

Statement of Purpose

As a citizen of the Tuscarora Nation, I realize that the future is located in our relationship to technology and I would like to help close the digital divide in Indigenous communities. It is my goal to help transform Indigenous thought in the digital media space as interactive media based art. I am committed to experimentation through critical play and the incorporation of Indigenous cultural content in this work. I'm influenced by the puzzle-platformer Iñupiaq game, *Never Alone*, digital videos like computer animator and artist Joseph Erb's black and red graphic history of Standing Rock, "*Mni Wiconi / Water Is Life*," Elizabeth LaPensée's sidescroller game *Thunderbird Strike* and Skawennati's first person platform game *Otsi: Rise of the Kanien'kehá:ka Legends*. My work has gained some traction based on interest expressed from curators with the National Museum of the American Indian, who are interested in including it in an upcoming exhibition on Indigenous gaming and interactive play.

Two examples of my research interest are best represented in the following examples. *TUSCARORA MOBILE APPLICATION* (2015-16) is based on an on-line source titled, *AppFurnace*. The content of this locative media is based on documentation of citizens of the Tuscarora Nation that had a relationship to spearing for sturgeon in the Niagara River. An assemblage of photographs, video, and audio documentation established the text of this work. Under the direction of Professor Rueb, I became familiar with locative media, sourcing applications for rapid prototyping and how to integrate raw documentation into a communications tool to create a memoryscape along the Niagara River through a mobile app. Another example of the integration of digital media and cultural content is encapsulated in an LED Voice-Responsive Pendant, or *WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY* (2015). Historically, Indigenous knowledge was primarily transmitted through oration or the voice. This piece acknowledges this but updates it with the use of an *Arduino* programming language embedded in a wearable (Turtle Shell) electronic platform that receives data from a tiny microphone translating the audio decibels into digital signals that light up the LED sequence when activated by voices.

I am interested in a teaching assistantship while pursuing a MFA, developing my research skills and media art practice. My areas of expertise are based on familiarity with digital technology with varying degrees of mastery. Perhaps the most important skill I have learned is how to problem solve in a consistently changing environment of media and digital technology. I have been exposed and worked with a variety of programs, but am also proficient at generating content with photography, video, studio lighting and animation based on the ability to draw. I know my way around professional lighting scenarios for still life and on-side video and photographic shoots. I am familiar with *Adobe After Effects, Flash, Premiere, Illustrator and Photoshop* and have applied them in varying degrees in my media productions. Primarily under the direction of Professors Rueb, Elder, Hyun Nam and Pape, they have expanded my technological use of these tools to create media productions that range from Rueb's innovation known as "locative media," Elder's exemplary documentary insights, Hyun Nam's interactive 3-D gaming and Pape's game design.

My research focus would be a continuation of the expansion of my awareness of digital technologies developed through media productions based on an Indigenous relationship to the environment. In addition to Professor Elder, scholars in SUNY Buffalo's distinguished Department of Transnational Studies will be able to provide insight into Haudenosaunee history and representation. Professor Rueb's work with the environment and media will provide a more critical reading of the well-worn trope of Indigeneity and the relationship to place. Professor Pape's work on gaming will be critical to my research project. I would like to bring this all together in the form of an interactive game that seeks to complicate and resituate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ideas about land, not simply as an environmental issue but integrated into our daily lives through critical play.

As a 2018 graduate of the Media Studies Department at UB, I realize that seeking an MFA in the same department might be less desirable. In contrast, I believe I have much to learn in pursuit of an MFA in the distinguished Media Studies Department. This in combination with the proximity to the Haudenosaunee community makes UB a desirable fit for my interest in digital media as art with an Indigenous infusion.