

Paper Rocket Productions: A decolonizing epistemology of young Indigenous filmmakers

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Abstract

This interview explores the significance of Paper Rocket Productions—an independent film company co-founded by young Indigenous filmmakers in Northern Arizona, USA. The author highlights why their artistic works are exceptional, followed by a discussion with two of the filmmakers and co-founders of the enterprise. The conversation brings attention to their filmmaking, primarily to the forthcoming feature-length documentary *Water is Life - Tó éí 'iiná até*. This film reveals how the industrialization of the Navajo Nation negatively affects the sacredness of water and traditional ways of life, and the interview calls attention to how Paper Rocket Productions relates and contributes to a decolonizing epistemology.

Keywords: *decolonization; filmmaking; Navajo; Hopi; youth*

Introduction

Deidra Peaches (Navajo) and Hoyungowa (Hopi and Navajo) are two young Indigenous filmmakers and founders of Paper Rocket Productions based in Northern Arizona.¹ Both have participated in networks of Indigenous filmmaking, including Outta Your Backpack Media located in Flagstaff, Arizona², and Longhouse Media based in Seattle, Washington³. In addition to working on film crews in places like Montana and New Mexico, their short film *Rocket Boy* (2010) was screened at the 2011 Sundance Festival—of which, to date, they are the youngest Native filmmakers to have their work accepted. Their short films also include *Real Love* (2007) and *Shimasani* (2009)⁴, and Peaches recently did video work for Matika Wilber's *Project 562*—a photo project that documents Indigenous people of federally recognized tribes in the US.⁵ Paper Rocket Productions is currently finalizing their feature-length documentary film, *Water is Life - Tó éí 'iiná até*,⁶ which screened this year at *De La Plume a L'Ecran's* 5th Annual Festival Ciné Alter'Natif in Paris, France.⁷ Beyond all of this, what makes Paper Rocket Productions exceptional?

One reason why Paper Rocket Productions is significant is that it challenges the extensive tradition of racist filmmaking that depicts American Indians in negative, stereotypical ways. Historically, literary and visual accounts portrayed and reinforced erroneous ideas of what Indigenous people allegedly were like (Rieder, 2008). These accounts were made by and for non-Indigenous spectators, supported by an ideological framework that combined evolutionary theory, anthropology, and colonial history, laws, and ideology. A dominant stereotype that was reflected in popular cultural texts is the "savage" that was either "noble" or "bloodthirsty." In the former, Native Americans are considered as "primitive and childlike....supposedly maintain[ing] purer instincts about nature and the world around them"; in the latter, they are described as "violent, aggressive, and demonic, bent on destroying innocent white settlers, including women and children" (Benshoff and Griffin, 2009, pp. 104-105). In time, such conceptualizations and representations led to the creation of the imaginary "Hollywood Indian" and furthered the Eurocentric idea that Indigenous people and cultures are inferior (See Rollins and O'Connor, 1998; Kilpatrick, 1999; Marubbio, 2006).

Paper Rocket Productions challenges the anti-Indigenous film tradition by providing complex, humanizing, and contemporary modes of representation and socio-political consciousness that rearrange the ways in which Indigeneity may be understood. Writing about

¹ "Paper Rocket Productions," <http://www.paperrocketproductions.com>

² "Outta Your Backpack Media," <http://oybm.org>

³ "Longhouse Media," <http://www.longhousemedia.org>

⁴ For an analysis of these films, as well as their work, technical skill, and challenges they face making films outside of the commercial industry and within the network of Indigenous filmmaking, see Berglund (2013).

⁵ For Peaches' video work on this project, see "Alaska: Journey to Celebration": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v34ySJWSymo>; for more on *Project 562*, see: <http://project562.com>

⁶ For more on this film, including a movie trailer, see: <http://www.paperrocketproductions.com/productions/water-is-life>

⁷ For more on this festival, see: <http://en.delaplumealecran.org/#home>

Paper Rocket Productions, Jeff Berglund (2013) suggests that their films "re-frame" Indigeneity by working "through refusal and a distancing from prior modes" of representation, where "the erasure or elimination of older, stereotypical filmic references allow a new form of Indigeneity to emerge" (p. 201). Moving beyond mainstream, stereotypical notions of Indian culture and realities as being static or unvarying, Paper Rocket Production contests that which is predictable and restrictive. Since Peaches and Hoyungowa express "the sovereignty of the imagination, of the right to tell any story" (Berglund, 2013, p. 204) in their films, they interrupt and transform pervasive colonial logic by refusing nostalgic portrayals of the past, which include a sense of purity, authenticity, and the accompanying stereotypes that perpetuate these. Providing multifaceted, present-day, and culturally relevant narratives, Paper Rocket Productions is part of the growing movement of Native Americans that actively partake in the creative control of images that concern them, using film as a medium of political and cultural expression.⁸

Another reason why Paper Rocket Productions is important is because of Peaches and Hoyungowa's unusual experience of making films at a young age. They began experimenting with movie-making in elementary school, but it was in high school when they concentrated their passion for cinematography. Along with their cultural expressions and artistic skills—which partially reflect their participation in activist filmmaking workshops for Indian youth, mentioned earlier in this essay—they are young Indigenous filmmakers who have achieved relative success with their movies. Such an accomplishment is rare in the world of traditional cinematography that is generally dictated by Eurocentric, hetero-patriarchal, financially affluent, and adult-driven standards. This is impressive given that American Indian youth, like other marginalized young people, encounter many social obstacles. For instance, as Sari Horwitz noted in a *Washington Post* article on March 9, 2014, there is a high rate of suicide among Native American young people, particularly those living on reservations.⁹ Moreover, Native youth face high levels of poverty and violence, graduate high school at a rate that is significantly lower than the national average, deal with a disproportionate amount of substance-abuse, and are more likely to die before the age of 24, compared to any other ethnic group. Directly related to historical traumas and colonial legacies, many Indigenous youth lose hope or lack the power to contribute to transforming their lives and their environments.

I do not mean to suggest that Native youth are doomed and that Paper Rocket Productions should be "tokenized" or solely celebrated for being an "exemplar." Instead, I point to the fact they are young filmmakers to precisely politicize their age, in order to highlight how the oppression of youth is systemic and central to modern/colonial society (Bañales, 2012). To elaborate with an example: during the rise of neoliberalism and conservative politics of the 1980s and 1990s, youth were especially criminalized through popular media representations that characterized that generation in negative ways (Acland, 1995). Youth in mainstream films were represented as being apathetic, apolitical, and ignorant on the one hand, and deviant, violent, or

⁸ For more on films and cultural texts that challenge stereotypical portrayals of American Indians, see Knopf (2008) and Radar (2011).

⁹ Sari Horwitz, "The hard lives — and high suicide rate — of Native American children on reservations," *The Washington Post*, (March 9, 2014).

criminal on the other (Giroux, 1997). Thus, along with challenging the extensive anti-Indigenous film legacy, Paper Rocket Production also disrupts Hollywood's anti-youth tradition. First, as young filmmakers and co-founders of Paper Rocket Productions, Peaches and Hoyungowa challenge adulthood as the primary location of power, always already mediating the position of young people's voices, representations, and experiences. Second, the complex content of their films defy the idea that contemporary Indigenous youth are disconnected from or lack political involvement in their communities. Finally, Paper Rocket Productions broadens filmic representations that allow new forms of Indigenous youth identities and epistemologies to emerge and continue, despite oppressive systemic social forces.

Last but not least, attention should be given to Paper Rocket Productions because their films are decolonizing. To explain, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) contends that, "decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels" (p. 20). Some of the ways in which imperialism and colonization affect Indigenous peoples is through "the conquest and expropriation of territories; massive loss of life through war, forced labor, and disease; erasure or marginalizations of cultures and languages; and the redefinition of a process of violent conquest as 'inevitable' because of supposed differences in levels of 'civilization'" (Mallon, 2012, p. 1). Such colonial practices manifest in the present, and are described by scholars as "coloniality" (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011; Martínez-San Miguel, 2014). In Northern Arizona, two physical manifestations of coloniality that impact Indigenous communities are the abandonment of toxic uranium mines that negatively affect the environment and pose serious health effects on the local Indigenous population, and the creation of the Snowbowl ski resort which produces artificial greywater snow on the sacred San Francisco Peaks.¹⁰ To decolonize, then, means challenging such forms of coloniality and being accountable to Indigenous land, life, and sovereignty (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Furthermore, decolonization also denotes opposing the colonizing turn in Western thought and its corresponding paradigm of "discovery" and "newness" which includes the gradual proliferation of capitalism, racism, colonial/modern gender system, and other hierarchies and power (Maldonado-Torres, 2006; Lugones, 2007).

Paper Rocket Productions challenges and/or transcends colonizing norms of Western culture in a variety of forms. For instance, the forthcoming documentary *Water is Life - Tó éí 'iiná até* raises awareness on the present-day forms of colonization that affect Indigenous land rights and sovereignty—primarily how the sacredness of water and traditional ways of life of the Navajo Nation are negatively affected by "modern development." The film is also decolonizing for making central the idea that the political is personal. , In addition to showing crowds of Indigenous people protesting against the political injustices that affect them, the filmmakers incorporate personal stories within the content of *Water is Life - Tó éí 'iiná até* , challenging the Western hierarchical dichotomy of subject/object through the interweaving of narrative with the

¹⁰ For more on this, see *Democracy Now!*, "'A Slow Genocide of the People': Uranium Mining Leaves Toxic Nuclear Legacy on Indigenous Land," (March 14, 2014), http://www.democracynow.org/2014/3/14/a_slow_genocide_of_the_people

social issues that are represented. Lastly, *Water is Life - Tó éí 'iiná até* is decolonizing for reflecting a form of "visual sovereignty." This describes an awareness and way of thinking that is grounded in self and community that is oppositional to Western logic (Lidchi and Tsinghnahninnie, 2009). Rather than concentrating their films on the ethos of Western European culture and Greco-Roman "origins", Paper Rocket Productions firmly and politically situate themselves on Indian land and through Indigenous worldviews.

In sum, Paper Rocket Productions is important because, among many things, it contests mainstream negative understandings of American Indians/young people as it simultaneously promotes the respect for Indigenous/youth knowledges and perspectives. Additionally, Peaches and Hoyungowa's films generate decolonizing representations and epistemologies that bring positive changes to the identities, well-being, and self-determination of American Indians and beyond. Through their groundbreaking films, Paper Rocket Productions advocates for social, political, and intuitional accountability to Native Americans and reflect "a conscious desire we have as Indigenous people to transform the world around us because we are dissatisfied with the status quo, because we are tired of the tremendous injustices occurring around us, and because we are hungry for a change that will bring respect to our rights as Indigenous people" (Mihesuah and Wilson, 2004, p. 204). Contributing to the ongoing dialogues with Native American filmmakers (see Marubbio and Buffalohead, 2013), what follows is a conversation the author had with two of the founders of Paper Rocket Productions.

A decolonizing film

Bañales: Please talk about your latest film and the creative process behind this project.

Peaches: *Water is Life* is a film project that started about four years ago that will be finalized soon. This documentary explores the sacredness of water and how the industrialization of the Navajo Nation continues to disrupt traditional ways of life. My introduction to the topic initially started with my mother. She had attended a forum on water in Tuba City, Arizona and became really interested in the issue. I eventually attended one of the forums and recorded a portion of the session. During the actual meeting I was told to turn my camera off. I thought, "What do you mean 'Turn my camera off?'" This is a public forum. There is no reason for me to turn off my camera unless you are hiding something." This sparked more interest so I decided to look more into the matter. The more I researched the subject, the more I realized how the water situation was problematic.



Black Mesa, Arizona

Jake Hoyungowa filming a community presentation organized by the Black Mesa Water Coalition.

(Photo credit: Deidra Peaches, Paper Rocket Productions)

Hoyungowa: I became really interested in helping Deidra with the project and capturing what was going on with the topic, especially with political protests that took place in 2010. I was interested in what was happening on the reservation since I never really had the chance to film there much. Prior to this, I had gotten footage on what Navajos thought about the presidential 2008 election of John McCain and Barrack Obama. It seemed that majority were voting for a candidate without knowing much about the policies or the politics. This broadened my perspective and influenced me to get involved with activist film work.

Peaches: Learning about the water issues on the reservation influenced the creation of *Water is Life*. My grandparents on the reservation had to haul water—they still continue to haul water. This is definitely troublesome for the people because one has to think about gas and other natural resources that go into this. Compared to Flagstaff, Arizona, which is about 40 miles away, one sees how it is totally unfair that there is running water, where everything seems bountiful, abundant. In Phoenix, Arizona, which is a large urban city over 300 miles away from the Navajo reservation, has running water even though there is not a major river in site. In part, this is thanks to Navajo nation which borders the Colorado River for about 110 miles. Through the Central Arizona Project, water from the Colorado River gets canaled to the desert cities of Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. This water is being diverted off its natural course to facilitate a community that has millions of occupants, while our own people—who are a population of less than 300,000 living in rural areas on the Navajo and Hopi reservations—don't have running water.

The unfair distribution of natural resources upset many Native people. This led to many water rights protests; the first one was in 2010. This happened during the same year that my paternal grandpa ran for president of the Navajo Nation. As he went on the campaign trail, we documented those who were running for president. Hearing what they had to say and learning

about the visions they had for the future seemed minimal to me. I kept thinking that we could be doing so much more with our people with the tools that we already have.



Dennehotso, Arizona

Many livestock drink from unregulated water wells.

(Photo Credit: Deidra Peaches, Paper Rocket Productions)

Hoyungowa: I helped film Deidra's grandfather's campaign. I was really interested in the politics that went into Native American politics itself. The process seemed like a circus event. It gave me a lot of perspective of how politics happen on the reservation, how crucial policies are, and how they are passed through people we "trust."

Peaches: As political issues grew, attention was given to the Navajo Generating Station (NGS), which gets its coal from Peabody Coal Company (PCC). PCC is on the Navajo reservation, and their coal has been subsidized when they buy from the Navajo and Hopi people—the costs have been fractionalized to relatively small amount. This is connected to the 1960s when there were land disputes. There is so much controversy around it, especially with how PCC got leasing rights on the Navajo and Hopi reservations. There are a lot of allegations of PCC pitting both tribes against each other, as well as having a lot of legal leeway at the federal level. As this issue progressed, we went to Washington, D.C., and talked with judicial leaders at their offices. Their views of the reservation were very condescending. The attitude they generally had was that we should be grateful for whatever we have. The documentary unfolded as we looked deeper and deeper into the issues.



Dennehotso, Arizona

"Water from this well is not safe to drink"

Such wells exist throughout the Navajo Reservation.



near Fruitland, New Mexico

The Four Corners Generating Station--a coal-fired power plant--is in close proximity to local native communities, contributing to many health hazards.

(Photo credits: Jake Huyongowa, Paper Rocket Productions)

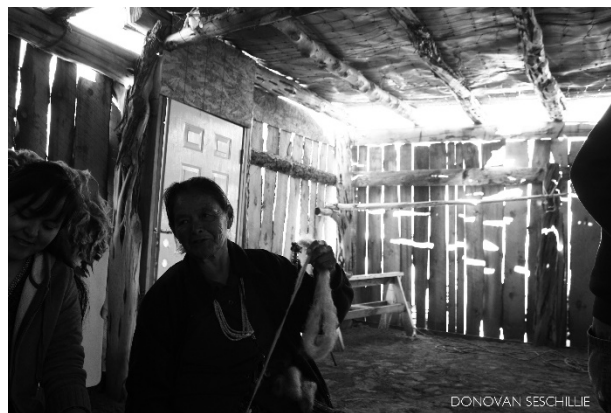
The personal is decolonial

Hoyungowa: During the political campaign, my grandmother died. Her death struck me; it destroyed me inside. A lot of what I thought about during the filming was to be true to myself and my spirit. Her death sparked inspiration to know more about the truth and have it exposed. Being Hopi and Navajo, this documentary became personal and very quickly. Deidra had done a lot of research and I was trying to recover from my grandmother's death. We had a lot of footage and wanted to compile something together. We shared each other's ideas and inspiration came to us to involve ourselves in the story. It took a long time; we had to find a greater meaning.

Peaches: Another factor that inspired the idea of involving ourselves in the story was that my maternal grandpa, when I was 12 years old, died of pulmonary fibrosis from working uranium mines. So, the more we looked into these issues, the more we found truth in our culture. My paternal grandpa is a medicine man, and a lot of what he says is what is really happening to our land: this extraction of natural resources is not just affecting the earth but our people. When we see this issue on those terms, we see the world differently: uranium is an entity that is meant to live in the ground and stay there. Through creating the documentary, I was reminded about the responsibilities we have, and how these relationships we have with nature should be acknowledged to the best of our ability.

Bañales: *Is this part of a decolonial method: involving one's personal struggles in the work we do and connecting them to the stories that are told?*

Peaches: For me, it is part of storytelling. Involving ourselves was part of the process. We went through many different phases, and I think the film is a testament to how we have grown as people. The turmoil, frustrations, and struggles that we experienced is what made us strong and gave us confidence. When I first started, I didn't feel like I was on solid ground; it felt like being in quicksand. Then things unraveled in front of us. For example, one of the people we interviewed recently died of cancer. That was a turning point that revealed my responsibility as a filmmaker. I thought, "Wow, we have her unique story on film. We have this preserved. This is something that is invaluable; it is something that money can never buy, in a sense." The memories and conversations of people who are gone—part of their soul—is spoken through what they say in their presence on screen; this is really powerful.



Black Mesa, Arizona

Local Navajo Weaver

(Photo credit: Donovan Seschillie, Ambient Lens)

Hoyungowa: In the beginning of the documentary, Deidra acknowledges that we have this great power with filmmaking. A portion of the film it about finding ourselves, what we found in our research, and acknowledging what has happening in the environment. In the end, we have this responsibility, particularly to youth—to help change and introduce ourselves into this world again. I think in this film we reflect a generation of young people who want to do something positive with our culture while being a part of it. In this film, we found ourselves again.

Decolonizing/indigenizing

Bañales: *I like the point you make, that you found yourselves in this process of filmmaking. This makes me think of a generative way to understand decolonizing work: that altering the ideological landscape also brings personal transformation (and vice versa). In my own process of "becoming a scholar," I didn't realize I was contributing to decolonization somehow until*

much later. Initially, I might have not called it this, but eventually this framework of working to "undo" the logic of modern colonization started to make sense with the work I was doing.

Peaches: Initially, our goal was not to decolonize; that was not our main impetus. It kind of came to us as it formulated and unraveled itself. When I understood that decolonization also meant to indigenize, that is where I found my voice.

Hoyungowa: In the beginning, I was not really interested in this word "decolonization." I never thought of it as something that was very major to my life. Now we are at a point where we have to do something about it. If not, who else will?

Bañales: *Perhaps this is how art can contribute to decolonizing/indigenizing our current political landscape and environments. What is the relationship you see between art and activism?*

Peaches: As Native American filmmakers, we will generally have this image of being activists because a lot of what we say is anti-Western thought. It's like almost everything that Western society does is against Native teachings all together. Traveling to France and Canada, I see that Native Americans in the US have been pigeonholed in a way. It seems like there is more respect and admiration towards Native Americans elsewhere than here in the US. This country of "America" has a type of amnesia. They often do not realize that about 100 years ago they were killing Natives for sport and for their land. Even now, Natives still continue to be eliminated by the exploitation of natural resources, moving them off their land, as well as through the whole process of who is and who is not considered to be federally recognized.

Hoyungowa: Many have stereotypes about us and wonder who Native Americans are. Are they looking for their identity? Are they struggling with maintaining themselves? Are environmental issues their main concern? This is often what people want to see in film, and it is a struggle we encounter with filmmaking as Native Americans. How do we create something away from all of that? We could make a movie about love, for example, but no one will probably give it a second chance. We could make a movie about Native Americans, but the mainstream wants to know about their struggles with their cultural identity. Then we have other struggles specific to our tribes. Being Hopi and working with Hopi, they generally keep themselves form public exposure, which is a good thing for them. But if we want to be able to preserve that culture, what other outlet could there be besides keeping to oneself, especially when the oral tradition keeps decreasing? Being part of the Hopi culture, it is rich but it takes a lot more for the elders to connect with the youth.

Decolonial storytelling

Peaches: I think a good way to emulate our struggles is through art. In Native American culture, art plays a huge in role, not just in teaching but with healing. I think filmmaking could be seen as the art of the next generation, as silversmithing and basket making was for other generations. Film and technology together is a way we can incorporate our ideals—who we are as people.



Cameron, Arizona

Jake Hoyungowa and Donovan Seschillie video recording a "No Dine Water Settlement" billboard.

(Photo credit: Deidra Peaches, Paper Rocket Productions)

Hoyungowa: Every person in our communities can become these storytellers and historians. Not a lot of Native people film on the reservation, and there are great opportunities to tell stories in different ways. Through film, you can express yourself in a creative way; there are limitless possibilities for that. I feel like we are part of that future revolution.

Peaches: What attracts me to film is the creativity—I see this as something boundary-less. But from a different perspective, a challenge we face with making films is funding. When you look at a lot of films that are in the film festivals, a lot of them are funded really well, sometimes by organizations. In a way, when there is this sort of involvement, a lot of what the artists have to say is diluted. Through grants or organizations, for example, sometimes they have the last word on the artistic product. To have freedom, one sometimes has to make these films out of our own pockets, even if it means working as janitors like we did, or going broke in the process. As an artist, you have to ask, what do you want? What is necessary to tell your story? Are you willing to compromise your vision or how you feel? Are you willing to sacrifice your voice for money? *Water is Life* was pretty much self-funded; the editing and production of the film we did ourselves.

Hoyungowa: I think this is the balance one has to have as a filmmaker: trying to own something but not wanting it to be somebody else's. So, one is constantly in this balancing act with yourself and external pressures at the same time. Perhaps this comes with the responsibilities of being a storyteller.

Art, education, and decolonization

Bañales: *I see art—in particular films—serving as a powerful decolonial and educational tool that can generally be more accessible than an academic book, for example. Although making high quality films continues to be relatively expensive and there are many challenges that come with this, new technologies, like the internet, have made it possible for film to reach broad audiences in a less costly way. However, the previous points make me think of other generative questions: What is your work building upon and what mark will it leave for other generations? Should material or monetary gain be the main concern when producing art or scholarship, or contributing to the legacy of knowledge and wisdom? How can cultural production contribute to challenging the colonizing aspects of Western thought?*

Peaches: I think education is important to cultural production and decolonization. Sharing our work is important for cultivating our craft but also for educating younger generations and Native American people. With our own company Paper Rocket Productions, we did a workshop in Yakima, Washington not too long ago. We worked with a lot of youth who were from Toppennish, which is pretty much a border town; the reservation is less than 5 or 10 miles away. The majority of the young people there struggled with adverse conditions, like poverty, high incidents of domestic violence, and many were on probation. Some of them had friends who had committed suicide. What can we expect if we have had a whole group of people who have almost been annihilated, who went through boarding schools, or went through other traumas and tribulations? Do we really expect for these people to feel consciously fine? Where do you find yourself when you are in these predicaments? In a sense, art and education are a way to heal because you can go into that realm where you can share the perspective of what you see and feel.

Bañales: *The healing process seems to be part of making sense of reality, of trying to find ways to understand one's existence in relationship to oppressive social forces. Perhaps a decolonizing process is altering the world in a form that other generations can exist in it in a way one could not—creating the space that is yet to come.*

Peaches: There really needs to be a revitalization within our reservations, cultivating a sort of positivity of hope. I think in a lot of ways that is what decolonization helps to do: it promotes a hope of living beyond the constructs of the Western world. Sometimes I think it is essential to cultivate educational endeavors with multiple mediums—not just with filmmaking—to help people become aware of their oppression and encourage building narratives of healing and

spirituality that link what has happened in the past with the present, so we can continue to live our lives in a better way. I would love to create curriculum based on what we make or about what we have experienced as filmmakers.

Hoyungowa: I want to continue outreaching to the community and introduce more filmmaking, hopefully on the reservation. What ideas do other young people have? What kinds of stories can they tell? I would like to create collaborative workshops with other organizations where youth can tell their own stories through film. It would be great to make socially conscious films, public service announcements about life on the reservation, the differences of living on and off the reservation or borders towns, and on subjects like these. Hopefully this could be a goal soon.



Leupp, Arizona

From the North Leupp Family Farm, a view of the San Francisco Peaks--one of the sacred mountains.

(Photo credit: Jake Hoyungowa, Paper Rocket Productions)

A decolonial horizon

Bañales: *Speaking of the future, what other film projects are you thinking about?*

Peaches: I am planning to make a feature length film all in the Navajo language that deals with contemporary Indigenous issues. I am currently thinking about my genetics as an Indigenous person. I've been reading a lot on this subject and how some research attempts to prove that our genes hold memories, like struggles that our ancestors experienced. I think this subject could potentially tie into memory and how glimpses in our lives we relive are connected to some of the predicament our ancestors went through.

Hoyungowa: As far as a film project, I would like it to be in Hopi. I would like to involve what happened historically during the 1940s, with World War II, governmental changes in the US, and the beginning of many of environmental issues that came as a result. Another idea I have is to

create a historical narrative piece that is about how Indigenous people lived prior the European colonization. I also want to create something that is unique on the reservation itself: actually shooting there and preserving it with story.

Bañales: *These ideas seem like powerful, generative ways that could help us understand the contemporary social context in other ways. One idea I have been thinking about is to create a film that crosses Native and Xican@ identities and experiences in the US and beyond. This film could show the cultural commonalities, but also the disparate histories of racialization that have taken place. Such a film, perhaps, could serve as a bridge between the cultural gaps that settler colonialism has created, evident in modern geographical, political, and social borders that divide people.*

Hoyungowa: While filming earlier this year, a group of us traveled to Texas from Canada. We got to visit people from Mexico who practice the peyote ways. We asked each other questions about how ceremonies were done and ways of practicing. One of the guys reminded us to not forget about our brothers and sisters living down south. Such interexchange is something we do not see often.

Bañales: *There are countless stories to tell and ways that film and other artistic mediums can contribute to a decolonizing/indigenizing horizon. Collaborating on film projects is part of this process too. Any closing thoughts you want to offer?*

Hoyungowa: I think it is important for a person to be involved with what they find most enriching.

Peaches: Practicing what you preach has to go hand in hand.

Bañales: *I agree: ideas and action must go together, especially when they come from love.*

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