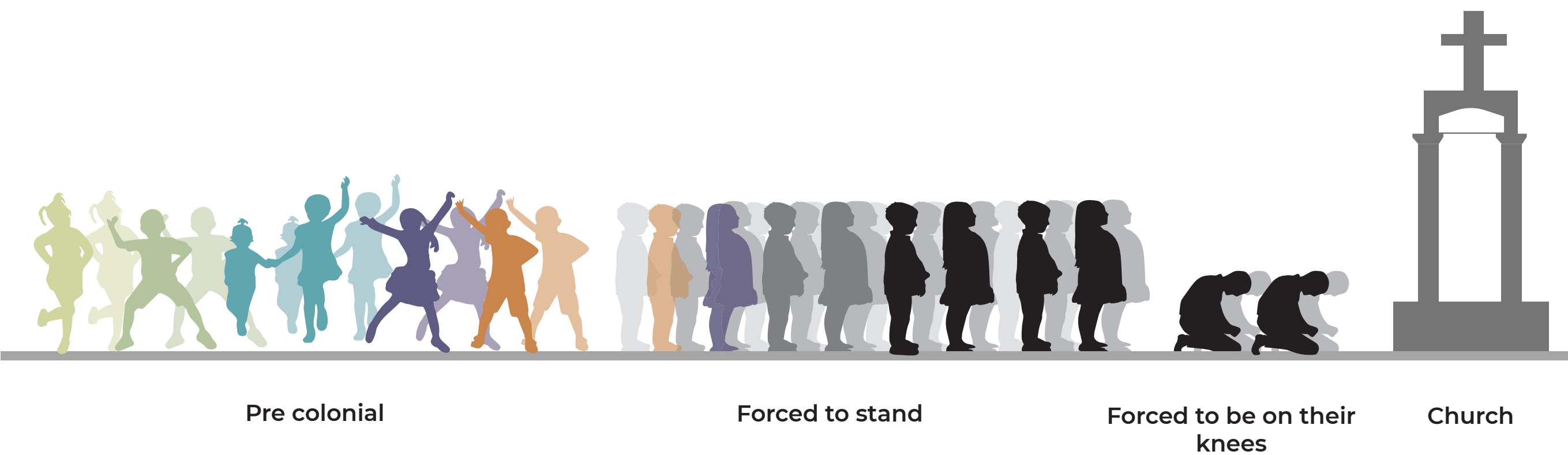


I OWN YOU



Diagram of Transformation



As one of a very few Indigenous architects in Canada, and as I complete my PhD in architecture, reconceptualising the plinth and site of the former statue dedicated to Sir John A MacDonald is of particular importance to me. This is even more so as I prepare to complete research for the Architecture of Traditional Indigenous Medicine and Healing: the Design of Indigenous Health and Wellness Facilities for Traditional Indigenous Medicine and Healing Practices. The racist, bigot so called founder of this Nation of Canada conceptualised, planned, and implemented the residential school system to get the “Indian out of the child,” initiating a project of mass genocide that nearly decimate my and other First Nations and Indigenous Peoples throughout the land. My grandmother Doris and my mother Vivienne were just two of hundreds of thousands of these children; the ones that were lucky to survive. Nevertheless, MacDonald’s program robbed us of our language and many of our meaningful cultural practices, as it has done to so many others. However, while remaining resilient,we are remembering and relearning those practices, and despite the great suffering we have survived.

The toppling of the statue of this designer of death has left a necessary opportunity for memory. The reason why, along with another PhD candidate, a Latina woman and community activists, we are proposing to use the plinth and site in memory of those hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children who did not survive, as well as the survivors of this horrendous tragedy.

In the place of MacDonald’s statue, we propose to locate a dark and imposing figure representing the church, the main institution in charge of the residential schools. This figure will be looking down at a sea of sculptures of Indigenous children of differing ages and therefore heights. The ones closest to the institution, will be spaced in a grid of twenty rows long and eight columns wide. They will be dressed in the outfits and haircuts that were forced upon them when taken to the residential school, standing at attention, and looking at the figure. Furthest from the figure, the children will be dressed in traditional pre colonial Indigenous clothing and hair. They will be rolling, jumping, chasing butterflies, and acting mid-pose playing, as children should be allowed to live. With each row increasing nearer to the church, they will be represented isolated, controlled, with less freedom and enjoyment, as was the case for thousands of them.

We truly believe the power of this installation, located in a space that symbolize the effort of collective decolonisation, will represent the consequences of a horrendous system imposed during decades, but more importantly the resilient and powerful strength of Indigenous people.

Proposed Materials

