

Healing Foundation published *Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential Schools*, and invited book clubs across the country to read and discuss the book. Documentary films such as *Where the Spirit Lives* (1989), *Kuper Island: Return to the Healing Circle* (1997), and *Muffins for Granny* (2008), as well as docu-dramas such as *We Were Children* (2012), all serve to educate Canadians and the wider world about the residential school experience, using the power of sound and images. Intergenerational Survivor Georgina Lightning was the first Indigenous woman in North America to direct a full-length feature film, *Older Than America* (2008). Kevin Loring's stage play, *Where the Blood Mixes*, won the Governor General's award for literary drama in 2009. It combines drama and humour to tell the stories of three Survivors living in the aftermath of their residential school experiences.

Art can be powerful and provocative. Through their work, Indigenous artists seek to resist and challenge the cultural understandings of settler-dominated versions of Canada's past and its present reality. Sharing intercultural dialogue about history, responsibility, and transformation through the arts is potentially healing and transformative for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.<sup>208</sup> Yet, art does not always cross this cultural divide, and neither does it have to in order to have a high impact. Acts of resistance sometimes take place in "irreconcilable spaces" where artists choose to keep their residential school experiences private or share them only with other Aboriginal people.<sup>209</sup> This is also essential to individual and collective reclaiming of identity, culture, and community memory.

The Commission notes that the use of creative arts in community workshops promotes healing for Survivors, their families, and the whole community through the recovery of cultural traditions. In conducting surveys of 103 community-based healing projects, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) found that 80% of those projects included cultural activities and traditional healing interventions. These included Elders' teachings, storytelling and traditional knowledge, language programs, land-based activities, feasts and powwows; and learning traditional art forms, harvesting medicines, and drumming, singing, and dancing. The AHF report observed,

A notable component of successful healing programs was their diversity—interventions were blended and combined to create holistic programs that met the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of participants. Not surprisingly, arts-based interventions were included in many cultural activities (drum making, beading, singing, and drumming) as well as in therapeutic healing (art therapy and psychodrama).<sup>210</sup>

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation's findings make clear that creative art practices are highly effective in reconnecting Survivors and their families to their cultures, languages, and communities. In our view, this confirms yet again that funding for community-based healing projects is an urgent priority for Aboriginal communities.

Art exhibits have played a particularly powerful role in the process of healing and reconciliation. In 2009, nationally acclaimed Anishinaabe artist Robert Houle, who attended the