

Western resource shelf- Detail 1991



Figure 12. *Western resource shelf- Detail 1991*, Mary Longman Mixed

In 1991, I was accepted into the Masters program of Fine Arts at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NASCAD) in Halifax. During this time, I continued with my politically active work, exploring themes of representation such as stereotypes and interpretations of Aboriginal history. *Western resource shelf* (Figure 12) examined stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples in terms of identifying types and sources. The most predominant stereotypes of Aboriginals were perpetuated from Hollywood movies, kitsch tourist items, and biased history texts. The top shelf displays film reel canisters, referencing film media that has been a powerful tool in perpetuating the stereotypes of Aboriginal, particularly those of a dangerous murderer and the loser to the colonial hero. Even though many of these movies are fiction-based, they have influenced the public to the extent that they are believed to be true representations of history. The middle shelf depicts rows of plastic 'Indian' dolls, 150 to be exact, that reference the multitude of kitsch images of 'Indians' found in tourist shops. And lastly, the bottom shelf has leather-bound history texts, with the first volume starting in 1492, referring to the starting point which typical North American history texts focus history on, the arrival of the earliest explorers. Subtle

semantics through time reinforce the dominant colonial perspective by reinforcing categorisations that suggest that 'prehistoric' is a mere preamble to the 'historic' period.