

Protocols for entering the Indigenous Artistic Ceremony

First, Indigenous protocol is to be respected. I've had the fortune and privilege of participating in many ceremonies and in the Indigenous paradigm, questioning them would be extremely disrespectful. It makes me cringe thinking about questioning a knowledge keeper of a longhouse or sweat or of any ceremony.

For Indigenous sovereignty to occur, I understand that Settlers [those whose ancestry is not Indigenous to this land] need to understand Indigeneity but I will say this, I have a PhD in Whiteness. I've been studying Settler and Eurocentricity my entire life. I live under Settler oppression all of the time, so I've put my time in doing the work, research lived experiences and detailed studies of why I'm positioned in society where I am.

So I offer everyone the opportunity to do an inventory of where their level of understanding is with regards to Indigenous world views, ceremony, historical and pre-colonial paradigms of thoughts and everything beyond. Then I offer, you consider how you make your requests from Indigenous people or make potentially oppressive comments towards Indigenous peoples who continue to live under siege of white supremacy.

After that inventory, I would make another offer that as a Settler, take time, significant time, to listen and listen and listen and experience and experience and experience before you speak and use your Settler power to actually hold space for Indigenous peoples to engage and be given voice instead of you taking more space. If you feel the need to speak or be given voice before, above or louder than Indigenous peoples about the ceremony then you are actively continuing to use your Settler power to silence, take space and harm Indigenous people.

Settlers have oppressively positioned themselves in the theatrical context to have some kind of presumed "authority" over Indigenous peoples. Historically that might have been permissible protocol but the era of white supremacy asserting power over racialized folks with no consent - is over. This is Indigenous artistic ceremony, so I offer for you to take inventory of why you think you have the authority, permission or position to speak on top of the Indigenous Matriarchs creating these artistic ceremonies.

We're not looking for comparative analysis with American Theatre. We are inviting you to come and bear witness and participate in Indigenous artistic ceremony to learn what that means and not assert Settler power aggressively over us. This story, this ceremony is for our Indigenous peoples, it is to give voice and illuminate the power of Indigenous women, to amplify our stories and remove the historical barriers that have excluded Indigenous, Black and racialized folks from Canadian theaters for far too long...This is the power we are reclaiming over our storytelling and the ceremony of offering Kamloopa.

With respect,
Kim