

4 Ancestors

The carvings on the cliff walls became the story board for evening story telling where a fire would burn nearby and cast light up so the indentations would be visible. The gentle breeze would make the flames dance and give the illusion of movement to the petroglyphs. The Ancient Ones would appear to dance before the audience as the stories would relate the relationship humans have with these spirits. The relationships and stories continue to develop among us as we struggle to survive and function as tribal people in a world wrought with alienation and denigration for those who follow a spiritual disciple. The need to present a visual experience that coincides with the teachings is critical as opportunities to interact with settings conducive to this ancient tradition are oppressed. Utilizing the creative skills afforded to me through contemporary art provides another approach to demonstrate the dynamic dialogue that occurs between humans and those benevolent energies around us.

The “4 Ancestors” are represented in a field of green color with action painting developed from Zen Buddhist decoration on pottery through Abstract Expressionism. The color scheme is intended to generate a small degree of multistable perception¹ by juxtaposing complementary colors in close proximity as well as causing an optical illusion through a technique referred to in art as subject/ground², where the ground (or field of color) in 4 Ancestors is green. The approach is more organic than more popular works that utilize this technique in such styles as Op Art, but the intent is to cause a slight vibration to occur between the shapes and colors in the work in a similar manner as a way to generate a similar experience to what one might have while viewing petroglyphs illuminated by a fire at night. The effort is intended to convey a visual without being creepy or eerie as this isn't a ghost story.

I've never been comfortable with the labels associated with the interrelationship between humans and the Ancient Ones³ provided through the English language. The wording brings forth a preconceived idea from other sources which provide a distraction from what is being said. One still needs to say it. More specific relationships come with an implied persona that isn't always accurate in common language. It is important for a person to develop an understanding of these experiences with some guidance but without the general societal overview. As one spends time in the natural world and observes the workings of the elements at a base level a different understanding evolves. The Thunder Beings⁴ aren't mystical creatures of a primitive people but an interplay of earth, sky, water, and fire. A person can and does spend a life time observing and interacting with the elements in relation to their personal reality. My own experiences have not always followed the common information one can easily access. As I developed a relationship with my surroundings an awareness developed which didn't fit any previous known order with respect to my person or place in this world today. I started having dreams about a buffalo (bison). During meditations I would sense the energy around me that I refer to as “Yellow Buffalo”. I associated the energy of the south with yellow in my personal “medicine wheel”⁵, which is the place of beginning in my spiritual outlook on life.

Yellow Buffalo dreams gave way to dreams about White Buffalo Calf Woman.⁶ Sometimes it would be a dream of a white buffalo calf dancing around her mother. Other times the dream would develop in a similar manner from the story of the two men who encountered the White Buffalo Calf Woman who later brought the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman Pipe to the Catawba People. Later a band of Catawba relocated to the Black Hills area of South Dakota with this Sacred Pipe. It is still with descendants of this People in South Dakota. Meanwhile, the buffalo calf would merge with the image of a woman who would walk forward and speak in my dreams. Over time other experiences developed wherein I would see White Buffalo Calf Woman. One experience was during a sweat lodge ceremony during which I observed a light appear over the stones in the darkness of the lodge. As I cleared the moisture from my eyes I could see a form develop not unlike depictions of Morning Star found in tribal

cultures of southern New Mexico. The lightness of being resembled that of fireworks where a strong light emanated before me but there were no sparks associated with something burning. I would watch as the energy from this presence with radiate out into the lodge and provide a blessing to all present. Others present were prompted to observe the phenomena and related a similar experience as well.

As my journey continued forward, there came a period wherein I was no longer integrated into the Spiritual Circle that had evolved around me. This Circle included these Ancient Ones that had been present for many years as well as the people in my everyday life. When the challenge at hand was finally resolved and I was able to reintegrate with the common realm of every day life the Circle of Ancient Ones began to return and participate in my life. One day while I was homeless and living out of my car I went to get a clean T-shirt out of the plastic clothes basket in the back seat. I could smell this strong odor which was familiar but uncommon in this situation. It took me a few days to remember and identify the odor which was present throughout the clean clothes but not anywhere else in the car, including the bag of dirty clothes in the car trunk. My clean clothes smelled like a buffalo wallow. When I related this to Maggie her immediate response was "Buffalo Woman paid you a visit."

During most of the period of "homelessness" I spent a lot of time in Morristown, Tennessee. The primary road coming into Morristown from the north is Buffalo Trail. The valley where Morristown developed in recent times had been a large meadow where a herd of Eastern Black Buffalo (*bison nigra*) grazed. They would migrate to the river a short distance away to drink. That is how the Buffalo Trail came to get its name. The spiritual energy of the buffalo herd is still in the land around me. The spirit of the herd participates in my reintegration into this world after I returned from the spiritual journey to the Land of No Light. As I mark this trail back into the casual reality of everyday life I utilize the methods derived from a diverse resource of international and inter-cultural systems. The Electric Buffalo of contemporary technology dances through cyber medicine wheel out into the web of Spider Woman, Grandmother of all things. We are all related.

The 4 Ancestors are here. Enjoy your time with them. Wadough.

Oliver Loveday © May 6, 2013 6:30 pm EDT

Reference:

1. Multistable perceptual phenomena are a form of perceptual phenomena in which there are unpredictable sequences of spontaneous subjective changes. While usually associated with visual perception, such phenomena can be found for auditory and olfactory percepts. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multistable_Perception)
2. For more on "figure/ground" theory in Op art see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op_art#Black-and-white_and_the_figure-ground_relationship
3. Nûññě'hī: The Nunnehi are a race of immortal spirit people in Cherokee folklore. In the Cherokee language, Nunnehi literally means "The People Who Live Anywhere," but it is often translated into English as "The People Who Live Forever," or simply "The Immortals." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N%C3%BB%C3%B1n%C3%AB%27h%C3%AF>
4. More on the Thunder Beings: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherokee_mythology#The_thunder_beings
5. For more on "medicine wheel": http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine_wheel
6. While the story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman has older origins than the one cited in the link provided, this is the current popular story in brief, which provides a quick introduction to the topic: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Buffalo_Calf_Woman



4 Ancestors

Watercolor

9 x 12 inches | 22.9 x 30.5 cm | rice paper

May 5, 2013

\$350.00 (USD)

The 4 Ancestors are represented by gray marks across the mid-section of the painting.



Detail of far-right midsection.



Detail of near-right midsection.



Detail of near-left midsection.



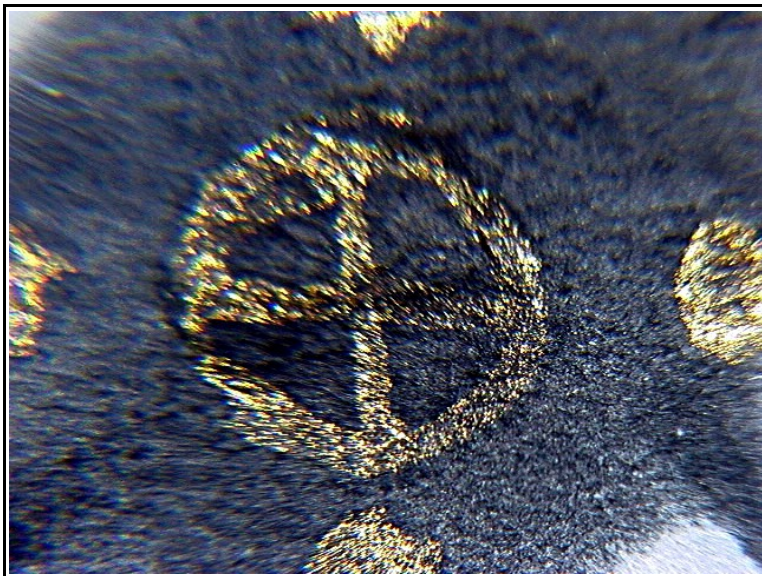
Detail of far-left midsection.



Detail of lower left area of painting.



Detail of upper left area of painting.



An example of a "Medicine Wheel" in gold ink over Sumi ink.

"Formation of Nothing" (detail)
Sumi ink and gold ink on rice paper
13 x 9.5 inches | 33 x 24 cm
April 15, 2013



A view of the Buffalo Trail looking northeast from Henry Street.
Morristown Tennessee November 4, 2011

She was calling into the night
Rhythms of the night
She was calling into the darkness
Waves of layers in the night
And she was watching in the night
We are all in her light
We are all sounds she is calling for
Can we answer in the night?
Can we hear her calling?
Calling in the night
 Oh, she is calling
Calling for our light
 Oh, she is calling
She is standing in a circle

Calling
Calling
We can form a circle of light
Calling
Calling
There is a circle in the night
We are a spark in her dark
Call
Crow caws. Ho!

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For more information regarding the work of Oliver Loveday visit www.lovedaystudio.com.

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