

Question and Answer Summary
Mapping the Moment: A Visioning Journey
with Carlene August & FPCC Coaching and Arts Team
November 6, 2025

Q: The session encouraged artists to envision beyond current limits. Given the historical context of arts and language suppression, how does the act of envisioning a creative future function as an intentional healing step to counter intergenerational trauma?

Glenn: That's a challenging question, and there can be multiple answers because everyone has unique needs. Visioning can serve as a healing step. If you're feeling heavy or facing challenges and you can recognize that while creating that, that gives you the opportunity to work through them and bring resolution to trauma or whatever your needs healing needs. I'm no counsellor, but I'm old enough to have learned a few things along the way. In envisioning, you see the successes and challenges along the way and the opportunity to create the map allows you to see them, address any challenges and can help you take the next step.

Arlene: Luk wil t'oyaxsut nüün. Thank you so much, Glenn. I feel like you really covered that the answer will be unique to everyone. For me, visioning opened an opportunity to imagine the best-case scenario so that when I ran into challenges or barriers, I could still feel confident knowing I have a bigger vision. This challenge or barrier might just be one thing I'm working through now. I can come back to it later, or not at all, and that's okay. Visioning can mean different things for different people.

Navigating intergenerational trauma is big and challenging work, and we're here to support your pathway through that. However, as Glenn mentioned, our expertise is not in counseling. Our role is to provide tools to help you move toward your goals for your arts practice and connect you with resources.

Q: My art does not belong to any stylistic tradition. Although I am Heiltsuk and Nisga'a, is it okay to grow into my own style?

COMMITTED TO THE REVITALIZATION OF B.C. FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES, ARTS, CULTURES AND HERITAGE

Participant shared their personal story of growing up without their First Nations culture since their parents attended Residential School. They elaborated on their art style, their desire to support others in their connection to their identity through art and their feelings around what is right or wrong in creating art.

Arlene: Thank you for sharing your story. You're not alone in feeling this way. Stay true to your story—it's okay for your expression to come out. Staying true to who you are is important for your creative spirit, for that process to happen naturally. In terms of that affirmation you're looking for, I'd recommend finding pathways to consulting with knowledge holders from your ancestral lands when possible. I know that can be challenging, and there are barriers for that too, and it might not happen right away. It may take time, but in keeping your heart open to consulting with knowledge holders sometimes a pathway will open up and you'll be able to have those conversations.

In the meantime, keep creating—whether it's oil paintings, murals, music, or any form that speaks to you. We live in a time with access to so many tools for expression, whether that's oil painting on wood, or murals on the side of a concrete wall, or being in a punk rock band. As storytellers, when those stories are surfacing in us, it's okay to experiment and explore with the tools that are available to us now. That's what I would offer to you. A Semiahmoo Hereditary Chief, I'm so grateful to Bernard Charles, he once told me: "take what works for you from what I've shared and leave the rest behind."

Carlene: Thank you for sharing how you're feeling and where you're coming from. Your identity is part of your journey. You come from Nisga'a and Heiltsuk, and you're representing two different nations—that's okay. It's okay to embrace your identity. Maybe start by having conversations with relatives from each Nation, sharing a little more each time. Set intentions to make connections if you can. It may be hard and won't happen overnight—it takes time to build that.

Your identity is important, and it's okay to feel uncomfortable while learning who you are. Embrace it and put it into your art; that expression is healing. It shows who you are and where you come from. Keep living in your identity and expressing it through your art. Remind yourself that you're not an imposter—you're on a journey, learning more about yourself. We all start somewhere, and it takes time to build knowledge alongside talent.

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Glenn: As you were talking, I was looking at my sweater. A cousin knit it for me 10–12 years ago. It's considered a Cowichan sweater, and you can tell it comes from a particular person because of the patterns they use to identify themselves. As a child, I remember sweaters my late Mom and Grandma talked about—they could identify knitters by symbols, patterns, or styles. That can be you. Of course, you might use styles from Nisga'a or Heiltsuk, or anywhere along the coast. The so-called Coast Salish form of art is different from other coastal forms and you can identify it readily.

There must be uniqueness in your art—maybe particular colors you always use. In our territory, some families used specific colors for sweaters if you're familiar with the area, like green and purple. I can see Carlene smiling, because she knows exactly, being from the birthplace of the sweaters. So, take that as a challenge: what do you want to embrace and display? Particular colours, patterns, or forms from your territory—make it your own.