

Mentor's Introduction for Kimberly Baker

Rita L. Irwin *The University of British Columbia*

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Mentor's Introduction to Kimberly Baker

Rita L. Irwin

University of British Columbia,
Vancouver, BC

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Kimberly Baker and her outstanding doctoral work to you. Over the last century, art education research has given us a tremendous wealth of knowledge -- from the perspective of western colonization. Kimberly Baker's research recognizes this important work but goes much further by questioning taken-for-granted assumptions guiding our practices and awakening us to indigenous perspectives that have permeated many cultures world-wide for centuries yet have gone largely unnoticed. In particular, her ongoing doctoral research is concerned with "*Wayfinding peace: Museums in conflict zones*" and focuses on a group of peace museums across Kenya. During her preliminary work in several of these sites, she was struck by the differences in peace museum conceptions. Many peace museums around the world have focused on particular events or specific people with the objective of memorialising violence. In Kenya, peace heritage traditions have existed before, during and since colonization. Today, these traditions are practiced in museums that are committed to accessing elder's knowledge of peace heritage traditions as they are enacted through many artforms (e.g. dances, stories, songs etc.). Working directly with community members, the museums have created community-based peace education programs that encourage peace and

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reconciliation during every day experiences. The result is the creation of indigenous relational aesthetics that permeates the artistic and linguistic memories of people working together to generate peace. Kimberly's doctoral work is committed to understanding the intricacies of the Kenyan peace museums as a way to understand the reconciliation practices embraced in these communities while shedding light on alternative practices to liberal peace strategies permeating much of our Western contemporary discourse. As she suggests, the results have great potential in building peaceful relationships and sustaining peaceful societies.