

Transcript: Anne Riley, *the heart of the matter*, 2020, video with sound. Collection of the artist

>> So, there's this work that I want to make and it's -- yeah, it started, the idea started from -- maybe during this, yeah, during this pandemic my nation has started to upload language different things in Dene for community who ended outside of the res to start learning the language. And it's something that I really deeply, really desired to learn this. And because I think language is so crucial. And so, they started uploading this, these videos, and the language teacher actually happens to be my auntie. And so, one of the phrases that they recently uploaded, and was this phrase in Dene, and the phrase means I love you. And I yeah, this like hit me pretty deeply, because I guess it was really, I was really -- yeah like - - yearned for that phrase for so long. And -- when they -- when I saw that, and I saw her -- like teaching us how to say it -- yeah, it was a pretty big moment. And so -- I wrote it down and -- I -- I've been sitting with it and I think for me one of the biggest things about learning this phrase and this desire is to -- know how differently it would feel to say I love you in Dene to myself -- then it does -- then how I say it in English. And really thinking about how how that how I might understand that phrase differently saying it to myself in Dene, and what energetically semantically, and how, what that shifts in my body that I might not even be aware of. And when I start saying it and as I'm saying it -- that to me is this really -- yeah, like this really important thing that is, you know, could be seen as this invisible thing but I know it's there. And this kind of Dene love, to think in love in Dene. And I think for me that gets to the heart of the matter, you know? That's gets to, yeah, why I do what I do. And that, it, yeah, like those shifts might not be so it may not happen quite quickly, but you know, thinking of this as a work and making this a work was really, for me between not literally making a didactic work where I'm saying the phrase, and that becomes the art practice or the art that becomes the artwork because it's sacred. And so for me to make a work about this is -- this is my way and my negotiation as a Dene person making in a system like the art world and what I keep for myself, and what I share. And what does it mean to make art during a pandemic? And how we all need to shift. And how will we be different after this? And so, this is my negotiation, this work and what I'm sharing with all of you. And so, yeah this is that work.