

Two Spirit+ Learning Series Session Three

The Environment is Queer: Indigiqueer Ecological Reflections

Session Abstract by Guest Speaker Abraham Francis:

Akwesasne, Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) Community, is home to a complex geopolitical landscape. Her history is full of grief and violence enacted by the settler states of Canada and the United States to assimilate, dispossess, and erase Akwesasronon presence. As an Indigiqueer Ecologist from Akwesasne, I am drawn to stories of resistance and survivance that created a community of resilient and innovative people. Historically, Catholicism held most of Akwesasne, but the people continued to practice their traditions, some in secret. I grew up in the church and actively sought out my culture later in life with family and community support. I am grateful to all the Akwesasronon who shared conversations with me and stimulated thoughts around the question, “Where do I sit in the Longhouse?” This question is about where I fit in this community and culture. What are roles and responsibilities? I imagine in the past that two-spirit Haudenosaunee existed and was recorded, but the knowledge was lost as a means of protection. In my experience as an Indigiqueer Ecologist, I found opportunities and created space to discuss two-spirit identity in connection with forests. My clan mother told me it was part of my responsibility to call home knowledge of two-spirit roles and responsibilities, and a sister noted that the presence of two-spirit people were an indicator of a healthy community, which we see increasing presence across Akwesasne. Creation is constantly teaching us about two-spirit identity. Queerness is all around us. Perhaps, there is knowledge here to help address climate change.