

Transcript for “On Data Sovereignty, Counter Colonial Storytelling, and Indigenous Resistance: An Interview with Luhui Whitebear.” From *Doing Digital Visual Studies: One Image, Multiple Methodologies*. <https://www.ccdigitalpress.org/book/ddvs/chapters/whitebear.html>

Laurie Gries:

Dr. Whitebear, thank you so much for being here with us today. I wanted to give you an opportunity first to just introduce yourself and to tell us a little bit about your research, what current projects you're working on, what your particular commitments are, what you're working on with your activism, and why you feel that is so pressing right now in this day and age.

Luhui Whitebear:

Thanks, first of all thanks for having me. My name is Luhui Whitebear. I use she/her pronouns. I'm enrolled with the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, and I also have Huastec and Cochimí ancestry. I have a Phd in Women Gender and Sexuality studies with a concentration area in gender, rhetoric, and representation, which was really exciting for me to blend two things I love together. I work over at Oregon State University. I'm the center director of the [Native American Longhouse] Eena Haws, which is one of seven cultural resource centers on campus. I also teach some classes in ethnic studies, women gender and sexuality studies, and queer studies. So I kind of do that too, and it's great. I'm pretty involved on campus and in the community.

Right now, what I'm working on--I actually just finished working on a couple of book chapters this past year. There are...different kind[s] of focus areas. One of them was on grassroots activism that I was a co-author on and looking at especially social media and Indigenous resistance movements, and with the No DAPL! Movement, and the water crisis situation in Mexico, in particular....The other two authors, Kenlea [Pebbles] was working on the Menominee nation...and then Stephen [Gasteyer] was working on the Jordan Valley, so we're kind of looking at frontier capitalism and extraction and Indigenous resistance and the rhetorical uses of hashtags and other forms of media. I really enjoyed working with them on that project this past year. We finished that up in the spring. Hopefully,...that's supposed to come out in 2022, that book.

Laurie Gries:

Great.

Luhui Whitebear:

The other one I was working on was for a book *Gender & the American West*....That's a chapter that I wrote on my own and in that one, I was looking at Indigenous California history and the role of women and two-spirit people in recovering memory, cultural memories, and also in...helping preserve stories too in different modalities, whether it's through things in the household or in very direct ways of recording histories. It's a very under-told story...in academia...the experiences of Indigenous California and especially with the mission systems. So that one...I think is coming out next year too, and that's a Routledge book....So, those are kind

of where my current projects are. I just finished those. And my dissertation-- what I focused on—was...what I call counter-colonial intergenerational storytelling in Indigenous activists circles....It's kind of a way to restore cultural memories but also to help re-center the stories of Indigenous women and two-spirit people in Indigenous activism and the pivotal role that they played. And so, my next project is going to try to turn that into a book.

Laurie Gries:  
Great!

Luhui Whitebear:

..which is a little bit of a project, I hear, I would imagine, and I was like...it was bit of a project writing the dissertation. [But I plan] to edit it [in]to a book and find a publisher for that. I'm really excited to be able to share that work in particular more broadly, and I'm thinking about [putting] my methodology pieces in that dissertation into, at least, an academic article before it goes into book mode. That way, some of the information can get out there earlier.

Laurie Gries:

Great, thank you for sharing all that. I think that I first stumbled upon your work in the piece you published in *Spark* about the missing murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) hashtag, which I imagine was part of your dissertation research. As someone who studies viral circulation and the technologies that make that possible, I was interested in your work with the hashtag; but then also in relation to digital visual studies, I was really interested in how you worked with other Indigenous women to design and produce, to collect the data and distribute the data visualization map. I wanted to, I was hoping that you could speak more into that process and the affordances of it. I was reading around this morning about some other work that's related to yours, and I came upon this phrase where this scholar Joshua Miner was talking about the importance of intervening in “settler cartographic practices.” And so, I was thinking about the importance of your work in doing just that....so I was hoping you could speak to it just a little bit more closely. I'm very curious about the [research] process.

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah. Yep, I saved that one because I was figuring we're going to talk about the *Spark* article.... I actually don't talk about murder and missing Indigenous women in my dissertation, which is...kind of more my community-based work....I could have pulled that in if somebody wanted to be one of my interview participants, but I'm a little bit protective of that story too because I think..it's really easy for people to...bring in MMIW work into scholarship and not look at the pieces of...how are you giving back to the families and to the movement itself. So, I'm really hyper aware of my positionality in academia and Higher Ed and how sometimes there's that barrier between the work being done by activists circles....I don't feel like what I was doing with my dissertation would have been exploitive or was at all, with even what I was writing about, because it's really immersed in my own experienes as well growing up with activism and pulling all these pieces together. But with MMIW, some of what's happened is there's--in the article, I know you've seen where I talked about the t-shirt companies and how I compared that with the federal cold case offices and the use of props and exploitation. I really wanted to call awareness

to that and help people understand what was happening and also the awareness with the t-shirt companies and all that kind of stuff and how the hashtag is relied upon because it's familiar and people know hashtag MMIW is trying to call awareness and help in the crisis that's been going on for over 500 years now. That's...an ongoing crisis. I was like, hmm, that's a long time....

Laurie Gries:  
So long....

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, yeah and so for me,... that piece was really important...I actually was talking with some other women when I was writing it and let them know I was writing it, so I didn't want to just produce something without them knowing, especially the ones I work directly with....One of the people that I talked about in the interview was Deborah Maytubee, and she's the one who's the director of MMIW-USA and kind of founded the whole organization. They do a lot of search recoveries, in [the case] of either reuniting families or in the unfortunate incident of somebody being found deceased, of bringing their remains back for closure with the family. They also do preventative work...with youth now and, a lot of times, there's not really any law enforcement assistant with those searches and especially with the recovery pieces, and so the work they do is very crucial in helping address this crisis, and it's gaining a lot of momentum because of the hashtag and becoming more known. It still surprises me how many people don't know about MMIW, but there's also a lot more people that do, and so it's...making sure that when we're talking about it, there's always that centering--of like, these are people, they're their stories,... those numbers have stories associated with them. And not have this disconnect--where like with the federal offices, it was kind of [like] *we think we know what's going on and we wanted to put on this display before the elections to say that we're doing something*. It was really disconnected from the on-the-ground work, so when they opened that first cold case office, they didn't, they didn't even invite local activists that were working on MMIW in that area....It's not only insulting --it's primarily women and two-spirit people that are doing the work on the ground work. It's not only insulting, but it's disrespectful. It's completely disconnected with the reality of what's going on and those that are on the ground know that reality....

I'm more behind-the-scenes kind of support with this and helping bring the story out. So, if I get invited, usually I'm like *hey Deborah, are you available or is anybody else available*, so that way it's--I don't want to be centered as like the one person, you know what I mean? And I know MMIW-USA is like that too....It's a collective effort, and so I think working collectively on that map was really important....When the office is open, I was like, first of all that's not even where the hot spots are. That's weird. And so to use the map for me was a way to visually show and help people understand what they were feeling because people were like, *why are we feeling like this? [It] isn't right. Something's wrong with this cold case office opening, and it feels weird and it feels icky....am not understanding it*. So, for me, [I wanted] to help bring that feeling into a visual representation by showing that the offices are not where the areas are with the most need, with the [most] cases. So...that's why I made that map and then got suggestions from the

group that I was in conversation with about [matters] like why don't you put the number on....I was like, oh yeah, so it went through a couple iterations to be what it was.

And it was shared on social media, right, because that's where a lot of people share things, and social media has been extremely important for the MMIW crisis and helping not only raise awareness, but those reshares have helped people be found. So...a lot of times, I think there's a growing number of people that are like, *oh we don't know if like facebook is worth it anymore or why are...people on Tiktok, or... is Instagram a social justice tool?* [But] all the modalities really are because they're reaching different audiences, and so it's always like looking at how can we get this word out the most....So, being able to produce an article like the one for *Spark*, I think, was to me...important because it helped bring some of the story, the collective story, in, and it helped rhetorically for people to understand what was going on with the misuse of hashtags and other imagery like the color red and, just like,...a lot of the symbolism. Like how I talked about putting the headdresses on the ground as a prop in front of a podium, and stuff like that in the message that sends of conquerer, right? And it's those subliminal messages that we feel, and we're like *am I? Am I misreading this?* But it's these subtle reminders of who's in control.

Laurie Gries:

Right. Your work is so important, and I appreciate your take on the hashtags. I'm, I was thinking of other kind of hashtag movements around this same issue like #AmINext, or I don't know if you've seen The Red Dress Project....They're quite reliant on hashtags too. So..., I came upon this article by Betsy Gardner, and she was talking about "decolonizing data," and, you know, she was talking about how one of the ways that you can do that, which is exactly what you're arguing for too and both, you know, enacting through your own research is the importance of making sure that the data is being produced and distributed by Indigenous people involved with the very issues, right?

Luhui Whitebear:

Right.

Laurie Gries:

And I'm just thinking about--You know, I'm thinking about others who want to do data visual studies, and I'm just wondering, like, if we played around with the idea of--I love this idea of--counter colonial storytelling (I think that's what you called it). I'm just wondering what other strategies you think that academics really need to keep in mind when they're doing digital visual studies from a decolonial perspective or working with Indigenous communities. Like what advice do you have for us, so that we can do this work as ethically as possible?

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, definitely making sure like how--because data tells a story too, right? ...I actually am very nerdy with data and love it, and I know it shapes so many things, and I'm always fascinated with the stories that are told with data and how that in itself is used rhetorically to help shape policy, shape our experiences, tell people something's real or not. So, it's also been used to gaslight

people in some instances, right? And say, like well..., actually it's not as bad as you think it is. So, I think looking at how data is used is super crucial. Right now, in Seattle at the Urban Indian Health Institute, Abigail Echo-Hawk is doing some phenomenal work on on data, and she's using the terminology *data genocide*.

Laurie Gries:

Oh, wow.

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, it's centered around Covid data, so if anybody's interested in that, she has a whole thing about data genocide on their web page with their Covid data, but it's shifting to apply more broadly about, like how people are erased in data and how things are hidden, and things are not as bad, right, as people think they are because of what data is saying. So making sure that when working with data, that it doesn't accidentally create, reinforce that dominant narrative of “well the data says...” or even the use of asterisks. That's another pet peeve of mine...because...we've seen that last Fall, right,...around the elections... (I actually made a t-shirt that had an asterisk on it because it was the something else thing that happened, and so it says “Something Else” and it had an asterisk and I had it underlined that said “Indigenous.) Because we know...who the asterisks are because that's us, right? [It's] Indigenous people a lot of times. It's Pacific Islanders a lot of times. It's other folk that are part of the queer community. It's kind of like, we know you're talking about us when there's an asterisk, and it's really painful because ...the justification is like the numbers aren't significant enough or that they will somehow disclose somebody's identity. And there's a lot of way that data is used in a harmful way in academia too, in those ways where it's like, we're “protecting people.” But you're actually not telling the story.

So...on our campus they did faculty pulse surveys, and I was very adamant about—like--you need to re-examine how you're reporting this data out. You're asking people about-- it had to do with trans identity. They were asking for the information about people's gender identities, but they were only reporting out for cisgender people. And I was like, what does that say? Like ... trans people's experiences are not important? I'm on faculty senate at our university, so I'm able to bring those conversations in and have us really think about data. So, I think as people use it, those kind of things are important. Or like how it makes decisions.

So like with the cold case map, the data wasn't even used properly. It's like you didn't even...Did you even look at the data? Look at where these cases are, come on. So, it's really interesting, and a lot of times, the most reliable data about Indigenous folk or other folk from highly erased identities is by their own communities. So like finding those connections of who has that, so knowing that nationally there's no database for like MMIW cases, or knowing nationally that people are misraced with the data as is, that those numbers are not always accurate. So [looking to] grassroots organizers like Sovereign Bodies Institutes, another one, or MMIW-USA or Urban Indian Health Institute--Indigenous based organizations that are...gathering their own data. We know that [much] data presented is wrong....

There was a report that was published, I think, it was in the winter about the MMIW cases in Oregon. They were so inaccurate. I was...appalled, and it was a federal report...It was very interesting because they actually used a picture (it was my daughter [who] actually took the picture) when governor Brown signed House Bill 2625 in 2019 in Oregon, which called for the inter-jurisdictional investigation on MMIW cases in Oregon. They use that picture and have my name in there because it...was my picture, and it was an article that was produced through our university publications because I was there and associated with OSU and was at the signing with her and stuff. But it was really interesting that they used that, but never reached out ... for any information, and they didn't reach out to MMIW-USA who is based out of Portland, Oregon or anybody else, any of the other groups that are doing the work. This data was presented, unfortunately, with not accurate numbers. You can see it if you're involved in the work. You can see the inaccuracies, but when you're not immersed (because not everybody can do this), it's really hard.

I don't do on-the-ground because, like I said, I have other responsibilities, and I do more of the behind-the-scenes support and policy kind of stuff and like writing the article for *Spark* and stuff like that with them. But it is really heartbreaking because you know every number is a story. A and a lot of people are, like, this is really overwhelming, but not everybody has to be that immersed in it to help. But because not everybody is immersed in it, you rely on what's presented. So, for this federal report to give inaccurate information that's going out all over newspapers that are online..., the only people that know that it's wrong are the people that are involved directly in the work.

Laurie Gries:  
Right...

Luhui Whitebear:  
Yeah, so it's creating this alternative story of our reality of what's going on.

Laurie Gries:  
Right and so for many readers who don't even check data, right, they just trust the data that they're seeing, don't even know that the multiple traumas that are being produced right on top of this long-standing history through data.

Luhui Whitebear:  
Yeah, I know that was a really long answer, but...

Laurie Gries:  
No, I loved it. I mean you've given us a lot to think about, and I appreciate that.

I wanted to speak, I wanted *you* to speak about...I wanted to hear your disposition about the relationship between, say, scholarship and activism.

I was wondering if you could speak to that because I mean, personally, I've been...really thinking a lot about that lately. I've been working on what I'm calling a swastika counter project where I've been collecting data. I've been basically kind of tracking the uptick of swastikas that have been surfacing on the streets of the United States during the Trump administration and just kind of tracking who they're targeting, where they're landing, how communities are responding. And really thinking about how I can use my scholarship to help create reliable data on what they call low-level incidents of hate, right? And so this is very much my scholarship, but it's also very much a public digital humanities project that will rely heavily on digital visual studies to work for social change and that is something that's new to me. But it seems that the link between scholarship and activism seems inherently linked for you, and I was wondering if you could just speak into that a bit more.

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, for sure. It's totally related. My scholarship completely has a huge focus on Indigenous activism, in particular, and so does my work. My work on campus is supporting students at a cultural resource center, but the centers were themselves born out of student activism in the late 60s and early 70s on our campus.

Laurie Gries:

Oh, cool.

Luhui Whitebear:

It's all interrelated, right? But for me that link is really important because you're helping inform people in the classroom of what's going on and when you're involved in the communities too, you're helping bring that information to communities too. So everything that I've done with advancing my degree, I've always intended to be able to use in the community. So like, as I'm learning in the classroom as a graduate student, it was very much focused on...or not focused on. It was like I was putting what I was learning into action right away. Like my work in the center are in conversations in community and helping unpack things with community members that maybe they didn't know about before. And having the tools especially through, like the focus with, rhetoric and having such a heavy component of Indigenous rhetoric being able to kind of help understand what's going on in another way and say, like, have you thought about this? And like bring[ing] in our own culturally based ways of communication and helping unpack some of the experiences that community is facing. So that was really important to me and also like understanding how important it is to be able to tell that story public facing, or in a classroom, or through a journal article, or through a book chapter--being able to present that story out that's highly erased.

So I think it's a back and forth for me all the time, like my scholarship informs my activism at this point and my activism is part of my scholarship. So they just work together now and it's always this focus on going back to community. Like how is this benefiting Indigenous peoples more broadly? How is it impacting my own tribal community in California? Are the tribal communities that I'm around up in this area? So it's like how do I use what I'm learning in a way for the people, and that's really what it focuses in on for me.

Laurie Gries:

Yeah, I was thinking about...the future potential of digital visual studies for activist purposes, and I was just wondering....Like...I've been thinking for a long time about how one of the issues here in the Boulder area is that we have a lot of these historical signs that are documenting history from a dominant perspective, right? So...I've been long thinking about, well, what if there was like an augmented reality project where, you know, students worked with tribal members who were still living in the area to create alternative histories so that when, you know, people are going up to the signs, there could be some kind of scan, and they could actually, you know, pull up this alternative history. That's just one idea, right, and I know that actually there...I think that there was a student, an Indigenous student from Canada who actually created an app to do this kind of work. But I'm just thinking about all of the potentials. I mean seeing the map that you created and then thinking about some of the other projects I've seen where digital visual studies is actually working for social justice issues. Like if you had the opportunity to lead some of these projects, like a digital visual studies projects working for Indigenous activism or even activism around your local community, what kind of projects could you imagine that um those of us who are interested in this area of research could help support?

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, I really like that one that you were talking about with the history marker signs, and... maybe even calling it a more full history instead of alternative history, right? Because...it's totally part of it, but it's dominated with a single like narrative of what that history is, so like offering that more full history I think that's really important.

Laurie Gries:

I like that. Because...it doesn't center, it doesn't center the dominant narrative, right? Right, so yeah, thank you for that correction.

Luhui Whitebear:

No problem. Yeah see...conversations like this, right, are always awesome.

Laurie Gries:

Yeah.

Luhui Whitebear:

But I just think there's just so much information out there, and there's so many ways to tell it. And so like when I was thinking about the visual pieces of Indigenous activism, it's crucial--that's what draws people to the issues. If you think about the NODAPL! Movement, ..... people know #NODAPL! but then there's...the signs that say “Mní wičhóni” (“For Water is life”) and then the image of...the thunder person, and the black snake, and all these pieces that are connected to Indigenous stories and resistance that people start to see and they associate with something. So being able to spread that across--and you're seeing that with Line 3 now. We've seen that with the Keystone XL, you see it with MMIW with the red hand, and you see it all across Indigenous activist work. There's some kind of visual representation that's grounded in story or

in that resistance moment, and those are, I think, that those visual representations are what help the story survive over time too, right? So, if...even thinking about something as far as the AIM logo from the American Indian Movement that was established in the late 60s. That image is still used today, and it goes across time, so it connects all these stories over the decades of where the American Indian movement is now, and what are they focusing on. So they are connector pieces--those visual orientations, especially digitally in the day and age we're in now with the use of technology to help spread things, it's even more important. So people see it, they're inspired, but they're also, *like wow I didn't know about that*, and it pulls people in to learn more. So that's so important especially for Indigenous communities because..the story is not told like through dominant news media or really at all much outside of Indigenous communities, so being able to spread that on social media and have folk outside of Indigenous communities understand what those images mean and that overarching connecting piece.

Laurie Gries:  
Right.

Luhui Whitebear:  
Right? So I think...it's super important. But as far as helping continue things and think about--there's so much and there's stories everywhere, right? And one of the things that another faculty over at OSU works on with his ethnohistories class is a social justice tour of Corvallis. That's Dr. Natchee Barnd in Ethnic Studies. He creates with his class these whole stories, and you take people on these tours, and there's little booklets that help people learn about the local history. I tell my kids those stories all the time. They know a bunch of them by heart...

Laurie Gries:  
Wow.

Luhui Whitebear:  
...by now I'm sure. We just did a tour for like the principals and vice principals at the local schools during their districts in-service, so that was really cool to have that connection with the local k-12. They were just like, *whoa*, and one of the things I mentioned to them is: it's like there's stories on top of stories on top of stories just in this one location. In like the story of this one person from this newspaper article from way back when in Corvallis where the post office is now that everybody goes to (used to be like the Chinese laundromat)....What are all those stories that are layered on top of each other, right?...One of the other ones was the American Dream Pizza place where people know what that is. It's a local restaurant, local owned. They're really big in this area around supporting local and stuff,...but it used to be like a barber shop with one of the few black shoe shines outside, and so what story is connected to that? But now, it's the story of like people hang out and gather, and it's the story about like food and local economy, and it's still a story of local economy if you look back farther too. So it's kind of cool to see those kind of connections through that tour.

I was in the first class that constructed one of the tours, so it's like super near and dear to me, because it was really fun to help see what would happen. And it's just continued over the years

with that class and grown. But I think finding ways to engage students in local histories and understanding those histories also could have been moments of activism. How do you help retell them and bring in other folk to learn with you--I think is really awesome.

Laurie Gries:

Are those tours supported by a web of digital archives? Are they being digitally archived?

Luhui Whitebear:

I think some of them are and like you would have more information on it ,but I know some of them are on--because we have the multicultural archives that has a ton of stuff digitized at OSU, and I think some of them are on there.

Laurie Gries:

Right, it'd be really interesting to try to-- could you--I think I heard that there are, you are already creating brochures to go along with them, but then to have web pages that people yeah if they could have virtual tours maybe even.

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, ... I think that's one of the goals-- to be able to...go to a place and you can follow it on an app or something like that. There's so many cool things you can do with technology now to help tell those stories. I know for us during the pandemic with the work I do at the center, we shifted pretty much everything online. I was like, *hey cool, I this is now a digital archive of our events.*

Laurie Gries

Right.

Luhui Whitebear:

Because they're on our Facebook page, and so like [who were] all the speakers we brought in? Who were the student leaders? What was the engagement like? What were people excited about in those moments of time? ...There's tons of things you can do on Youtube or on Instagram or on Facebook....Using social media modalities, especially beyond the pandemic, is gonna help be that repository for those digital archives too, of these stories of what was going on. I think that's super cool, and I'm really excited that down the road, like in 20 years, students that work at the center can go back and be like, *oh this is what was going on* and then they can still learn from it too. Tme that's exciting.

Laurie Gries

Absolutely. Ellen Cushman, who is a writing studies scholar, has been working hard on...decolonizing the archives and working to help digitize languages, I think, from the Cherokee tribes....She's written a lot of really useful stuff for us to think through when it comes to archiving. I was thinking about a point that I read in a piece, I think, that was written about you published recently on [an] OSU website. You were talking about how one of the most pressing matters was to make sure that people understand that Indigenous people are still here and...I'm just wondering: is there a tension in doing historical kind of work and the need to make explicit

and clear and transparent that...we don't need to just do historical work. We also need to do present work to help everyone keep in the forefront of their minds Indigenous issues and communities.

Luhui Whitebear:

Yeah, totally. I think it's important to do both because like the historic piece is not well told, and like, it's always sad when I'm teaching classes, and people...say they felt betrayed by their education up until college...from not knowing some of this stuff. And also, like you have to have the access to higher ed, right? So I think that to learn some of these things---there's always that need for people to learn the history because it's not well told, right. outside of like usually a couple paragraphs in a textbook. I think that there's a lot of movement towards change in that in public education right now, which is really exciting to see, not just in Oregon, but in other states as well, to help bring Indigenous histories in, and be like, this is part of our story. They're doing that with black histories and everybody's history. It's all our history; it's not just like these single histories. It's all meshed together. So for me, that's exciting, but until we get to the stage where people actually know our history more fully, we're always going to have that need to understand the past, to understand the issues now. So that's one of the things—What I try to do in a lot of my native studies classes, or Indigenous studies classes on campus, is to be able to be like this happened and that's why MMIW is happening. Like the Major Crimes Act was passed way back in the 1800s because there was this dominant framework of what justice looked like and that's why we have this huge MMIW crisis--because of jurisdictional issues. Or it could be something...about the allotment and the way that treaties were written to understand the high rates of cancer now because of uranium mining and Navajo nation---stuff like that....I try to bring them together, and I think that's really important. That way, people aren't like only viewing us in the past; they're understanding us in the present and understanding the issues too that are being faced and [that] there's historic context of why these issues are here. It's not like people are just like, oh I want to be the center of attention; it's like no, like really, there's literally federal law and policy that was passed that make these issues a reality now. How can we work together to help heal not just Indigenous communities but our collective whole too?

So, for me, that's part of it, but a lot of times, it is surprising when people...had no idea there was native people....So,...usually...unless you're in a heavily populated or tribal school, usually people have not had an Indigenous teacher until college. That's hands down a reality. And so for people to see us as capable of producing knowledge is already a challenge, even if you have your PhD and you're teaching a class. You have to--it's like you don't have to justify you know what you're talking about, but a lot of times, people are like: do you know what you're talking about? Which is sad; there shouldn't be that perception of Indigenous people as being capable of producing knowledge. So that's a really long answer to say, again, to say...you have to do both because we're so invisible eyes in the reality we live in now, and our histories are also like undertold, so there's this huge double erasure both in the past and the present. So...that's why it's, yeah, it's sad that we have to still help remind people we're still here, and no, we don't all live on reservations, and not everybody had tepees, and I actually have Wi-fi and cable too.

So stuff like that--where it's like...I remember my mom bringing this up. When I was in elementary school presenting to some of my classes, I remember her telling my peers we live in a house.

Laurie Gries:  
Oh my gosh.

Luhui Whitebear:  
We actually didn't grow up with electricity, so that wasn't a good example in that context, but she's like we live in a house, and we drive a car to and stuff like that. It's just mind-boggling that you have to tell somebody that.

Laurie Gries:  
Yeah.....Well, thank you so much.

Is there anything else you want to share about, you know, making connections between digital visual studies and activist work in behalf...

Luhui Whitebear:  
I would say that just to remember that it's completely intertwined and they work well together and sometimes there's this almost separation that doesn't need to happen because it's actually totally related.

Laurie Gries:  
Right, right. Well, thank you so much for being here. I so appreciate your time and energy. I also saw, I think, that you're participating in a collection that is being edited by Lisa King. Is that correct? *Decolonial possibilities?*

Luhui Whitebear:  
Oh yeah. That one. I was doing a lot of writing during the pandemic.

Laurie Gries:  
Right, just really quickly, we can give a plug for that project. So for those who are listening, the project's called *Decolonial Possibilities: Indigenously Rooted Practices In Rhetoric And Writing*.

Luhui Whitebear:  
Yeah, that one is--I'm focused on a little bit on land acknowledgements on campus and how those are used and how the center's mission statement was constructed and kind of the messaging sent when it was reliant on regulatory race reporting kind of demographic information. And so, how we reshape that as a community, and how...it was a community project in representing ourselves beyond that construct....And, then, of course, the land acknowledgement piece too.

Laurie Gries:

Great. That's been that's a very interesting issue, I think, and so I'm glad you're writing about it, because I think there needs to be some clarification, right, on what our responsibilities are.

Luhui Whitebear:

Yea, and I'm excited about that project too. I can't remember the timeline for that one. It's a little bit out too.

Laurie Gries:

Okay. well great. We'll we'll look forward to it, and thank you, again, for being here so much. I wish you all the safety and health possible with you and your community and just all the success with all your activist endeavors and your scholarship and all your current projects.

Luhui Whitebear:

Thank you so much for having me and for listening.

Laurie Gries:

Okay, yeah. I learned a lot. I really appreciate hearing from you.