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A mile in her moccasins

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Raven's Eye	Brian Lin, Raven's Eye Writer, Vancouver
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In a world plagued by fear and uncertainty, Metis performance artist Kerriann Cardinal wants us to experience something we could all use a little of-a grandmother's TLC.

In her one-woman show A Mile in my Moccasins at grunt gallery on Nov. 28, Kerriann offered an intimate look into her tender relationship with her grandmother, a traditional Metis woman who used an "X" to sign her name.

Created by Cardinal and first performed at this June's Talking Stick Cabaret, A Mile in my Moccasins is about the Aboriginal cultural traditions she experienced growing up.

She calls the piece a "physical story." Combing storytelling and physical theatre, she wants the audience to live the story, rather than just listen to it. Compared to her last performance, the focus has shifted from Metis traditions to learning more about Cardinal's grandmother as a person, and the different worlds the two women represent.

"I want to share with the audience who my grandmother was, as well as the links and contrasts between her life and mine," said Cardinal.

"For example, I have a job to support myself whereas she used to hunt moose to survive. Her first language was Cree and mine is English," she said. "I probably know four words in Cree... Yet

whenever I hear someone speaking it, I am immediately reminded of her."

While she was growing up, Cardinal knew her grandmother was different.

"We used to take Greyhounds to visit relatives and attend powwows," she recalled. "But I've always wanted to go to Disneyland, my friends were all going on vacation to Disneyland, but we never had any vacations. None of us took 'vacations.'"

Although Cardinal's grandmother died years ago, her legacy lives on as Cardinal explores what her heritage means to her in today's society.

"My experience is not unusual," she said. "But it's significant to me."

Apparently it is significant to some members of her audience as well.

"I had one woman come up to me and told me she had lost her grandmother just four months prior. And she really appreciated seeing my relationship with mine brought to life."

A Mile in my Moccasins was part of a larger performance art festival in Vancouver-LIVE Biennial of Performance Art. LIVE was the second installment of the LIVE Project organized by grunt gallery. Preceded by Live at the End of the Century in 1999, LIVE took an unusually intimate approach this year and featured one solo-performer a day for six weeks, from Oct. 13 to Nov. 30.

1425 views

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