



Artist:

Lana Whiskeyjack



As an artist, I listened, learned, witnessed and responded through this painting.

In PISISKAPAHTAM (to notice and observe or watch) the centre circle, represents a lens in which the viewer becomes a witness, shares the relationship of ayisiniwak (beings of this land) continues to have with Mother Earth since prior to Treaties and colonization.

The tipi belonged to the woman, the mothers and grandmothers – the home fires of family, community and Nation. The tipi reflects the leadership position women had within their communities prior to the Indian Act which removed women from their traditional roles of governance, justice, education, health and nurturers of kinship. The Indian Act is one of the most racist systemic laws that governed all levels of ayisiniwak that created the rippling influence of oppressive and violent treatment of ayisiniwak within the growth of Edmonton, which is reflected in the black and white image.

At the community engagement event, I heard many ayisiniwak community members share their

stories that as the city grew, so did the poverty and mistreatment of many ayisiniwak by the Edmonton leadership and community members.

Between each circle is sweetgrass to represent the prayers of our ancestors to our current Elders and ceremonial leaders. The sweetgrass also represents the Law of Kindness since we can cut, walk, and stamp on grass and still it grows and nurtures our lands.

The final layer is the collective vision the ayisiniwak community members shared as “City as Listener”, the need to learn and/or remember where they come from; they are Treaty people too, with roles and responsibilities to ayisiniwak and the lands that the Treaties were signed in agreement to be shared.

The Laws of this land include Kindness, Truth, Courage, and Sharing. These Laws are beautiful principles that can guide the City’s role as Listener and build good relations.

