

For the Love of This Place by Jennifer Smith

This Place. This Place where we live. This Place where we survive. This Place where we thrive. This Place we love. This Place we fight for. This Place we are. This Place where our medicines grow. This Place we practice our traditions. This Place that provides for us. This Place that knows our ancestors' footsteps. This Place where we have suffered. This Place where we come together. This Place where we make art. This Place that inspires art. This Place where ceremony is practiced. This Place where we thrive. This Place where we survive. This Place where we live. This Place.

Recently I was having a conversation with a friend about how special it is to get to live on the land of my Métis ancestors. To know that my ancestors have walked this land, and built a community here. To know that they used the land and waterways of this place in the best ways possible to survive, and hoped the same for future generations. During this discussion both my friend and I talked about the ways we honour our ancestors, and the lives they lived in this place. I honour them by living and working within my community, by loving this place now called Winnipeg, and work and hope it will be a great place for future generations.

I also know that this is a romanticized vision of place, home, and territories. Yes home feels like an easy subject to love. However this place does not resemble the place my ancestors lived. This place was taken from them, the streets are named after the military and business men who claimed this land as their own. There are reminders of the Indigenous history of this territory here and there. Louis Riel being one of the main ones, with statues of him, which are a good reminder of the impact he had on these territories and his people. This summer, the summer of 2019, city hall planted a garden to reflect the medicine wheel, and put up signage with teachings about the medicine wheel. Indigenous artists are creating murals on building all over downtown Winnipeg. The reminders show that we still exist in this place, we use this land and love this land.

For the Love of This Place, is a video program that is being shown in a small park in downtown Winnipeg called Air Canada Park, likely if you are reading this, you have come to the park for the screening, and know that in the last year a collection of public artworks were mounted in this park on Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. Together this grouping of public artworks is called *This Place*, and includes works by Rebecca Belmore & Osvaldo Yero, Kenneth Lavallee, Julie Nagam, Rolande Souliere. The screening, *For the Love of This Place* continues to explore the theme of this place. This place is defined very loosely in the context of the screening program. The artists mainly live in the borders of what is now called Manitoba, however it did not feel right to define this place based on colonial borders. For the context of the screening *This Place* is the place that provided inspiration for the film or video being screened. This park is another marker of the Indigenous presence of this place, and this screening is an opportunity to come together even for an hour and honour this place through the lense of Indigenous filmmakers and video artists. The nine films and videos in order of screening are:

High Altitude by Victoria N. Inglis

Mikomiing by Leonard Sumner
Sweat by Kristin Snowbird
Journey Through Fear by Dennis Jackson
Nikamowin (Song) by Kevin Lee Burton
Water Meets Body by Katherine Boyer
Eight Years in Winnipeg by James Dixon
Heart by Sam Karney
Skate Break by Peatr Thomas

These nine films and videos honour the place that is home for each of the artists, exploring ideas of activism and land protection, food sovereignty, ceremony, living on the land, language, colonization and corporatization of the land, and urban living.

Although place, land and territories is the recurrent theme in each of the films and videos, it is essential to understand the community is an integral part of the love of this place. Each of these artists contribute to their community in various ways. As land and water protectors. Through activism. As artists and performers. As mentors and teachers. As language carriers. In working with youth. By raising up the voices of other Indigenous people. By raising up the voices of 2 spirit youth. Through sharing knowledge. By seeking out traditional knowledge and honouring it.

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