

Octopus Journal Submission
By: Tamara Aisake (a.k.a Hanisaka)

Tauna'i: to join together



This painting is about love and healing through community. This piece depicts two spiral waves crashing together. The spiral being an ancient land-based symbol of many meanings. For myself, I refer to it as the Fibonacci sequence or *momoa* in Rotuman (my indigenous language), context depending. People make their own meaning out of this symbol; it occurs frequently in nature from the quantum-micro to the cosmic-macro level. For this painting, it represents new beginnings coming together, healing through water, riding the waves of life as we collectively heal the universal web.

With 82 fingerprints from the children of our community with 133 additional dots added to a total of 215. The orange dots and prints represent the 215 children's remains recovered at an unmarked mass grave at the Tk'emlúps Indian Residential School in the North-West Interior area of Turtle Island (Aka Kamloops, British Columbia). This is one of 146 Indian residential schools with more sites to be investigated. The painting was designed with more space to add dots as the numbers will inevitably rise in the coming times. Therefore, the healing of this painting is ongoing.

**Edit: since gifting the painting, the numbers have drastically risen.*

It is through the water that we exist, we heal, we discover, and we grow. While working on this painting, my nieces and I burned orange candles, picked orange wild poppy, and chanted traditional songs for healing, reverence, and grief for children stolen by war. Experiences of genocide and colonization are complex, multigenerational, shared, and unique to everyone. It is overwhelming like a wave of pain that drowns us. But so is the wave of collective healing and grieving we share, like cooling water on spiritual burns. Let the waves crash down and break apart the false consciousness that has been forcefully indoctrinated into us. Let the water and waves heal, massaging out the pain and filling our souls with ancestral mana as we heal our DNA and spirits.

The heart shape of the two waves represents the union between a First Nations matriarch and a Pasifika patriarch. Such unions of indigenous peoples between Turtle Island and Te Moana (the Pacific Ocean) are ancient. Our peoples have been connected with relationships and interwoven stories passed down for generations (i.e.: Kanaka peoples on Turtle Island). Therefore, these modern unions of our cultures represent a massive victory for indigenous revitalization and indicates resurgence. Happy, loving, and robust indigenous families is an act of bold and radical resilience in the face of genocide. Having a blended Turtle Island and Te Moana community highlights a massive new beginning of healing and regenerating ancient knowledge together.

We grieve for our ancestors, our survivors, our children that were stolen by colonization. And together we reconnect to our ancestors, heal our survivors, and produce loving, protected and sustainable communities.

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