

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Artist Interviews continued

Star Crop Eared Wolf

Star Crop Eared Wolf was born in Lethbridge and lives on the Blood Reserve outside the city. She is a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy/Kainai Tribe. Star began drawing and painting as a child and then, influenced by her father's work in the medium, began working with photography when she was fifteen years old. While she took basic art studies in High School, she was more interested in history and photography as a form of documentation and so continued with this when she attended university. In June of 2017 she graduated from the University of Lethbridge with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art History/Museum Studies and Native American Art.



Star Crop Eared Wolf
ssksinima'tstohki (Teachers) #1, 2018
Photograph
Private collection

Her focus during university was on the repatriation of Blackfoot artifacts from museums but she also studied photography in order to use this medium as a voice to express her ideas concerning the environment and cultural stereotypes.

Star is inspired in her work by the simple need to create and to share what she sees with the world. For her, artistic expression is *...like I'm giving a gift to others*. In her photographic work she focuses on documentation, using photographs as a means of documenting her people as she sees them rather than as they have been seen by outsiders. She also enjoys the freedom of photography which allows the artist to take a photograph and then manipulate it. As she expresses it, *...there's so much one can keep doing to a photo*. Finally, Star finds that there is a 'healing aspect' to the art of photography. The medium demands that the artist has to go out into the world to take their photos and this really makes one notice the world and the beauty and interest in everything.

Much of Star's work involves her community and she finds a great deal of inspiration in her community. As she states

I like to capture the true essence of what's going on at this time.

For her works included in the exhibition [Aakí isskská'takssin \(Woman - thought\)](#) Star focused on different traditional practices that are still being pursued and are being passed on to younger generations. This is seen in such images as a father and son tanning hides or a grandmother showing her grand-daughter how to bead. Her photographs express the moment when this traditional knowledge is being passed on through story and lived experience. Through these images Star wants the viewer to see that such practices are still being passed on: that Indigenous people are a real people and not a vanishing race and are still here, thriving, and practicing their traditions. As described by the artist:

These aren't staged photos. We're not mascots or princesses...we're not buckskin and feathers. We're a real people and a way of thinking and living.