

## MEMORY LANDSCAPE II (2018)

---

*Memory Landscape II* is part of a series that responds to *Memory Landscape I*, a set of honouring scrolls Barry Ace completed in 2014 as a tribute to a loved one who had recently passed. The recent death of his friend, who Ace describes as close to him as kin, an “adopted brother”, prompted Ace to go into his own archive of slide transparencies. The images were taken in the 80s during their travels together through their home territory of Manitoulin Island and the surrounding Algoma region of Northern Ontario. The compositions for each scroll include the digital scans Ace made of the transparencies to form photographic diptychs, his beadwork the intermediary between each image.

Traditionally, the Anishinaabeg used birch bark as a material to record information including migration stories, songs, ceremony and mythology. In *Memory Landscape I* and *II*, Ace's diptychs and beaded motifs on birch bark form a tableaux drawing its inspiration from birch bark sheets that are stitched together to form sacred scrolls with incised information important to the Midewiwin, the Grand Medicine Society of the Anishinaabe. Using the facsimile of birchbark, which he has created by digitally scanning bark that is then printed onto archival canvas, he innovates with a modern material to commemorate the time these two friends spent together on the land. As with much of Ace's oeuvre, he uses contemporary materials to situate the work into the current context while still ensuring cultural continuity with the past. Lashed with deer hide strips onto either end are wood sticks Ace sourced where he now resides, Ottawa, Ontario. The scrolls can stand alone or be further extended by lashing together to form a longer work.

In *Memory Landscape I*, a very personal work for Ace that was first exhibited in Braga, Portugal at Museu Nogueira da Silva, 30 scrolls form a complete narrative documenting the seasons of life and will remain together as an unbroken set. In *Memory Landscape II*, each of the 30 diptychs from this set stand alone as Ace continues with images depicting the Manitoulin area, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. Through the lush images, Ace invites us to see this stunning landscape through an Anishinaabe lens.



## Memory Landscape II

digital print on archival canvas, glass beads, thread, metal hardware, wood, deer hide on verso signed, titled, dated 2018 and inscribed "#5-30"  
12 7/8 x 31 7/8 in, 33 x 81 cm

Depicted are two locations that hold personal meaning to Ace. On the left is Dreamer's Rock, located on Birch Island in Whitefish River First Nation reserve. A sacred place, the top of the white quartz rock is where one would go for a vision quest upon reaching puberty. From this high elevation, a 360 degree view of the land is possible. To the right is an image of Bridal Veil Falls. The Falls flow from Lake Kagawong the source of the Kagawong River that moves onwards to the North Channel of Lake Huron, one of the five Great Lakes, all of which are important to the Anishinaabeg. Between the rock and the water is the beaded outline of an otter, Ace's *dodem*, or clan. The otter, *nigig* in Anishinaabemowin, is a sub-clan of the Marten, the Warrior clan. The otter, poised as though on the edge of gliding into the Falls' pool is halted in mid act looking out from the work, its gaze meeting our own.



**Memory Landscape II**

digital print on archival canvas, glass beads, thread, metal hardware, wood, deer hide on verso signed, titled, dated 2018 and inscribed "#6-30"

12 7/8 x 31 7/8 in, 33 x 81 cm

In the centre of this work is the Thunderbird, a *manitou* or spirit, important in the Anishinaabe worldview. *Animkiig* in Anishinaabemowin, the sky world and heavens are the domain of the Thunderbirds, invisible forces that represent protection for the Anishinaabeg. They are also a symbol for M'Chigeeng on the Island of Manitoulin, the First Nation where Ace is from. Hovering between the winter and spring scenes, Ace has chosen to depict the Thunderbird as white as during the coldest season the Thunderbird is dormant, re-awakening once warmth returns to the earth. The spring storms with their thunder and lightning symbolize the return of the *Animkiig*. The winter scene is taken at Whitefish River First Nation, near Manitoulin Island, and to the left is an image taken at Gull Lake, Temagami, Ontario.



**Memory Landscape II**

digital print on archival canvas, glass beads, thread, metal hardware, wood, deer hide on verso signed, titled, dated 2018 and inscribed "#7-30"  
12 7/8 x 31 7/8 in, 33 x 81 cm

In this work the Sky World, important to the Anishinaabeg, is present in all of its stunning colour at dusk. The images were taken on the Spanish River near Gogama in Northern Ontario in the 80s. The beaded floral motif in the centre also alludes to the Sky World in the way it is positioned. The lower flower is the watery underworld, the leaves the middle world of earth, while the top flower points to the heavens and the Sky World beyond. The colours echo the palette created by the setting sun. Their style references the Anishinaabe Woodland beadwork of the Great Lake Regions and symbolizes the medicinal power of plants.

***Excerpt - Encoding Culture 2 Catalogue.***