

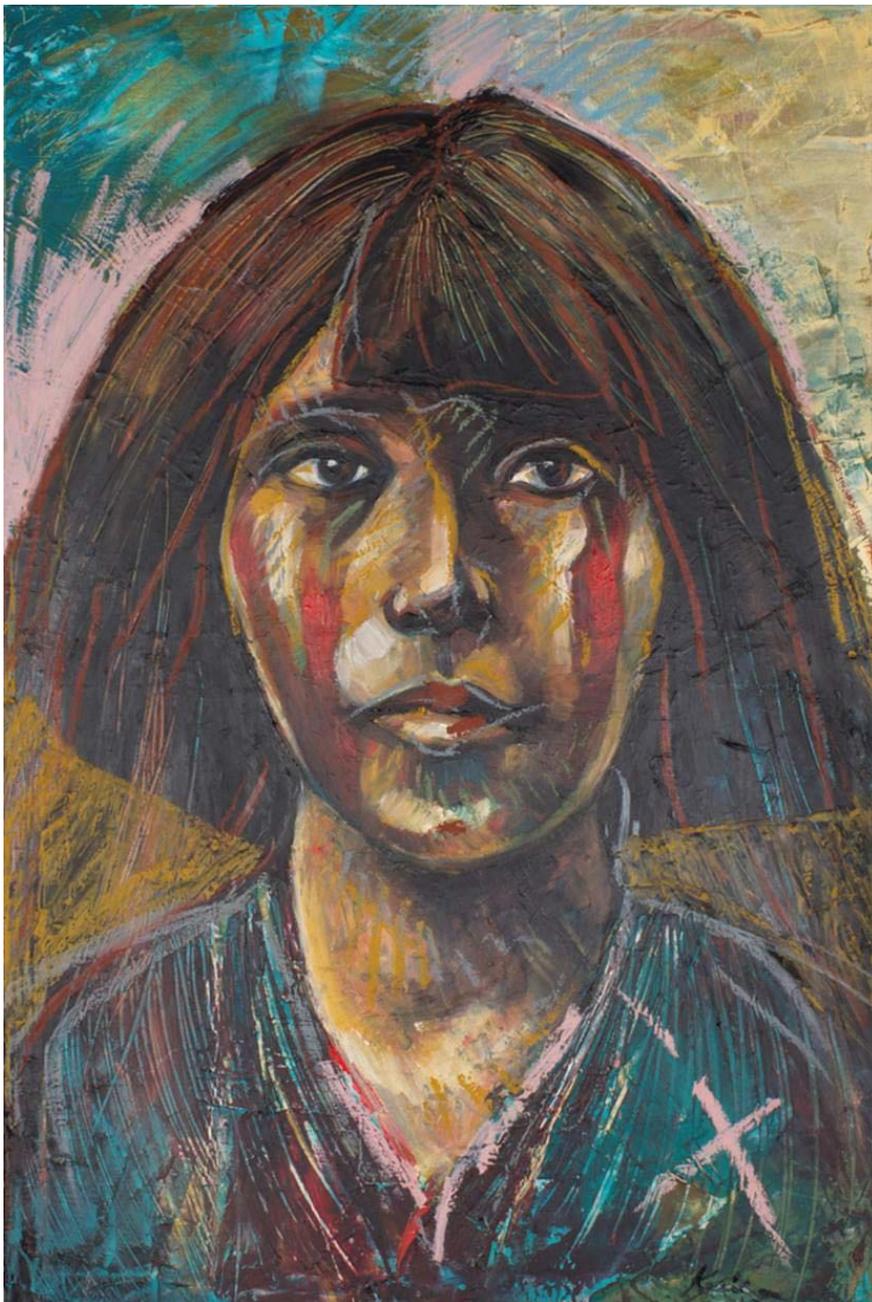
FOCUS

NATIVE AMERICAN ART COUNCIL

September, 2013

AFTER BOARDING SCHOOL: IN MOURNING

**Painted by Kaila Rose
Farrell-Smith (Klamath)
2011**



36"X 24" oil paint and oil bars on canvas

Growing up, Kaila learned her tribal history from her father, Al Smith (Klamath, Modoc). In his lifetime these stories included historical traumas of children being removed from families; not allowed to speak their language, and subsequent loss of culture and family ties. This was followed by tribal termination, family strife, and loss of traditional lands. From her father's childhood the boarding school concept was "Kill the Indian, Save the Man". Because Kaila's father was resilient and developed survival skills, she was raised with the values, beauty, and spirit of her indigenous culture. Today, Kaila strives to decolonize her mind and offer healing. "I am a Klamath woman", she says. "It took me awhile to understand that there's this need to return and start looking at my indigenous identity; looking at how painting explores what that means in contemporary society; how indigenous people identify with displacement from their ancestral homelands." This painting depicts a native girl whose hair has been chopped off. This was common practice at boarding school. In Kaila's tribe "Cutting hair is only done when someone dies. It's mourning." Kaila says "This painting references an Edward Curtis photograph, *Mosa, Mojave*. It is a portrait about the embodiment of power in indigenous woman's identity.

Compositionally the gaze is focused on the viewer, revealing strength beneath the veil of historical genocide. By painting the woman in a large scale and with expressive color, I am returning her spirit of resistance and survival to her and to untold stories.”

Farrell-Smith strives to mend the legacy of being raised in a ‘Split Head Society’ (Melissa K. Nelson): “This is a term describing indigenous children’s mind sets of European colonized thinking forcibly imposed on an aboriginal soul through the Indian boarding School assimilation process; being raised with an indigenous paradigm as well as being educated in linear, Western concepts, and society.” Kaila searches for her identity with paint, creating emotive landscapes and figures to bridge literal and abstract worlds. She searches for understanding to bridge an identity of two conflicting paradigms. Her marks manifest the present and the past, people, language, song, and the homelands. She is named after the Klamath mythological character, Kaila (KaEEla), who represents creation, the earth, and the land. She identifies as bi-cultural growing up in urban Oregon with ties to the larger native, inter-tribal community and traveling abroad. “ Her work focuses on healing the historical traumas of dislocation, displacement, loss of language, and ceremony while simultaneously upholding stories of survival, spiritual regeneration, and the power of remembering and invention.” Her art expresses transcendence and beauty.

Kaila Farrell-Smith was born in 1982 in Ashland, Oregon and raised in Germany and Eugene, Oregon. Her father, mother, and brother are all artists/painters. Kaila graduated from Pacific Northwest College of Art in 2004 and is currently an MFA candidate in the Contemporary Art Practices and Studio Degree Program at Portland State University.

After Boarding School: In Mourning won the “2012 Spirit of the NW Award” at the exhibition “In the Spirit: Contemporary NW Native Art.” It was purchased by the Portland Art Museum in October, 2012 with funds from the Native American Art Council.

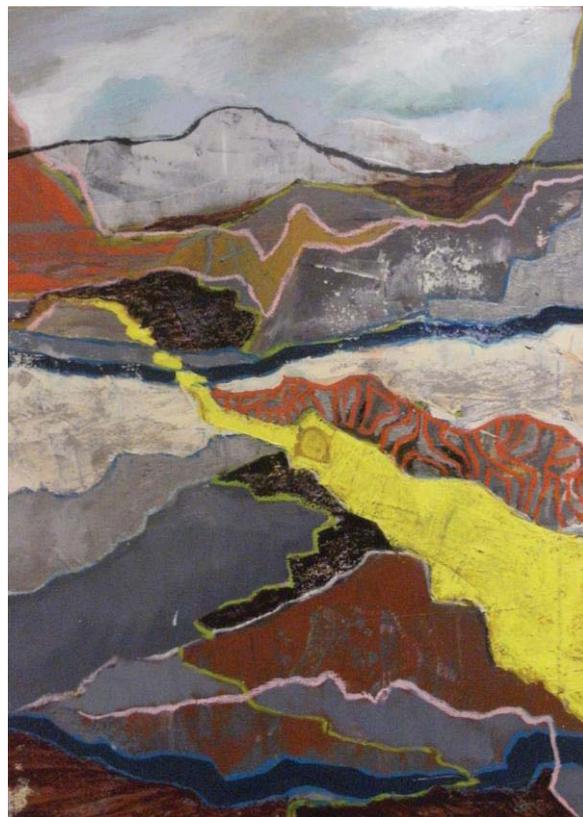
Sources: www.artofkailarose.com; studio interview with artist July 1, 2013.

Mary Jo Hessel



The Wocus Gatherers
2013 Spirit of the NW Award Winner
'Wocus' is the Klamath word for the yellow lily pads in the Klamath Marsh Lakes, the seeds in the pods are food for the Klamath/Modoc peoples

Oil on canvas, 48" x 66," 2013.



Lavafield Stronghold
Oil on canvas, 30" x 40," 2013.