

DIASPORAS ON STOLEN LAND

A decolonial zine made by
BIMPOC for BIMPOC

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This zine was created on the unceded, unsurrendered lands of the Lək'wənən peoples (Esquimalt, Songhees, Chekonein, Chilcowitch, Swengwhung, Kosampsom, Whyomilth, Teechamitsa, and Kakyaaikan) and WSÁNEĆ peoples (W̱JOLELP (Tsartlip), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), and STÁUTW̱ (Tsawout)).

As Black, Indigenous, mixed, and/or people of colour, we can reflect on our own experiences of diaspora, displacement, and/or dispossession and understand that many of us are not guests on these lands. Rather, we are here due to historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism and violence to Indigenous peoples and lands. We have not been directly harmed by colonial violence here, but our homelands and ancestors have been. Leaning into our lineages to cultivate sites of anti-colonial solidarities will aid in the journey towards Indigenous futures.

W E L C O M E !

This is an interactive zine for self-identifying Black, Indigenous, mixed, and people of colour (BIMPOC*) to reflect on our unique decolonial roles in supporting Indigenous sovereignty. This zine created by a collective of diasporic settlers, migrants, and displaced peoples who are living (or have lived on) the unceded and unsurrendered territories of the Lək̓wəŋən and WSÁNEĆ peoples. Our zine uses community collaboration, art, and reflection as a means to build & deepen our solidarities with Coast Salish communities.

"My ancestors would be turning in their graves for me to be here and not recognize how colonialism is attempting to destroy Indigenous peoples here, just like it did in our homelands. As settlers of colour, we may not be the direct targets of colonialism in this place. But we have been. We can honor our ancestors - we can heal ourselves and our ancestral line - by fighting colonialism here and now."

- Nic Wayara & Lala Matthen

"Episode 25: Take What's Mine", Seen [podcast]

*We use BIMPOC rather than BMPOC in recognition of internally displaced Indigenous folks, Indigenous peoples from lands beyond Turtle Island (i.e. Afro-Indigenous folks).

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION & ART NIGHT

Before creating this zine, we held a community discussion and art night through the Students' Open Forum Against Racism (SOFAR). There were 14 BIMPOC folks who supported/co-authored this zine, with a focus on the following topics:

- (1) The mosaic of BIMPOC identities and our relationships/responsibilities as settlers, forcibly displaced peoples, migrants, uninvited guests, and/or as guests on Coast Salish shores;
- (2) The ways we are harmed by and benefit from settler colonialism and ways to unsettle;
- (3) How we can heal and honour our ancestral lines by collectively working towards Indigenous liberation.

The next few pages of this zine are spaces for BIMPOC to scribble, draw, and reflect on these topics. As well, we are excited to present 6 pieces of art creations and reflections contributed by BIMPOC folks that attended the discussion night.

We recognize that each person brings a unique story of migration and diaspora. Our hope is that this zine allows you to feel safe to reflect, learn, and heal as we continue the journey towards Indigenous sovereignty, colonial abolition, and collective liberation.

" WHERE ARE YOU FROM ? "

Before entering into our discussion and art night, we took the time to each introduce how we came to Lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ shores and lands as well as shared our stories of diaspora, displacement, and dispossession.

Providing our lineage and stories of migration created a site for our ancestors to meet one another. It also allowed us to see the uniqueness of each person's relationship place, space, and belonging - some of us as settlers or settler-migrants, and others as forcibly displanted peoples and uninvited guests.

We invite you to use this space to help ground your journey through this zine in a self-location. What is your ancestry? What lands did you grow up on, and whose lands do you currently reside on? What is your relationship to colonialism?

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Question 1:

What complexities come up for you when defining your own responsibilities as a person in diaspora living on stolen land?

How might relationships to settler colonialism differ when considering voluntary vs. forced migration?

(i.e., forcibly disiplanted peoples/decendants of the African diaspora, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced Indigenous peoples, Indigenous peoples from territories outside of Turtle Island, descendants of racialized labourers (i.e CPR)).

Some community reflections:

Coming to terms that our settler privilege & racial oppression exist at the same time

Do we have a different decolonial role as 2nd & 3rd generations if we weren't directly displaced?

Thinking about consent when coming to lands that aren't ours... What brought our ancestors here? Was it forced?

YOUR REFLECTIONS

What complexities come up for you when defining your own responsibilities as a person in diaspora living on stolen land? How might relationships to settler colonialism differ when considering voluntary vs. forced migration?

Question 2:

Where might you perpetuate colonial processes in your day to day practices?

How do you practice decolonization/unsettling?

Some community reflections:

Unsettling: providing self locations when introducing ourselves in anti-colonial spaces; taking time to reflect independently & in our relationships

How do we participate in colonial institutions? What ways can we opt out? What ways are we withheld of an ability to opt out?

Having to take part in colonial institutions (i.e. university) to be able to get a living wage job/survive capitalism

YOUR REFLECTIONS

How might you perpetuate colonial processes in your day to day practices?

How do you practice decolonization/unsettling?

Question 3:

Diasporas are rich, vibrant, and complex...

How might we reconcile and heal our own diasporic relations through centering Indigenous liberation and self-determination here and now, and how would this radically transform our perceptions of the land on which we live?

Some community reflections:



"Those who inherit war and colonialism cannot change the past, but what we can change is how we respond to that past, as well as how we choose to live the present." -Rita Wong

Healing as diaspora; healing our own intergenerational traumas...our responsibility to heal while doing this work is radical and transformative

Centering decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty through solidarity builds community and creates bound liberations against white supremacy

YOUR REFLECTIONS

How might we reconcile and heal our own diasporic relations through centering Indigenous liberation and self-determination here and now, & how would this radically transform our perceptions of the land on which we live?

D I A S P O R A S O N
S T O L E N L A N D A R T
S U B M I S S I O N S



I am currently residing on the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lək̲wənən peoples, but mostly grew up in the Okanagan nation on the lands of the Syilx people. My mother's ancestors came from the Fukien province in China, but she grew up in Pangasinan (a province in the Philippines) and immigrated to Canada before I was born. My dad's ancestry traces back to Iceland mostly but also other Western European countries.



Grappling with the complexities of a diasporic identity on stolen land, I always return to my body. What privileges do I carry in this body? What kinds of spaces do I have access to? Every time someone tells me that my English is good or asks me where I'm from, I'm reminded that I don't belong here—that this space isn't made for me—and that because my nose is a little more flat and my skin a little more warm and my eyes a little more angled that I'll never belong here. And yet I carry whiteness with me every day—in my tongue, my body language, my form of dress. Unbelonging, but blending. To blend is to have access to this space and to this land—access to something that has been stolen, through violent dispossession and genocide. To blend is also to conform to whiteness, and to make up the fabric of Canada's multiculturalism myth—a story that Canada tells itself, and the world, to veil its foundations of genocide, colonialism, and racism. To blend is also a loss of my mother's tongue, and of my ancestor's ways of being.

How do I reconcile this access with this loss?

The Canadian state uses our bodies—we blend, conform, and assimilate, and they are able to uphold the false idea that they're tolerant, accepting, and multicultural. To reclaim our bodies is to resist their place in Canada's story, and to resist that they exist solely for capitalist productivity. My ancestors' memories, traumas, and joys are also living in this body. This body is a space of healing, liberation, and transformation. My Ama took care of five children. My mother took care of two, on her own and in a country far from home. When we heal, and take care of our bodies, we're doing the work that our ancestors didn't have capacity for. When we heal, we liberate our bodies. This is a collective process—of grieving, and of healing. To be safe to grieve and heal here is to benefit from ongoing dispossession. So as we heal, we also support Indigenous healing—in real material ways. I'm still learning to do this, and it's an ongoing process. But our liberations are necessarily interwoven. One does not exist without the other. So we find home, peace, and healing in our bodies—together.



Knowing the conditions
of my own present

so as to unsettle
and embody a
deeper decolonial
practice as I walk
on these stolen
lands

grounding myself
fully in what I
bring ashore as
a mixed-race Chinese/
European settler

so as to honour my
ancestry & my
grandparents' immigration
story.

- Dayna Eldridge

Ashley | she/they

I was born on the traditional territories of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation and grew up in Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut’ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation (region III). I come from a mixed background, my mother being Filipino and my father being Canadian. My mother is from Cabio, Neuve Ecija Philippines and came to Canada so that her future kids could have a better life. My father is from Canada with ancestry from Russia, Germany, and Norway. Coming from a mixed background I struggled with my identity not knowing where I really belonged. My white friends would refer to me as the ‘Asian’ friend and my Asian friends labelled me as the ‘white’ friend. I grew up feeling as though I had to pick a side, am I more white? Or am I more Asian? It has not been until recently that I have come to terms that there are no sides. I am free to be both and free to live comfortably with both identities not being more than the other.



My first tattoo says “Mahalagang buhay” meaning precious life. Along with sampaguita the traditional flowers of the Philippines.

YOU CAN'T POEM YOUR WAY OUT OF A COLONIAL STATE

but tread lightly

I

Airport rituals: Place your boots in the tray.
Then on the altar of Canada, your electronics.
Then your carry-on. Then your keys.

Canada: A question, an answer and a stamp later
there is land beneath my feet. Land beneath feet
and oil beneath the land. Now we pause for breath.

Breath: See, the poem cannot begin.
The poet has brought no gifts for the Elders.
Nothing but a mouthful of doubt.

II

Doubt: The mouthful of doubt was stories once
before the throat gave way. Each story a cautionary tale
of wandering where you're not wanted.

Throat: A chorus that only repeats
here on this island slowly shoaling
am I invited / am I invited / am I invited

III

Chorus: You can't poem your way out
of a colonial state. No sincerity of metaphor
brings land. No line break brings justice.

IV

Justice: Who are you protecting?
Everything I learnt about land
I learnt here. I learnt screaming.

Here: What do the fleeing know
of land? I am given the water song
with all its meandering.

Given: NO LAND BENEATH YOUR FEET
AND NO CANADIAN PIPE DREAM.
Outside the Leg., a chorus of the body.

Chorus: You can't poem your way out
of a colonial state. No sincerity of metaphor
brings land. No line break brings justice.

But I (forgive me) tread lightly. I tread lightly.



Brett | he/him

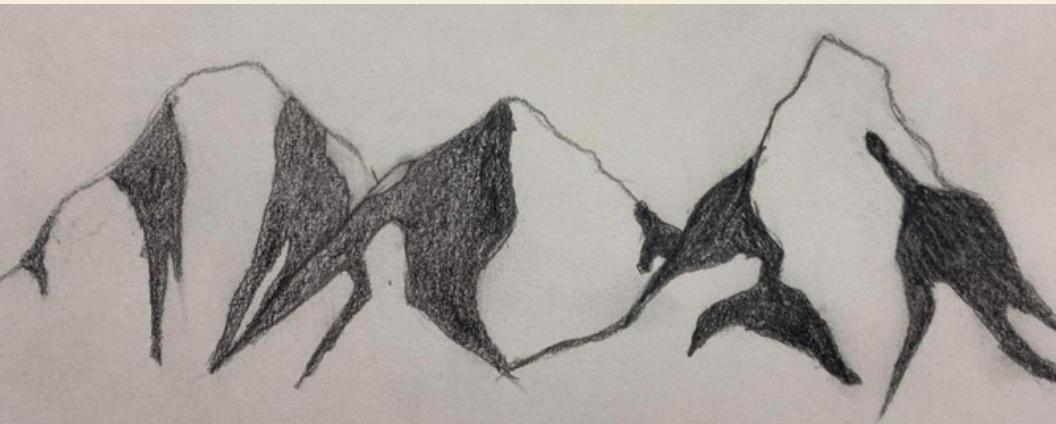
I was born in Steinbach, Manitoba and grew up on the territories of the Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation (region III). I guess I never gave any thought as to what my identity is. Growing up, I always assumed I was white, and I never really questioned it. My dad is white, and my mother is half indigenous. My father's family comes mostly from Russia and Germany, and my mother's family also comes from Europe. But her mother is an indigenous woman from Pine Creek First Nation, which is located on the shores of Lake Winnipegosis, Manitoba.



I was never taught any indigenous cultural things growing up but was handed down plenty of traditions from my other grandparents. And as it turns out, my grandmother on my mother's side had been adopted by a white family at a young age. A lot of the details are unknown to me, but I believe this to be the reason that not a single tradition from my grandmothers' family has been passed down to neither my mom, or myself and my brothers. It upsets and hurts me to know that so much has been lost in the span of just one generation. How do I get these traditions back? Will I be able to find these traditions when my grandmother has lost them? There is so much to learn and unlearn in these spaces.

I feel overwhelmed. Where do I start? How do I start? These spaces have not been made to help guide me. Decolonizing spaces was never taught to me or even known to me.

Sitting in these thoughts have been hard for me as I try to connect to my roots.



حنين الغباري

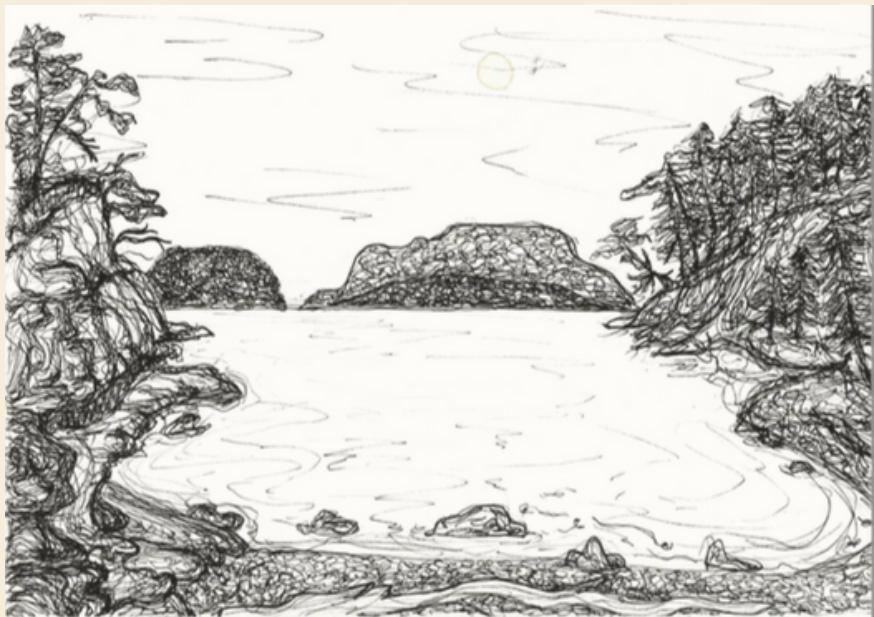
Haneen Ghebari | they/them, she/her

I am a second generation descendant of Palestinian and Lebanese refugees, both of whom were directly displaced by militarized violence enacted by settler-colonial state of Israel. I grew up on the territories of the Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation (region III), and am grateful to be learning and living on the territories of the Lək̓wənən and WSÁNEĆ peoples.

I often dream of what the reunification of land would be like for me one day, and how I can use my lived experience of colonial dispossession to support the collective liberation of all colonized and displaced peoples.

While creating art for this zine, I kept reflecting on Franz Fanon's quote:

"For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity."



(a drawing from the perspective of a calm, quiet, lush meadow looking out to the cove near TEKTEKSEN (east point of "Saturna Island")

Diaspora is in my name. "Haneen" is well-known Palestinian feeling of nostalgia and memories of a place that you have never been to. Yet this is not something that is held by Palestinians alone. It is a feeling that many colonized and displaced communities know - a feeling that is written in our hearts, our bones, our blood. It is a feeling about what was lost, and what you will never know. It is the feeling that you get when you imagine what it will be like to be reunited with land. For me, Haneen is a feeling of wonder. I wonder what it would be like to be on my ancestral lands. The texture of the soil, the sound of the breeze through the olive



trees. I wonder what it would feel like to graze my hands along beds of lentils and bulgur. I wonder how ma'amoul would melt on my tongue. I wonder if the moon flows differently in the sky, and if the sun sits differently on my skin. I wonder what the mountains and rivers and oceans would say if they knew I was listening. I wonder what I would respond if I could speak my mother's tongue.

the prayers of your ancestors
are carved into your hands



إِن شاء اللَّهُ

You can find them there.





I had complex relationship with my identity as I didn't understand that I was Palestinian - let alone what Palestine was - until I was 18. For a long time I assumed my paternal side was Jordanian, but now I know that's only because they fled Palestine during the 1948 War/ Nakba (Arabic for "catastrophe"). It is also influenced by the common narrative of first generation immigrant parents wanting their children to embrace colonial "Canadian" identities. I've spent early adulthood learning more about the connections between Palestine and Turtle Island; how settler-colonialism is harming our lands. This process has heightened my yearning for (be)longing for a home, and also taught me that there is no Palestinian liberation without Indigenous and Black liberation.

T H A N K Y O U & O U R H O P E S

Thank you so much for engaging with this zine
and sharing space with us!

We hope this zine will serve as a decolonial intervention in community and spark reflection and engagement with centering Indigenous liberation and self-determination on these lands in the here and now.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES PLEASE
VISIT...

<https://diasporasonstolenland.github.io/>