may be the reason for its incomplete shape (the older trail intersects at the feature and the newer trail passes by just 10 metres to the north).

Both Features G and H are newly recorded during the 2017 In Situ survey. Feature G is similar to F, as it is a curved line of six boulders on a lower rock shelf below and to the east of Feature B (fig 21). Although in a less ideal location, this line is likely part of a now destroyed or attempted Moon Circle, built later than the others already occupying prime locations.

Located directly north from the edge of Feature A, is Feature H (fig 22). A circle of approximately 5 metres in diameter, Feature H was mostly reconstructed by the In Situ Team in 2017. The surviving portion of this Moon Circle was a semicircular line running parallel to the north side of Feature A's neat line of boulders.

The In Situ team did an outstanding job of rectifying the damage to this important cultural site. As archaeologists, some of them members of the shíshálh nation, their efforts award the Moon

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Merchant, Peter (2001) 'An Archaeological Impact Assessment of a Proposed Recreational Trail on Mount Daniel Near Garden Bay.' Report 2001-061: 21

Circles the continued care and respect deserved by an important Place recording shíshálh culture. Although Kenzie, Corinna, and Nick documented two previously unacknowledged features, there are many other ‘inconclusive’ boulder compositions found on the various rocky levels of *shelkem*’s summit (fig 23). Small piles of boulders and short lines similar to Feature F and G may be further creations of a girl during her transition to womanhood.

### **Women’s Creations**

The numerous petroforms and possible portions of formerly built Moon Circles align with the oral history and ethnographic accounts of this important site. When asked about *shelkem*, many shíshálh note “it’s where young girls become women”<sup>86</sup> and cite the petroforms on its summit as physical evidence of this purpose. This is generally known by some in the community, but the details are remembered by shíshálh knowledge keepers like Yvonne Joe and Margaret Dixon. The oral history of the shíshálh explains how the Moon Circles were created and used by girls during their puberty rites and multiple ethnographies support these records.

Speaking with Yvonne Joe and her cousin Margaret Dixon, I learned how “girls that were going up, were becoming women. They used to put rocks and they had to get in that circle and stay there [for a long time].”<sup>87</sup> During their secluded time in the circle, one woman from their family, usually their Granny, would bring them food.<sup>88</sup> In a 1995 interview, Gilbert Joe, a shíshálh elder and knowledge keeper, also explained how the Moon Circles got to be on the summit:

on the very peak - the summit of that mountain, there’s this moon rock, and you can see all the big boulders in a circle, a circle of life. And women, early childhood days when they begin their monthly menstruations, and when they’re coming out of that, they’d go

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<sup>86</sup> Yvonne Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

up there and fast for 10 days or up to 2 weeks to come out of their puberty stages to become women.<sup>89</sup>

These shíshálh elders all note that girls built the circles and spent an extended period time in this Place, which was physically demanding to reach, spiritually potent, and culturally significant. To reach the rocky summit of *shelk̓em*, one must dedicate a large amount of time and energy to climb 450 metres on a steep, winding trail up the mountainside. From *sexw?awin*, this trail would have been even steeper and more treacherous than the current BC Parks trail leading up the opposite side of the mountain along a former logging trail (map 5).

Once you reach the top, sweaty and out of breath, the cool breeze, the quiet, and the breathtaking view mingle perfectly to create a great sense of calm, contentment, and accomplishment. Every time I have climbed *shelk̓em* I have felt this, and I have watched others experience this same feeling. Yet the experience of this summit to shíshálh girls deeply connects them to their Ancestors; looking around the plateaued summit, the Moon Circles can be seen, sitting quietly, pensively, amidst the bushes and windswept plants. As physical remnants of their Ancestors' transition from girl to woman, this place and these Circles are further imbued with power and meaning, beyond what visiting hikers like myself could possibly contemplate.

This experience and the accounts shíshálh elders have shared with me are akin to many puberty rites practiced by Northwest Coast Peoples. They require girls to obtain knowledge through a specific process involving physical stress and fasting, a journey to a place of great spiritual power, and the learning of special knowledge – often through aesthetic production. This process enabled a girl to safely traverse the liminal phase of shifting identity and changing role within society.

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<sup>89</sup> Gilbert Joe; shíshálh Interview Transcripts. TS109: 30

Ethnographic accounts also note the role of *shelkem* as the final phase in shíshálh girl's transition to woman. Homer Barnett mentions the construction of Moon Circles in his detailed account of shíshálh women's puberty rituals. He notes that after 10 days,

she went by herself to a place on a hill and laid out a circle of rocks which represented guests at a feast. In the center, she put two rocks representing herself and her future husband. Her task was accomplished in one day and she came home as soon as she had finished. No one disturbed the rocks.<sup>90</sup>

Although this time span relating to women's ritual (ten days) is similar to Gilbert Joe's account, Barnett's record of placing rocks in the middle instead of yourself is not supported in shíshálh oral histories shared with me during my time in Sechelt. However, Lester Peterson also records this marriage-associated meaning of the *shelkem* Moon Circles, citing shíshálh elder, Dan Paull, who stressed it was "for local, not intervillage marriages."<sup>91</sup>

Mary Saul, raised on the Lillooet River just north of Harrison Lake and near *shelkem*, spoke of one way the Moon Circles continued to play an important role in the lives of women after their first menstruation. Saul states that, women would visit at night "during their moon time" to circumambulate their Moon Circle, praying to each rock under the light of the moon.

A girl would spend nights during her time alone going slowly around her circle on her knees, reciting certain words as she reached each stone. She would take at least four hours to complete the circuit. Her words were addressed to the moon.<sup>92</sup>

In examining the oral histories and ethnographic records of the Moon Circles on *shelkem*'s summit, explanations of their creation, purpose, and use vary. There are a number of reasons why this may be: firstly, as a deeply personal rite completed in seclusion, unique methods of completing the same task may have arisen. Furthermore, lived traditions are dynamic and active; their methods and meanings shift over time, especially when colonial pressures attempt to cleave

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<sup>90</sup> Barnett, Homer (1955) *The Salish of British Columbia*: 174

<sup>91</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*: 39

<sup>92</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*: 38

peoples from their traditions. Although Canada's unsavoury history made it increasingly difficult for shíshálh women to connect to their culture and the Land that embodies it, these colonial efforts have been unsuccessful, as the last chapter of this thesis will demonstrate. Lastly, only a small percentage of women would have constructed a Moon Circle, as this 'additional stage' of a girl's puberty rites was controlled by the strict social hierarchy governing shíshálh society. This exclusivity would have limited the number of women who knew about and completed this ritual, accounting for records of shíshálh women's puberty traditions that omit the Moon Circles altogether.

Social standing impacted one's role and access to shíshálh tradition and knowledge; elites were responsible for important knowledge and were often privy to certain rites and ceremonies. This restriction was carried out through the *stah-oo* system which "preserved and perpetuated the nation's heritage": one elite boy memorized, word for word, the oral histories and stories taught to him by the Elders.<sup>93</sup> Basil Joe fulfilled this role during his lifetime and was the source for Lester Peterson's ethnographic record of the shíshálh nation. Gilbert Joe was also a shíshálh rememberer in this way and his accounts inform the following discussion of *shelkem*'s significance and meaning. Although this system of knowledge transmission traditionally chose one boy to fulfill this role, learning and keeping other forms of specialized knowledge was carried out by many shíshálh, both male and female. Many individuals were trained in other forms of knowledge such as medicines, ceremony, midwifery, and ritual to name a few. Barbara Higgins' new publication, *Etched in My Memory: Life as a shíshálh Rememberer* demonstrates this, as she (a shíshálh woman and contemporary of Gilbert Joe) was also chosen to remember and teach aspects of shíshálh history and knowledge.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid

Although the *stah-oo* system has come to incorporate more than one individual, its traditionally exclusive nature of knowledge-sharing is an important cultural pattern to acknowledge, as certain aspects of puberty rites were either reserved for or only attainable by those of the upper-class. “Among upper-class families, as children approached adolescence...Both sexes were expected to seek visions, both before and after puberty.”<sup>94</sup> Hill-Tout speaks of the various gifts awarded to a girl by her parents upon the end of her seclusion, which included a comb and a pair of fire tongs, stones for heating water, and other household utensils.<sup>95</sup> Her family might also celebrate her first menses and announce her eligibility to marry with a feast and a public display of gifts, only achievable to a wealthy family.<sup>96</sup> An account of a shísháhlh chief’s celebration of his daughter was recorded by Barnett in 1955:

When...he brought his daughter out, he used three canoes, one loaded with food, and other with blankets, and a third carrying himself and his daughter on a platform laid across the gunwales. Underneath the platform were two or three men wearing goat skins. As he had been grounded, the men emerged and walked down the planks to the beach, acting like goats. The owner 'shot' them and they fell over bleeding. He then invited several important spectators to 'skin' them and take the hides in the name of this daughter. Other skins and blankets were then distributed.<sup>97</sup>

Although all Coast Salish girls went through rites related to their first menstruation, there is direct link between ‘social stratification and puberty ceremonies.’<sup>98</sup> Not all women’s families were able or permitted to celebrate in the above method nor were they privy to specific aspects of ritual. Yvonne Joe spoke of this when discussing *shelk̓em*; she mentioned that, “not all women would go there for that” and “one girl from the family would be chosen to construct a Moon

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<sup>94</sup> Suttles, *Handbook of the North American Indian*, vol 7: 496

<sup>95</sup> Hill-Tout. Charles (1904) *The Salish People*. vol 4: 33

<sup>96</sup> Markstrom, Carol A. (2008) *Empowerment of North American Indian Girls: Ritual Expressions at Puberty*: 148

<sup>97</sup> Barnett, Homer (1955) *The Salish of British Columbia*: 174

<sup>98</sup> Markstrom, Carol A. (2008) *Empowerment of North American Indian Girls: Ritual Expressions at Puberty*: 148

Circle”<sup>99</sup>, suggesting the creation of a Moon Circle was limited to select individuals within upper-class families.

Therefore, a deep connection to this Place and knowledge about the features and of the mountain would have been reserved for a select group of women. Since being a knowledge keeper was directly linked to status, these women would have been the matriarchs of their communities who would be relied on to aid their people when necessary. In examining the roles of *shelkem* in the following section, it is clear that the knowledge these women learned was important to the well-being of shíshálh women and the community at large.

### **A Woman’s Mountain in Every Sense**

Although site boundaries exist for DjSa-10, the important place created by and for shíshálh women is not limited to the summit of *shelkem*. Thus far, this chapter has spoken of the importance of *shelkem* in shíshálh girl’s transition to womanhood. Yet the significance of this mountain to women extends beyond these land works and beyond puberty, as it continued to shape and enforce their identities as shíshálh women throughout their lives.

Once welcomed back into shíshálh society, these ‘new’ women were considered ready to marry. Although the choice of spouse was often a whole family’s affair, deeply connected to political alliances and extravagantly celebrated, local partnerships were treated differently. According to shíshálh elder Dan Paull in *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*, the shíshálh did not have formal local marriage ceremonies. Instead, when two people wished to formally partner with one another, they would travel up the slopes of *shelkem*. There, they would stay for a number of days

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<sup>99</sup> Yvonne Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

and upon their return were considered ‘married.’<sup>100</sup> Therefore, this mountain was not only the site where girls became women, but it is also the place where they transform their social and ontological identities once more, into wife.

There are no accounts or details pertaining to what passes during the couples’ time spent on the mountain, but the shíshálh word for this ceremony, *yak’-sohw-ahm*, contains *-ahm*, denotes “there was a spiritual aspect to any Sechelt marriage.”<sup>101</sup> When connected to the oral history of Dan Paull and ethnographic records of Peterson and Barnett, this wedding ceremony could be considered a secondary portion of the Moon Circle’s purpose. As previously noted, shíshálh girls would carry two boulders and place them in the centre of their Moon Circle to represent themselves and their future husband; perhaps as part of their *yak’-sohw-ahm*, they returned to their Moon Circle where they replaced the two boulders with themselves and their partner. This would account for the sheer number of small boulders strewn down the cliffside, as women removed their ‘rock couple’ from their circle and replaced it with themselves, to complete their attainment of the goal set by this petroform’s construction.

*Shelkem* continued to play an important role in women’s lives as they became mothers and matriarchs in their community as well. Because raiding was a common practice of certain Northwest Coast Peoples of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it became necessary for shíshálh women and children to easily ‘disappear’. “There was a band that was further up north that used to steal the women from down here.”<sup>102</sup> During these raids, shíshálh women turned to a place they knew well for protection; the slopes of *shelkem*.

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<sup>100</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*: 39

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Yvonne Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

Shíshálh knowledge speaks of a hidden cave with a spring on the eastern side near the summit which awarded them a place of refuge, for days if need be.<sup>103</sup> Only certain women, “would have known the spot from memory, for it was there that they had fashioned their moon-rings in the golden moss.” Therefore, these women became (or reinforced their status as) the matriarchs, relied on to lead the community to safety. Being a keeper of this knowledge would have been a sign of status, further reinforced by these women’s ability to keep other women and children safe. Although I and Kenzie Jessome have both searched for this cave, we have not yet found it, further supporting its ability to keep a large group of people hidden and the importance of knowing its location, which is still guarded by those few shíshálh women.

This mountain was also a Place where women were provided for. When examining the floral species growing in and around the boulders of the Moon Circles, the summit of the mountain becomes as a Women’s Apothecary, providing them with materials and medicines specific to menstruation, childbirth, and other common female ailments. Medicine is sacred knowledge not to be widely shared, as its acquisition is specialized and achieved by specific members of the community. When I spoke to Yvonne and Margaret about medicine plants, they stressed the importance of respecting this knowledge, “a lot of people want the recipes but we don’t give them out.”<sup>104</sup> For this reason, the plant knowledge I discuss in the following pages does not include specific recipes, only general uses of plants which I have largely learned from widely distributed publications such as *Plants of Coastal British Columbia: Including Washington, Oregon & Alaska*. This extensive record cites information regarding Indigenous uses of plants publicly known by both Indigenous and settler botanists of British Columbia.

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<sup>103</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*: 40

<sup>104</sup> Yvonne Joe; Interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

There are many plants that grow on the slopes of *shelkem* that were used in shíshálh medicine, but the ones discussed in this chapter are those used by women and whose location or growth patterns seem directly related to the petroforms on the summit site.

The first medicinal plant I noticed at the site grew on the rock ledge under Feature A and B. A bronze-pink succulent with yellow star-shaped flowers, Stonecrop is known to grow in rocky, nutrient poor locations, such as the rocky ledges of a mountain summit (fig 24).

Although present in its natural habitat, its abundance on only one ledge suggests its establishment here was controlled. There are three kinds of Stonecrop that grow in the North Pacific Coast, all visually similar and all used as medicine for ailments directly relating to menstruation and childbirth. Oregon Stonecrop (*sedum oreganum*) is noted to have been used by the Klallam to promote menstruation in girls. Spreading Stonecrop (*sedum divergens*) was used in a ‘female tonic’ made by the Haida and the Nuxalk who brewed it in a tea to ease childbirth. The Nuxalk also applied it externally as a poultice to help breast milk flow.<sup>105</sup> Broad-Leaved Stonecrop (*sedum spathulifolium*) is noted to have been chewed by Songish women in the ninth month of pregnancy. The peculiar growth pattern of Stonecrop on *shelkem*’s summit and the use of this plant as medicine by women throughout the Coast suggest that its connection to the Moon Circles is intentional.

The particular growth patterns of other flora amidst the boulders in this harsh, rocky, Place further suggest the intentional use of the Moon Circles as a pharmaceutical cabinet for women. Rattlesnake Plantain (*goodyear oblongifolia*) (fig 25) grows in large quantities around the site,

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<sup>105</sup> Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy (1994) *Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon and Alaska*. Vancouver: Ministry of Forests and Lone Pine Publishing: 156

particularly near the interior and amidst the moss-covered features of C and D (specifically the starburst feature).<sup>106</sup>

As a low to middle elevation plant<sup>107</sup>, its abundance on a mountain summit is of interest and its direct connection to childbirth medicine and healing further supports the conclusion that its presence is intentional and related to shísháhlh women's use. Shísháhlh Elder, Mus Swiya (Jamie Dixon), has often spoken about the use of Rattlesnake Plantain in healing wounds without infection. x̄wu'p'a'lich (Barbara Higgins) recalls how her mother and grandmothers saved her father's life with this plant when he was accidentally shot while hunting. She talks about how she collected the "little green plant with pale yellow veins on it" and her mother "began chewing or masticating the green leaves until they were all squishy and mushy like a wet poultice."<sup>108</sup> They spit this directly in his wound; he lived.

Alongside the Rattlesnake Plantain, Pipsissewa or Prince's Pine (*chimaphila umbellata*), flourishes as well (fig 26). The W̄SÁNEĆ (Saanich) used this plant in a bath to soothe sore muscles, useful during labour or menstruation.<sup>109</sup> This small evergreen plant contains quinine, a urinary antiseptic, used to treat urinary tract infections (UTI).<sup>110</sup> Although not a specifically female ailment, UTI's appear more often in women and can be a by-product of sexual intercourse. With Devil's Club and Cascara, other plants that grow in the sex?wamin area,

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<sup>106</sup> Iselmoe, Leah (2017) Fieldnotes on Flora of Mount Daniel

<sup>107</sup> Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy (1994) *Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon and Alaska*: 120

<sup>108</sup> Higgins, Barbara (2016) *Etched in My Memory: My Life as a shísháhlh Rememberer*. Sechelt: Creator's Touch Press: 75

<sup>109</sup> Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy (1994) *Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon and Alaska*: 226

<sup>110</sup> Cichoke, Anthony J. (2001) *Secrets of Native American Herbal Remedies: A Comprehensive Guide to the Native American Tradition of Using Herbs and the Mind/Body/Spirit Connection from Improving Health and Well-Being*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.: 64

Prince's Pine was also brewed into a tea to aid postpartum menstruation and was used to treat childbirth complications.<sup>111</sup>

Another medicine that aided in pain relief growing among the rocky outcrops of *shelkem*'s summit is Yarrow (*achillea millefolium*) (fig 27). This plant is widely known to relieve pain and calm anxiety. The shíshálh used it to cure colds and the Klallam used it in childbirth medicines.<sup>112</sup> Due to its calming properties, it is no surprise it is found on *shelkem* amidst other pain relievers, relaxants, and childbirth remedies.

Common Juniper (*junipers communis*) is another plant used medicinally during labour, present near Feature B and nowhere else on the summit (fig 28). Although the plants mentioned thus far directly relate to motherhood and pregnancy, they also have properties to aid women in navigating (or avoiding) these milestones. For example, when used in high quantities, juniper can bring about miscarriages.<sup>113</sup> Alternatively, False Lily-of-the-Valley (*maianthemum dilatatum*) (fig 29) is very common at the site and is noted as being used by the Squamish (shíshálh's direct neighbours) and the Klallam to reverse sterility.<sup>114</sup>

Therefore, not all medicines found in and around the Moon Circles relate to pain relief and childbirth. Some of the plants of *shelkem* provided women with necessary materials to control and regulate their fertility, continue their busy schedules during Moon Time, and attain esthetic ideals. Sphagnum moss (*sphagnum squarrosum*) is a form of peat moss growing all over *shelkem* (fig 30). In the fall it turns a gold colour, giving the mountain a distinct warm glow that Peterson

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy (1994) *Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon and Alaska*: 279

<sup>113</sup> Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy (1994) *Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon and Alaska*: 94

<sup>114</sup> Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy (1994) *Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon and Alaska*: 103

mistakenly linked to its namesake.<sup>115</sup> Sphagnum moss was widely used by Indigenous women throughout northern North America as menstrual pads and baby diapers due to its hyper-absorbent and antibacterial properties. When dried, sphagnum moss will soak and retain 25 times its own weight in liquid.<sup>116</sup> It can also be washed and reused if a piece is placed “into the stream to rinse clean, then re-dried in the sun to sanitize it.”<sup>117</sup> The sphagnum growing on the slopes of *shelkem* and over the Moon Circles was used by shíshálh women for themselves and their babies.

The last medicine notably present on the summit of *shelkem* and directly related to women is Small-Flowered Alum (*heuchera micrantha*). This subtle pink flowered plant was used by the Skagit to make little girls’ hair grow thicker (fig 31). This would have been applied around and as part of girls’ puberty rites and directly relates to the aestheticization of the body practiced by the shíshálh during their puberty seclusion. Small-flowered Alum’s presence around the Moon Circles, and the aesthetic traditions of shíshálh women’s puberty rites, suggests its connection and use by shíshálh women in this way.

During my fieldwork on *shelkem*, I noted multiple plants known to be used as medicines that directly related to women, growing in distinct locations (map 5). I conclude that most flora discussed were found growing in their natural environments, but specific placement and density patterns around the petroforms suggest intentional management of their growth. Further fieldwork and research are needed to explore these patterns further.

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<sup>115</sup> Peterson, Lester (1990) *The Story of the Sechelt Nation*: 39

<sup>116</sup> Geniusz, Mary Siisip (2015) *Plants Have So Much to Give Us, All We Have to Do is Ask*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 159

<sup>117</sup> Geniusz, Mary Siisip (2015) *Plants Have So Much to Give Us, All We Have to Do is Ask*: 160

Northwest Coast Peoples have been categorized as ‘complex hunter-gatherers’ by anthropologists.<sup>118</sup> Yet this term undermines recognition of the sophisticated resource management practiced by Indigenous groups of the region. There is a perpetuated misconception that ‘true agriculture’<sup>119</sup> was only introduced to Northwest Coast Indigenous societies by European contact and that prior to European influence, the Peoples living here simply collected what grew around them and did not manage floral resources in any way. This view has been further supported by the strict dichotomous framework of European thought which struggles to acknowledge alternative forms of agricultural practices; you either farm or you gather. There is a growing body of scholarship that invalidates this perspective and speaks of the ways Northwest Coast Peoples intentionally managed the flora of their Lands. Prominent scholars such as Nancy Turner, Sandra Peacock, and Douglas Deur, strive to ‘dispel the myth’ that,

the ‘hunter-gatherers’ of the region were not simple ‘affluent foragers,’ but active managers who have cultivated, sustained, overseen, and promoted culturally valued plant resources.<sup>120</sup>

Plant resource management practices of the Northwest Coast included a variety of methods based on the particular species being cultivated; cultural use, physiology of the plant and environmental factors all shaped how a plant was tended and harvested. Primarily organized and accomplished by women, methods ranged from simply tending and tilling, to transplanting, landscape burning, and the maintenance of garden plots, all following the plant’s yearly cycle.

The shíshálh managed their floral resources in this fashion. As an important Women’s Place to which access with regulated and where the abundance and distinct growth patterns of plants

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<sup>118</sup> Suttles, *Handbook of the North American Indian*, vol 7: 130

<sup>119</sup> Suttles, *Handbook of the North American Indian*, vol 7: 131

<sup>120</sup> Turner, Nancy J. and Peacock, Sandra (2005) Ch. 4: ‘Ethnobotanical Evidence for Plant Resource Management on the Northwest Coast.’ *Keeping it Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America*. eds. Douglas Deur, Nancy J. Turner. Vancouver: UBC Press: 102

directly related to menstruation and fertility, *shelkem* was likely apart of shíshálh women's resource management program. Growing medicines that aid women during her Moon Time and other phases of woman's fertility in the spiritually powerful space created by this female experience seems conceptually logical and in line with Coast Salish cosmology, tradition, and subsistence patterns.

### **Conclusion**

*Shelkem* is a Women's Place in every sense; its relevance being continuously reinforced at every stage of a shíshálh woman's life. This continuous relationship shaped both shíshálh women and *shelkem*: the ways in which shíshálh women interacted with this Place enforced specific roles and characteristics, associating them with womanhood. *Shelkem* and its Moon Circles were also continuously imbued with history and knowledge, making it a spiritually powerful Place. This reciprocal relationship was formative to both parties and deeply connected this Place to shíshálh women's ontologies.

## Chapter Three: An Active Tradition

Thus far, this thesis has discussed how shíshálh girls historically constructed and interacted with the Moon Circles on the summit of *shelk̄em*. In doing so, the significance of this Place and its longstanding relationship with shíshálh women has been highlighted. However, focusing solely on the historical construction of the Moon Circles and uses of *shelk̄em* inaccurately frame this relationship in the past; suggesting its current cultural significance is based solely on *shelk̄em*'s historical role as a Women's Place. In fact, Shíshálh women continue to participate in this relationship with *shelk̄em* and the Moon Circles. In experiencing this Women's Place, the Moon Circles inform their identities, their roles in the community, and orient them in the world as shíshálh. In this way *shelk̄em* is an active Traditional Site for shíshálh women.

This chapter is based on interviews conducted in October 2017, between myself, Steven Feschuk and four shíshálh women from three generations: Margaret Joe Dixon and Yvonne Joe, Raquel Joe, and Corinna Julius. These four women were born and raised on their Land and are deeply involved in their culture.

Margaret Joe Dixon (*sewsawmat*) and Yvonne Joe (*kiksewa*) are cousins from *ts'unay*; the traditional shíshálh village closest to *shelk̄em*. They attended Residential School in Sechelt (*cha'alitch*) where they currently live. Yvonne Joe was married to Gilbert Joe, a late shíshálh rememberer and Elder whose knowledge has also informed this research. Both women are respected shíshálh Elders, who founded the shíshálh Language Program and compiled the shíshálh dictionary.

Raquel Joe (ch'elkwilwt) is the curator of the shíshálh nation's Tems Swiya Museum. She is a culture keeper, weaver, sister, auntie, and mother. Her family originates from *xenichen* and she is the daughter in-law of Yvonne Joe. I have had the opportunity to work closely with her as a member of sARP and she has taught me so much about shíshálh history and women's traditions.

Corinna Julius is an archaeologist and the daughter of former band archaeologist and current councilor Keith Julius and Leah Julius, cousin of Raquel Joe. She was the archaeologist who reconstructed the disturbed Moon Circles this past summer and is the youngest shíshálh woman interviewed for this project.

As the previous chapters have illustrated, shíshálh women's traditional relationship with *shelkem* was formative to their understanding of shíshálh womanhood. Through experiencing this Place and the ritual production of a Moon Circle, the importance of being productive and passing on knowledge to other shíshálh generations was instilled. Within the contemporary context, productivity and passing on shíshálh knowledge are still associated with shíshálh womanhood and the Moon Circles continue to inform contemporary shíshálh women's identities.

### **Shíshálh Womanhood**

“As shíshálh women and culture keepers I think that we are actually the backbone of the community. I think the shíshálh nation ladies are really strong in their culture, a lot more than the men...I really think that being a Sechelt lady and continuing my culture is what I'm meant to do.” – Raquel Joe

Shíshálh women are active members and leaders of their community. They maintain and fulfill the roles of producer and knowledge keeper in various ways; as artists, curators, archaeologists, teachers, mothers, community leaders, and much more. Within these capacities they participate in the protection, understanding, and strengthening of shíshálh culture and knowledge.

MD: We try to keep on, what you call, remembering the words in our language even when it went down to our Grannies. I started trying to remember things to understand, you know.

Remembering shíshálh knowledge enables shíshálh women like Margaret to understand their culture and to pass it on to future shíshálh generations. As producers, they biologically and culturally create the future of the shíshálh nation. Learning, employing, and teaching shíshálh language, history, and skills are ways shíshálh women fulfill this role as knowledge keepers and ensure the continuation of their people. I do not claim that there is or has ever been a strict definition of shíshálh womanhood, yet, there is a clear continuity in the ways the shíshálh women with whom I spoke continue to shape identity through their relationships with the Land and aesthetic practices.

Productivity is closely associated with shíshálh womanhood, their puberty rites have connected generations of shíshálh women's identities through ritualized aesthetic production including Moon Circles. Productivity remains a part of shíshálh women's identities: "We are the weavers, we're the medicine gatherers, we're the cedar strippers, we keep the community growing by, you know, carrying our children."<sup>121</sup>

Raquel embodies shíshálh womanhood as a producer and teacher of shíshálh culture through weaving,

RJ: I love teaching weaving, I am an advocate to keep this tradition alive because my cousin Andy was the one who taught me and I love it. I love teaching it, I love teaching the basics of it and now I'm going into that area where there's a lot of weavers now, that know how to make a simple shawl. Now I want to teach them the more intricate designs of diamonds and triangles, so that's what my specialty is.

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<sup>121</sup> Raquel Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 19, 2017

For her, it's important to remember this skill and ensure it survives; sadly, there are other women's practices that have been lost, illustrating the importance and urgency of producers and knowledge keepers. For example,

RJ: really important that I do this because right now we don't have any basket weavers. Cedar root basket weavers. Which is really sad because the Sechelt nation women were famous for their basket weaving, right? The cedar root basket weaving is a dying art here in Sechelt and we have to get it back, you know? We have to get it back... We can't let that die. My grandmothers all did that. Even, I think Yvonne and Margaret did that, and Anne, the last, the oldest female elders but they don't do it anymore because their Elders, right?"

Raquel's pursuit of shíshálh women's knowledge and skills is an example of the way aesthetic production continues to be an important skill that informs her identity.

RJ: I just started weaving about ten years ago, I didn't know that it was in my blood to weave. I just started cedar stripping probably a few years after that and I've grown to love doing that. Gathering medicinal medicines and stuff like that, plants ya know. I love doing that.

Shíshálh women's aesthetic traditions are collaborative; women often complete this work together, gathering and preparing materials, learning from one another, and building relationships during this time spent together.

RJ: [I learned] from my family, my cousins. My older cousins, my cousin Leah. She's a couple years older than me but I consider her my big sister, right? Because we, ever since I can remember she's always been in my life. My cousins Mary, my cousins Sabina, they're all like my big sisters so everything... Leah's really cultural and I really look up to her for a lot of things because she loves the culture just as much as me, even more, right? With the medicinal plants especially. She loves 'going up', collecting medicinal plants. When she gets excited, I get excited!

Although not formally ritual nor limited to puberty rites, these extended periods of time spent with other women aesthetically producing or time spent in Women's Place on the Land is similar to former seclusion practices, with aesthetic production and Place remaining at the center. Participating in these relationships enables shíshálh women to connect to their history and share concepts of womanhood with one another and their shíshálh Ancestors. However, contemporary

shísháhlh women also enact this productive identity in new ways, with examples like Margaret and Yvonne's development of the shísháhlh Language Program, Raquel's role as a curator, and Corinna's career as an archaeologist. These may not be perceived as 'traditional' ways in which shísháhlh women shaped their identities and fulfilled their societal role, yet they embody the same elements that have always defined shísháhlh womanhood: production, knowledge keeping, and community.

### **The Role of Moon Circles in shísháhlh Womanhood**

Margaret Joe Dixon and Yvonne Joe's relationship with the Moon Circles taught them of their roles as knowledge keepers of shísháhlh culture. They visited the Moon Circles as young women, accompanied by their Elders, along with other knowledge-keepers-in-training. Prior to this trip, Margaret and Yvonne did not know of this Place or about the puberty tradition of constructing a Moon Circle.

MD: You know that when we went up there, I never even know what to do! It was all gone, you know? It was like we were *xwáhliten*.

YJ: Yeah.

MD: We were amazed! I was amazed! "Wow!" you know, just like a *xwáhliten*.

Margaret notes that she felt just like a *xwáhliten*, a white person, because she did not know what the Moon Circles were or why they were important to her people. "It was like we were there as tourists or something!"<sup>122</sup> The experience of being in this Place and not knowing it, not understanding its significance, had a great impact on Margaret and Yvonne. It demonstrated the necessity of learning and strengthening shísháhlh culture by teaching shísháhlh history and language to their people. They realized that if shísháhlh culture was not remembered or taught, it could be forgotten or destroyed. Seeing the vandalized Moon Circle only strengthened this message.

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<sup>122</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

MD: Yeah. It was an easy climb. Everybody was willing to go up to that Place. We were all yacking and talking and laughing going up...Everybody is laughing and enjoying themselves and they go around the corner and they see the 'CL'.

The 'CL'<sup>123</sup> Margaret is referring to is the vandalized Moon Circle which the Hills reconstructed in 1976. Seeing this vandalism, this blatant ignorance and disrespect of an important shíshálh Place further strengthened Margaret and Yvonne's resolve to learn and teach shíshálh history and knowledge.

Corinna Julius also learned the importance of protecting and teaching shíshálh culture from her relationship with *shelk'em* and the Moon Circles. It was Corinna who completed the most recent restoration of the disturbed Moon Circles. She would, "like to get more of the young girls to go up there and learn about what the Circles mean and why they stay up there for that many days."<sup>124</sup> She hopes having girls visit this Place can become an important part of her community's traditions once more;

CJ: When they break for summer, like the Summer Fun program for kids, they used to split it boys and girls, I used to supervise. I think that's one of the ways we could interact with just the girls and let them know what's going on and what our Ancestors used to do when they became a woman.

It's important for shíshálh girls to see the Circles, as they must experience this Women's Place to know it. It is a spiritual Place to Corinna and the 'feeling' it inspires is only attainable when in this Place.

CJ: I take friends up there but I don't take them to go see the Moon Rocks because of how sacred it is but we just go to the one specific view and just sit there and like eat our snacks...but it does come to me, like I kind of feel it when I'm up there: the spirituality about it.

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<sup>123</sup> The 'CL' formation is noted as being 'CW' in the 1999 Assessment Report completed by Peter Merchant.

<sup>124</sup> Corinna Julius; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 19, 2017

‘Feeling it’ has taught her that experiencing Place, is a powerful way of knowing and orienting herself in the world as a shísháhlh woman; she believes other young women should also visit this Place, “just to get them to experience and know.”<sup>125</sup>

### **Knowing the Moon Circles**

As evident in Corrina’s account, ‘knowing Place’ through experience is paramount to shísháhlh women’s relationship with *shelk<sub>em</sub>* and the Moon Circles. The construction of the Moon Circles during puberty seclusion provided shísháhlh girls the opportunity to know this Place, as it required them to hike the steep slopes, look out at the view, and spend time in this spiritually powerful Place. Contemporary shísháhlh women continue to actively participate in this relationship, coming to ‘know Place’ through experiencing it. In doing so, they connect with their history, Ancestors, and access knowledge on a deeper level; this experience helps to make them distinct shísháhlh people. Raquel’s experience of being in the Place rewarded her with knowledge that simply hearing about *shelk<sub>em</sub>* could have never done:

RJ: I went up there, I thought it was grueling but I loved every minute of it because there’s all women that went up with us, right? And I did not know it was going to that long to walk up there and I didn’t realize how steep it was, right? It took us, I think, 50 minutes, 45-50 minutes to get to the top but when you get to the top, you forget all about that pain in your legs, calves, right? And you get up there and you just look, it feels like you’re on top of the world because there’s one, big open area, a big rock where you just stand there and look down onto our band lands and the water. It’s super beautiful. I bet that’s where the ladies used to sit, you know? Where their family was down below, living.

Raquel had learned about this Women’s Place before her visit, but it was not until she had experienced the process of getting there and felt the Place herself that she came to ‘know’ it. Knowing her Ancestors felt the same breeze on their faces after the long hike, looked out onto

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<sup>125</sup> Corinna Julius; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 19, 2017

the same view, and defined shíshálh womanhood where she stood, Raquel connected with her Ancestors, sisters and cousins, and her shíshálh history.

The importance of seeing this Place, not just learning about it, is integral to knowing it. As Margaret told me, “because we don’t know really, don’t really know until we see it.”<sup>126</sup> Her argument is grounded in Coast Salish pedagogical approaches to learning, which are centered on ‘showing things’ or ‘showing how to do things.’<sup>127</sup> Therefore, visibility of and access to important Places are a requirement for transmitting and continuing Indigenous cultures and traditional knowledge. As Raquel, Corinna, Yvonne, and Margaret’s accounts attest, the relationship between this Women’s Place and contemporary shíshálh women is current and formative to their identities and ontological orientation. Being able to experience the Moon Circles is imperative to ‘knowing’ them. If shíshálh women cannot access this Place or see the Moon Circles, the flow of knowledge from generation to generation threatens to be impaired.

All the shíshálh women I spoke with learned the value and importance of their role as producers, teachers and knowledge keepers of shíshálh culture by seeing the Moon Circles. The ability for shíshálh women to access and see these features is necessary for their formative relationship to be possible. Therefore, continued degradation and lack of protection puts this Place and contemporary shíshálh women’s traditions at risk. *Shelkem* is currently designated as a provincial park, and the Moon Circles are a heavily trafficked hiking destination. Due to its public access, this Women’s Place has been heavily disturbed; a number of the Moon Circles being dismantled and other rock constructions by non-shíshálh people built all over this spiritual Place.

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<sup>126</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

<sup>127</sup> Carlson, Keith (2003) ‘Mountains that See and Need to Be Seen’: 6

It is for this reason that many shíshálh want the opportunity to protect this Place, so it may continue shaping shíshálh womanhood;

RJ: I know that I would love to have it protected and I would love to have it returned back to the Sechelt nation because right now its not under the Sechelt nation's land, right? These people who named it, probably came here like, 60-70 years ago, right? But that's been in our land forever and ever, right? We used that, we used it! For our young ladies to become women and our grandmothers to teach their young ladies what it means to be a woman; what it means to get your period and moon and whatever. It should come back to the Sechelt nation, definitely.

### **Living Traditions**

Participating in the relationship between shíshálh women and the Moon Circles is a tradition established long ago, in which contemporary women continue to engage. Contemporary shíshálh women no longer construct circles of boulders during their first Moon, yet they continue to use the Circles and the experience of this Women's Place for the same purpose: to orient themselves within the world and shape their identity. Therefore, shíshálh women's use of and relationship to this Place is fundamentally the same, having existed since time immemorial and continuing to exist through the living experiences of contemporary shíshálh women like Margaret, Yvonne, Raquel, and Corinna.

As an active relationship between shíshálh women and *shelkem*, the way this relationship manifests shifts and expands, adapting to the living culture and women who define and enact it. These adaptations occur through traditional relationships with this Place, therefore they in themselves are traditional. As individuals *living* shíshálh culture, their experience in the contemporary world is apart of this experience, becoming a part of this Place, and is no more or less 'traditional' as the experiences and practices of their Ancestors.

Each shíshálh woman's relationship with the Moon Circles is different and personal, yet all include the experience of climbing to this Women's Place, of seeing their Land from a

perspective shared by their Ancestors and witnessing the physical manifestation of their history and culture amidst the moss.

By continuing to use the Moon Circles to ontologically orient themselves in the world, shísháhlh women are informed by the concepts of shísháhlh womanhood imbued there. Contemporary shísháhlh women fulfill their ‘traditional’ roles while also (re)mould and contribute their own experiences to these traditional definitions. In the contemporary context, these roles have adopted a vigilant and protective quality; to be a shísháhlh woman is to be a protector and advocate of shísháhlh culture. This derives from historical events that have threatened shísháhlh culture and is a form of resilience and reaction to colonization.

Being physically removed from their Land to attend Residential School was one way many First Nations women were disconnected from their traditions and Places. When Yvonne and Margaret became women, puberty seclusion “was done by that time”<sup>128</sup> and they were “not taught at all”<sup>129</sup> about shísháhlh women’s puberty traditions or the changes that occurred when they became women. When I asked them what they were told or what happened when they became women, they shared this memory with me:

MD: Well, nothing really, “Be careful, whatever” because we were in school. And I recall, we were all sitting down in front of the cottage, father’s cottage, the swings, there. And then somebody shouted and said to call a doctor or something; one of the girls was standing up on the swing. One was sitting down, and one was standing up, and she was full of blood on her petticoat. We thought she was hurt! Everybody started crying, we didn’t know what was wrong with her.

SF: Nobody was telling you.

YJ: No. Even up to this stage.

Experiences of shísháhlh cultural knowledge being under threat have been incorporated into shísháhlh women’s identities and understanding of their roles in their community. As shísháhlh

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<sup>128</sup> Yvonne Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

<sup>129</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

culture was/is threatened by colonization, protecting and strengthening it has become an important part of shíshálh women's ontologies. These roles of protecting and advocating for shíshálh culture are consistent with the established, continuous, shared ontology held by shíshálh women. Like "adding stones to a partially finished wall or laying bricks upon a foundation of a house,"<sup>130</sup> shíshálh women continue to shape their identities, adding "new material onto the like material already in place."<sup>131</sup> The protector and advocate roles may be moulded from more contemporary influences, but evidenced by *shelkem* and shíshálh women's aesthetic practices, the way they learn these roles is still through Women's Places and aesthetic production.

### **Women's Places**

There were likely other Places where shíshálh girls constructed Moon Circles that have not been formally acknowledged in the scholarly record. "There's Moon Rocks all over. There's probably some on top of this mountain; just going towards Langdale."<sup>132</sup> Yvonne and Margaret know that certain Places created and used by women were family-specific; "girls had certain places to go for their family"<sup>133</sup> which were close to their villages. "Those who used to be around, right up the head [Jervis Inlet], you know, they have their own."<sup>134</sup> Although there is only one known location of Moon Circles on shíshálh Land, this reference to other Women's Places 'up the mountain' demonstrate the importance of Place within shíshálh women's lives and landscape. For example, they used Places in the mountains to give birth;

MD: There are other places where women went but that was for childbirth too. There was certain places where they kept their babies up, they had to go up, way up.

MD: Even here in Sechelt, they got their baby when they went up.

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<sup>130</sup> Basso, Keith (1996) *Wisdom Sits in Places*: 87

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Gilbert Joe; shíshálh interview transcript TS109, lines 21-23

<sup>133</sup> Yvonne Joe; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

<sup>134</sup> Margaret Joe Dixon; interview with Leah Iselmoe, October 18, 2017

YJ: Yeah

LI: So, women 'went up' to have babies too.

YJ: Yeah

Shísháhlh women continue to participate in relationships with many of these Places. Together, they continue 'go up the mountain' to collect medicines, berries, cedar bark and access their history from the same Places their as Ancestors.

RJ: We go to up the mountain back here to go gather and collect up in Narrow Inlet. There's mainly all women that go... That's where we gather our medicinal tea. That's the only place it grows cuz you have to go in an area where there's, it's a bog area, you have to wear gum boots and its squishy and you know like, pond area, so we go up there and there's also wild blueberries that grow up there.

Partaking in these activities connects and incorporates shísháhlh women into their culture and Land. Furthermore, those Places become personally meaningful and imbued with memories and history. As members of the shísháhlh social network, these Places also participate and reciprocate their relationships with shísháhlh women and foster community and connections between women, the Land, and other beings in the shísháhlh *swiya*;

RJ: It's a real bonding experience for us ladies to go up. I wish more ladies would come and do it with us you know...just as long as they had the experience, right? Just to know that, "Yeah, I picked *tsálip-ay*, Labrador tea." That's all I want them to say, "I did it! I've done it! Don't like it but I did it." Some of them didn't like it and some of them fell in the big bog, they were up to their waist! We laughed!

Being imbued with these memories, such Places are formative to shísháhlh women's identities that orient them in the world. Raquel's response when asked to explain who she is demonstrates the central role Land plays in shísháhlh women's identity:

RJ: I have to be near the ocean. I have to be near the trees and the mountains and the rivers. I have to be near where there's sockeye salmon and chum salmon and whatnot, right? Cuz that's who we are.

## Conclusion

*Shelk<sub>em</sub>* and the Moon Circles are still used by shíshálh women despite attempts to remove shíshálh women from their Land and culture. They continue to live, teach, and protect women's knowledge, learning from one another and the Land. Places such as *shelk<sub>em</sub>* allow them to access their history and knowledge. In doing so, they continue to create and define those Places and relationships, living shíshálh culture. The Moon Circles are an example of this, still used in the same as they have been by generations of shíshálh Ancestors to understand what it means to be a shíshálh woman and to actively participate in this identity.

This continued, reciprocal relationship demonstrates the unbroken, active traditions of shíshálh women and the contemporary significance of *shelk<sub>em</sub>*.

## Conclusion

*Shelkem* is important to shíshálh women. It is a spiritual Place, aesthetically shaped by the Moon Circles that act as access points to shíshálh women's knowledge and history. These Circles attest to the longstanding presence of shíshálh women on their Land as they continue to shape their identities and participate in their history through their relationship with this Place.

This study highlights how shíshálh women employ aesthetic production to create Places formative to their identities, illustrating the connection between Place, Salish women's puberty traditions, and their 'art'. In doing so, this research underscores the necessity of redefining dominant perspectives on Indigenous women's 'material culture', art, and ritual.

By examining *shelkem* and the Moon Circles through the knowledge and perspectives of shíshálh women living today, their voices are incorporated into the scholarly record in discussions of Indigenous relationships with the Land and Place-making and such relationships are acknowledged as continuous and current. There is an urgent need for this incorporation, as it improves the visibility of Indigenous women's relationships to Places created by their aesthetic practices. This urgency is prompted by social, political, and economic inequalities resulting from colonialism which are perpetuated upon the Land and within Canada's socio-political institutions. Many Women's Places are not acknowledged or recognized as important cultural sites within academic and legal records. This leaves them unprotected and often makes them inaccessible to the women with whom they have important cultural ties. Unacknowledged, many of the Places have, and will continue to be, subjected to destruction through vandalism, urban development or misuse. This in turn will limit their ability to reciprocate in their relationships

with Indigenous women; knowing a Place involves seeing it, if altered or inaccessible, the knowledge associated with that experience may be unattainable.

Including Indigenous women's culture within the scholarly record will also support their efforts to decolonize and reclaim sites previously taken from them. Academic research, historical ethnographies, and 'proof of use' studies are all referenced within land claims. Therefore, incorporating Indigenous women within the scholarly record is one method of rectifying the erasure and marginalization of Indigenous women's presence within the dominant narratives and upon their Land. Furthermore, without addressing this absence of perspectives in the record, Eurocentric definitions and understandings of Place, Indigenous relationships to Land, and 'traditional use' will continue to enforce the inequalities associated with Indigenous land claims.

The recognition of aesthetic production as a means of Place-making highlights the dynamic ways in which cultures and traditions are lived. In being lived, they are adapted and built upon. As the contemporary way shíshálh women continue to use the Moon Circles is 'traditional' so too are many other ways Indigenous peoples practice 'traditional use' of their Land. Especially in the context of colonial histories, when the adaptation of tradition was a means of ensuring it endured. Acknowledging this resilient method of producing, protecting, and sustaining tradition in scholarly, legal, and political perceptions accurately reflect Indigenous cultures and reinforce Indigenous knowledge, history, and culture.

This study of *shelk'em*, shíshálh women's aesthetic traditions, and Women's Places has in no way been exhaustive. Based on the knowledge of shíshálh Elders, archaeological reports, and historical ethnographies, the presence of other Women's Places within and without shíshálh Land is very likely. Further investigation of sites marked by aestheticization and bolstered by

Indigenous women's knowledge and voices may identify more Women's Places within the Land. The important role of *shelkem* and the Moon Circles in the lives and history of shíshálh women demonstrates the value of learning more about Women's Places and the ways in which women create(d) and use(d) them.

Shíshálh women continue to participate in this active relationship with *shelkem*. Through their interaction with aesthetic features built by their Ancestors and their continued aesthetic practices, they access knowledge formative to their identity as shíshálh women. In doing so, their experience and identities are incorporated into the ongoing, living history of the shíshálh and imbued within the Moon Circles. These aesthetic works, built by shíshálh girls during their puberty rites, are central to shíshálh women's history and identity, and are evidence of the importance of aesthetic products and Place within the lives and cultures of Indigenous women.





**fig 3:** Seated Human Figure Bowl, Pre-1800; Coast Salish, Shoal Harbor, Soapstone (Seattle Art Museum: 83.223)



**fig 4:** shísháhlh Baskets, Tems Swiya (Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



**fig 5:** Cedar Armbands worn during girl's Puberty Seclusion, 1899; Kwakwaka'wakw, Koskimo. Red Cedar (American Museum of Natural History: 16 / 6797 B Field No: 41)



**fig 6:** Fringed Breast Strap worn during girl's Puberty Seclusion, 1899; Kwakwaka'wakw, Koskimo. Red Cedar (American Museum of Natural History: 16 / 6794 Field No: 38)



**fig 7:** Cedar Hat worn during girl's Puberty Seclusion, 1899; Kwakwaka'wakw, TSAWATEENOX. Red Cedar (American Museum of Natural History: 16 / 6780 Field No: 24)



**fig 8:** Puberty Necklace, ca. 1860; Thompson River Region. Cotton thread, early glass beads, and bone (Portland Art Museum: 2013.38.49)



**fig 9:** Tweezer used to pluck eyebrows during Puberty Rites, 1899; Kwakwaka'wakw, TSAWATEENOX. (The American Museum of Natural History: 16 / 6789 Field No: 33)



**fig 10:** Knotted Culturally Modified Tree (CMT), Interior Salish (BC Ministry of Forests)



**fig 11:** Upper Nicola Band Puberty Petroform, Merrit, BC (BC Report: 1991-12)

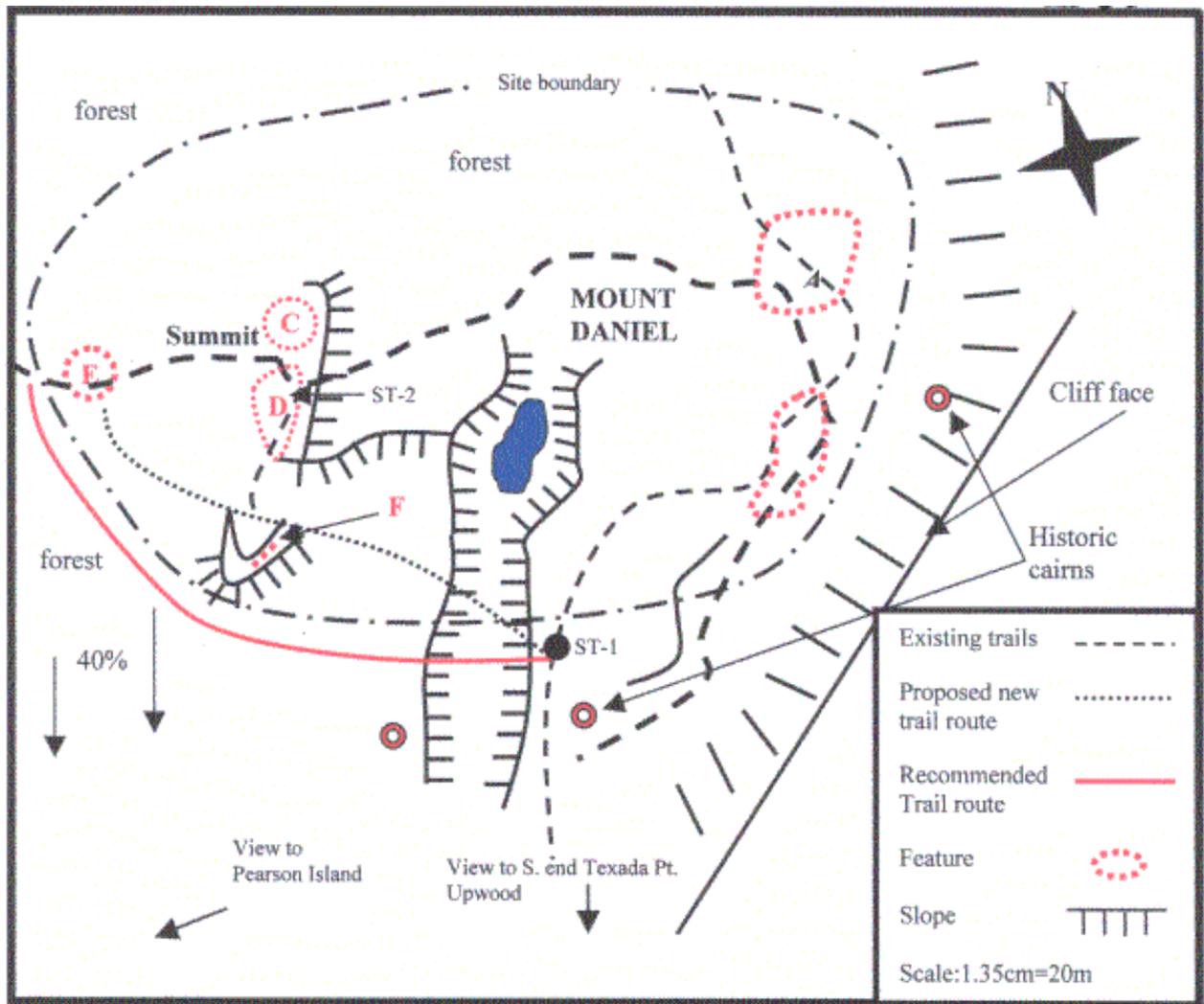


fig 12: Map of site DjSa-10 with location of Features A to F and former and current hiking trails (BC Report 2001-03-061: 15)

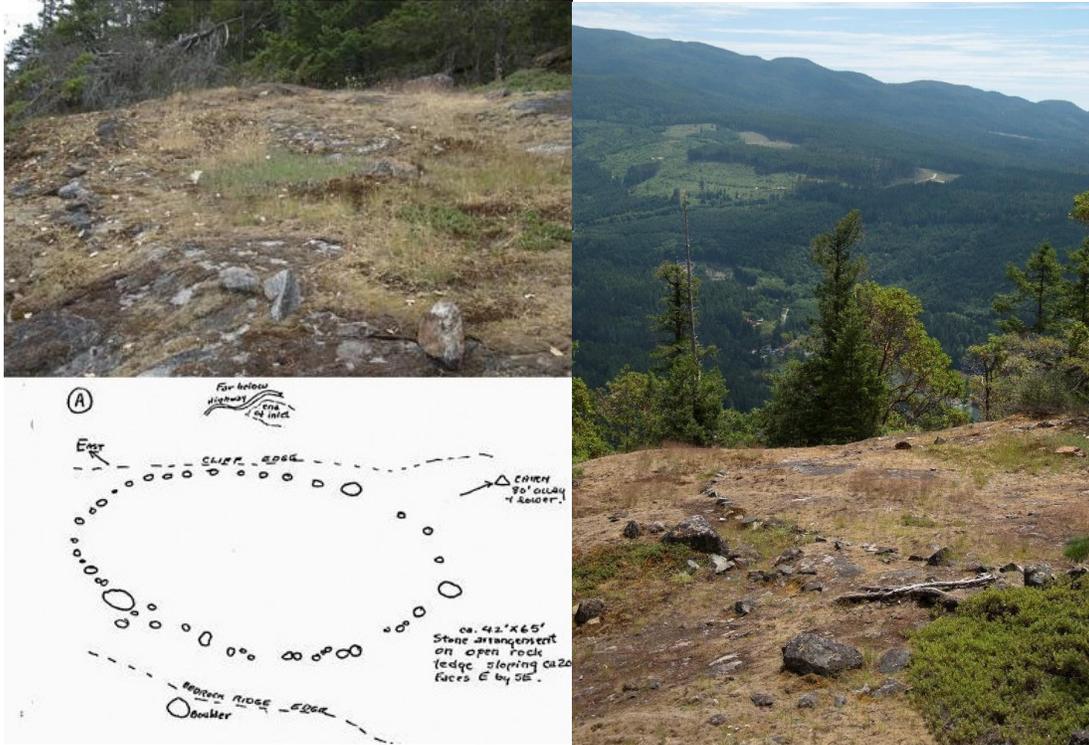


fig 13: Feature A diagram and location (Sketch: BC Report: 1976-007; Photos by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



fig 14: Red Boulder in Center of Feature A (Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)

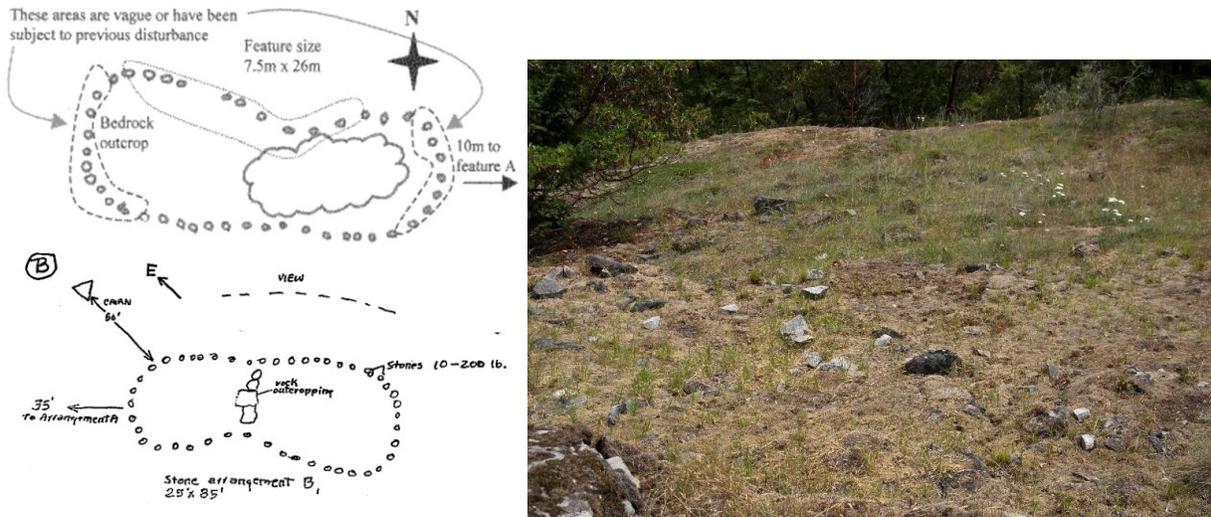


fig 15: Feature B Diagram with disturbances (BC Report 2001-03-061; Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)

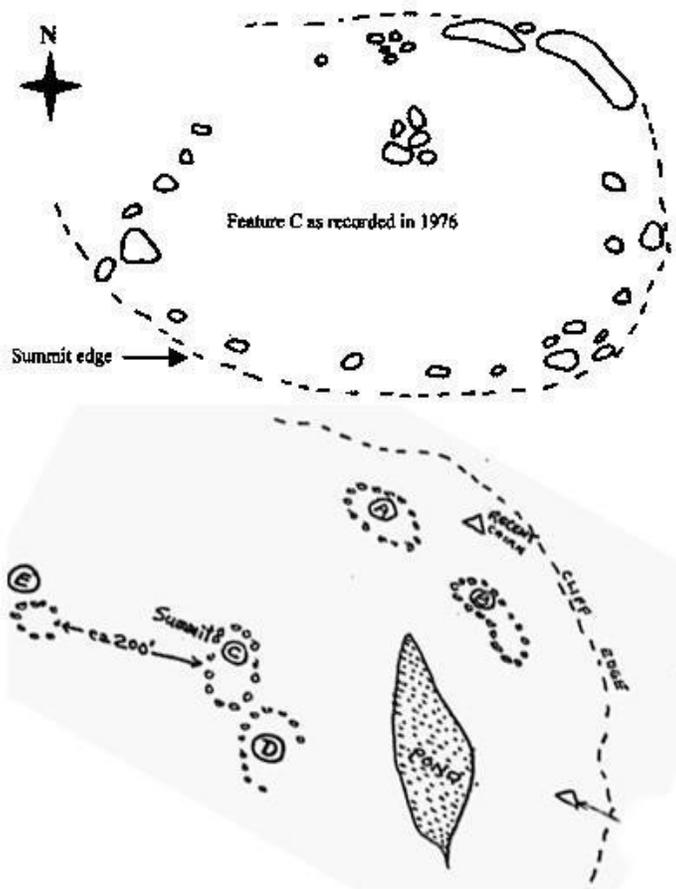


fig 16: Original 1976 sketches of Feature C and Feature C in relation to Features A and B (BC Report: 1976-007; BC Report 2001-03-061)



fig 17: Current state of Feature C (Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)

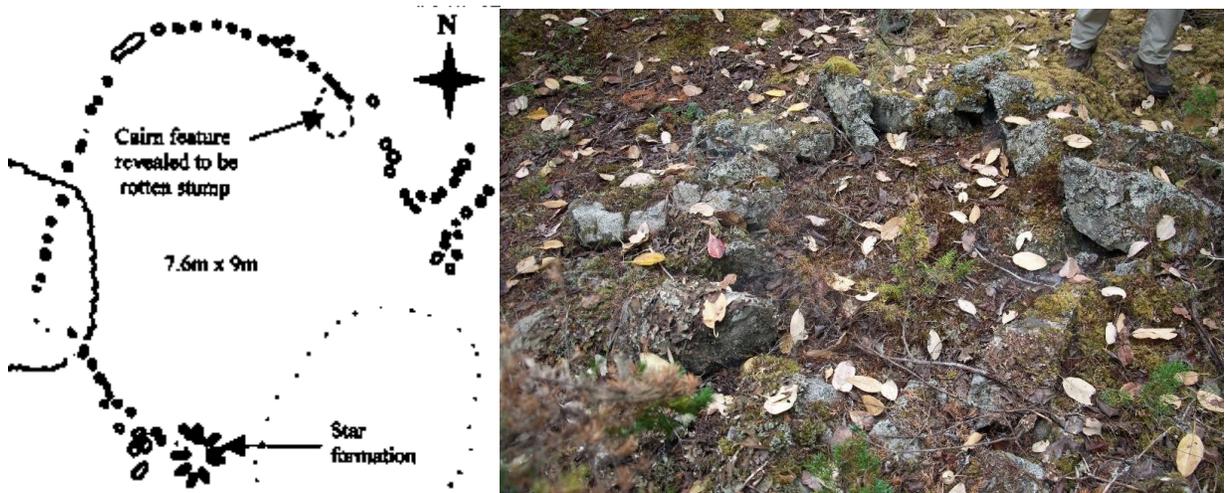
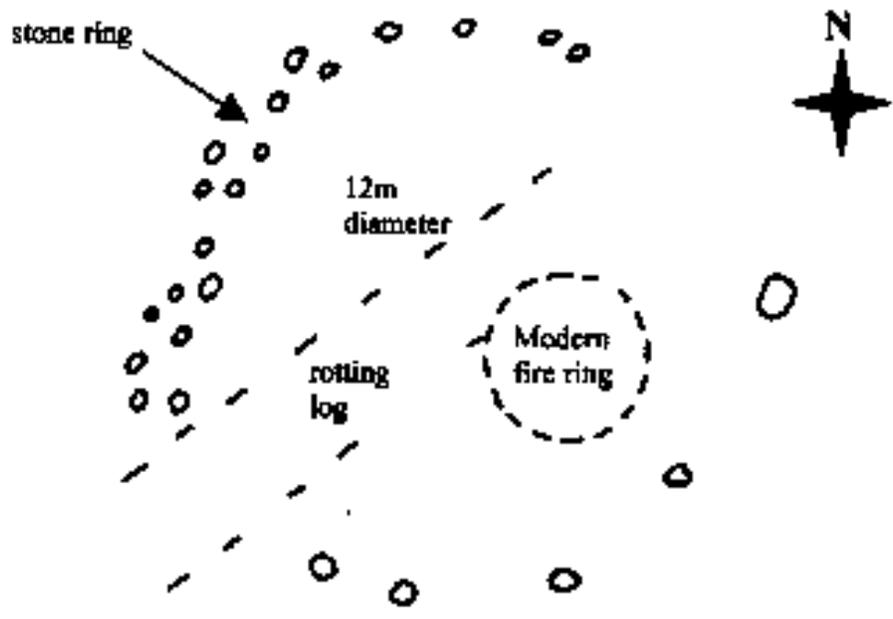


fig 18: Feature D diagram (BC Report: 1976-007). Starburst shape (Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



**fig 19:** Feature E sketch; (BC Report: 1976-007) This Feature is no longer exists; its rocks having been used to create a fire pit (pictured here) (BC Report: 2001-03-061)

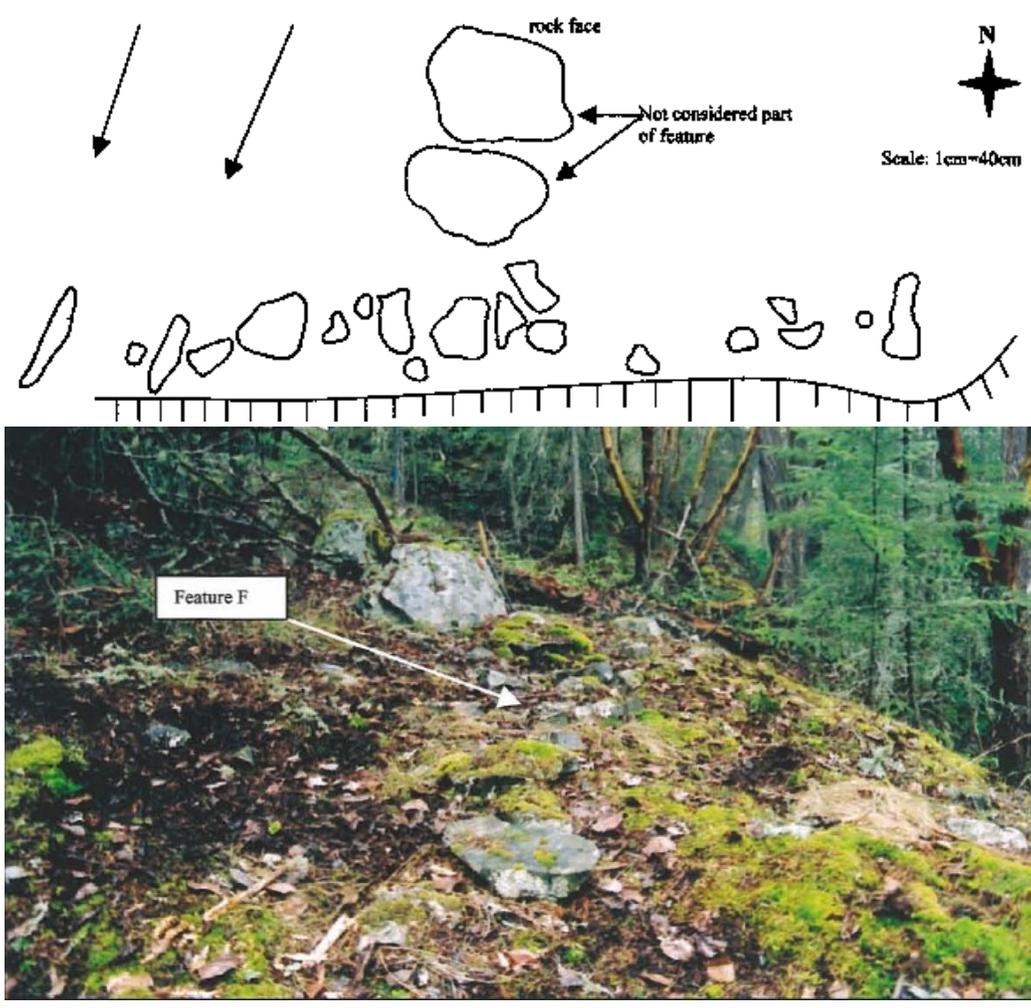


fig 20: Feature F sketch and photograph (BC Report: 2001-03-061)



fig 21: Feature G (In Situ Consulting, 2017)



**fig 22:** Feature H (In Situ Consulting, 2017)



**fig 23:** Examples of other boulder configurations that may be portions of additional Features (Photos by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



**fig 24:** Stonecrop collected from *shelkem*, Stonecrop growing amidst Feature G (Photos by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



**fig 25:** Rattlesnake Plantain near Feature C and D (Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



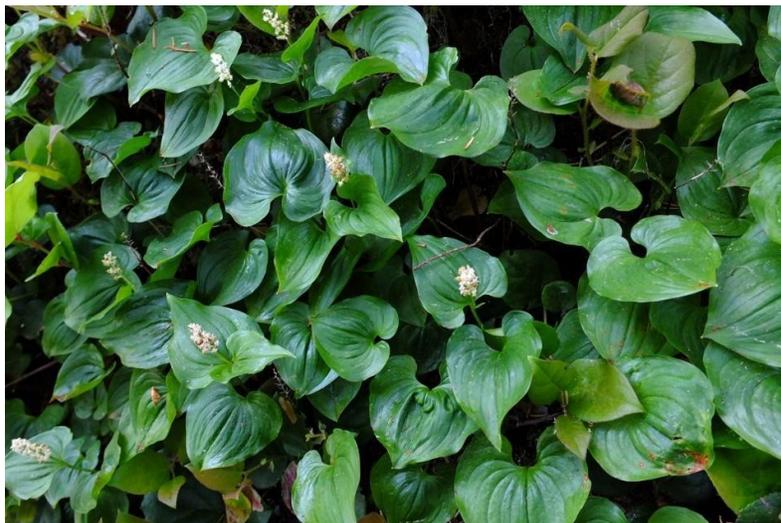
**fig 26:** Pipsissewa or Prince's Pine (PhytoImages.siu.edu: Photo by D.L. Nickrent, 2008)



**fig 27:** Yarrow (PhytoImages.siu.edu: Photo by Janet Sundberg, 2013) Yarrow growing amidst Feature B (Photo by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)



**fig 28:** Common Juniper; (PhytoImages.siu.edu: Photo by D.L Nickrent, 2017)



**fig 29:** False-Lily-of-the-Valley (PhytoImages.siu.edu: Photo by M Costea, 2017)



**fig 30:** Sphagnum Moss growing on Features C and D (Photos by Leah Iselmoe, 2017)

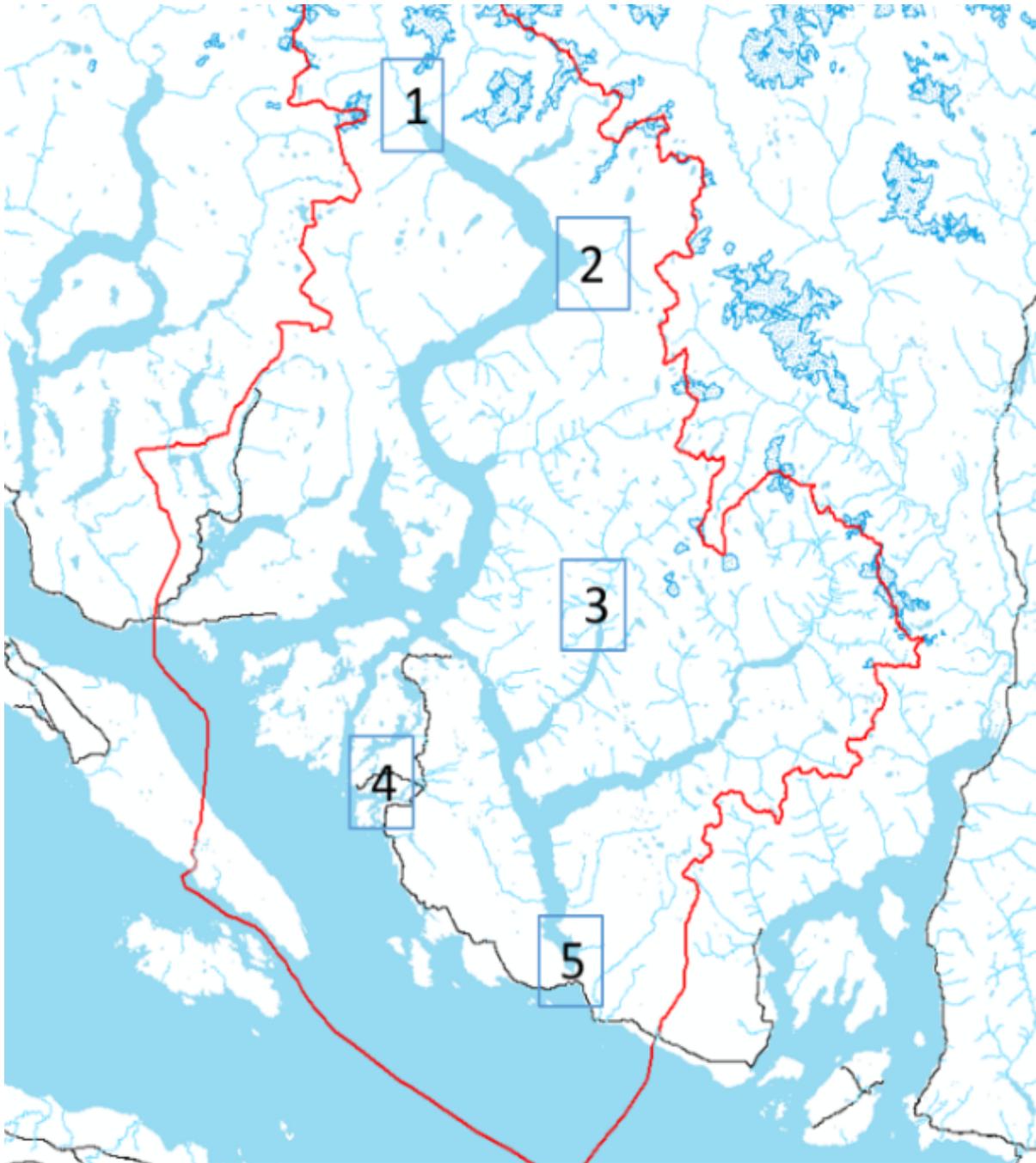


**fig 31:** Small Flowered Alum (PhytoImages.siu.edu: Photo by M. Costea, 2017)

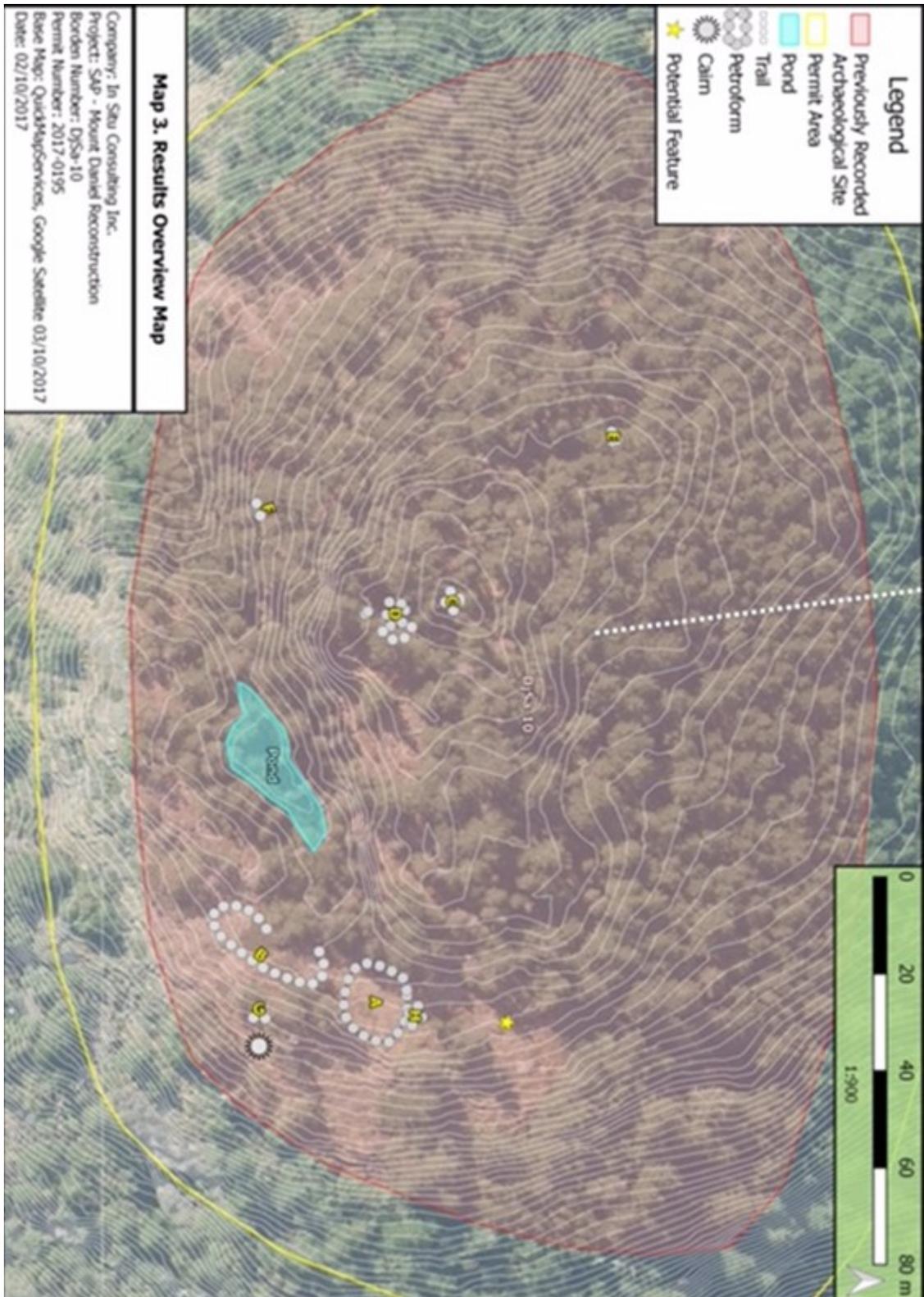
# Maps



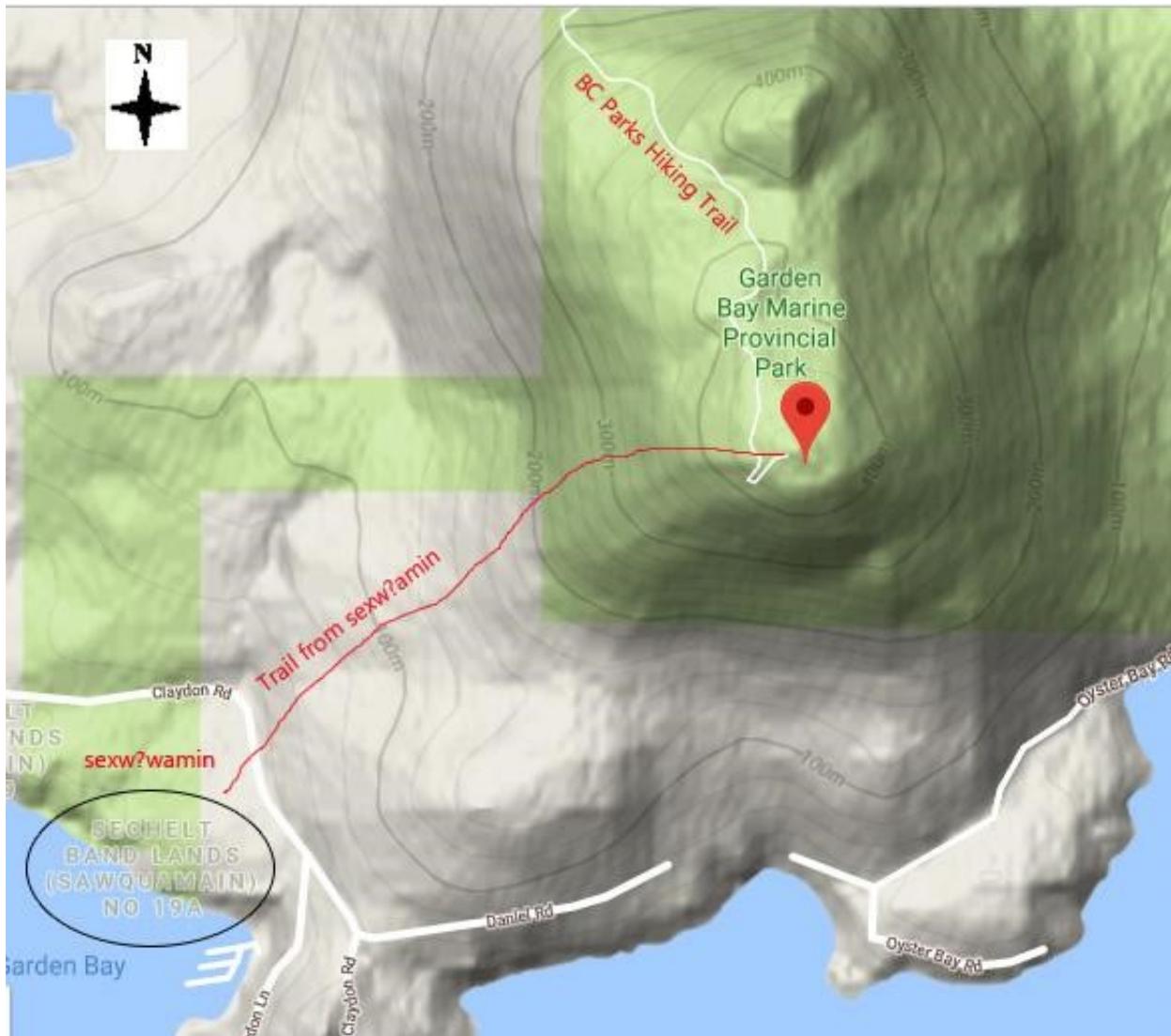
map 1: First Nations People of British Columbia (First Nations People of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, British Columbia. <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm>)



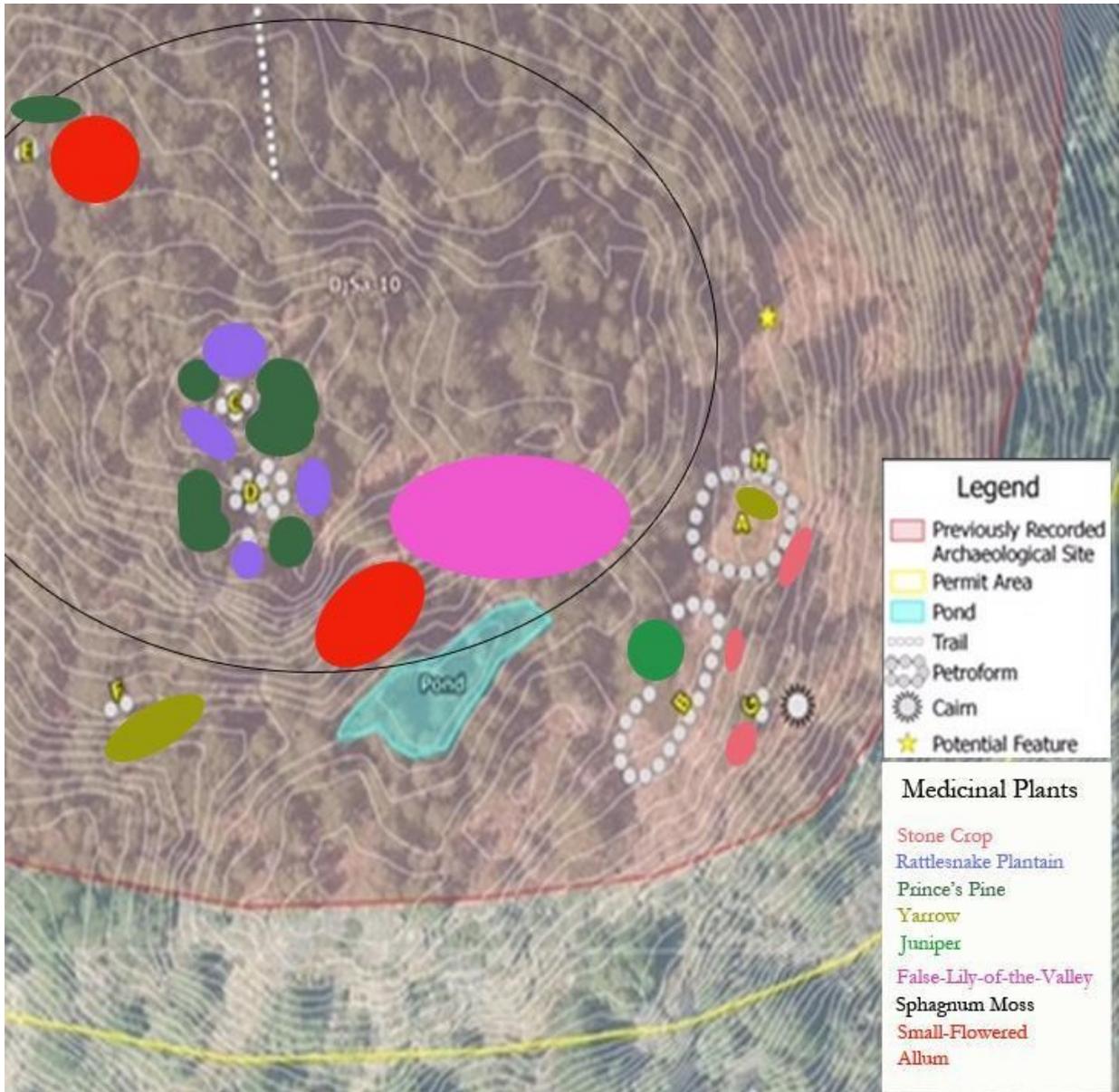
**map 2:** Original shishááh villages: 1. *xenichen* 2. *tuwankw* 3. *kalpilin* 4. *ts'unay* 5. *cha'alitch* (modern Sechelt)  
(Tems Swiya Museum)



**map 3:** Features A to G and cairn location originally recorded by Hill-Tout. (In Situ Consulting Site Map, 2017)



map 4: Topographical Map of *shelkem* with hiking trail and possible original trail from *sexw?amin* (Google Earth)



**map 5:** Locations of Women's Medicinal Plants growing on *shelkem* based on survey (July 2017, October 2018)

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