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Figure 1: Bickel, Barbara. (2006). *Re/Turning to Her Performance Ritual*. Vancouver, BC: Vancouver School of Theology. Video stills. Click on the bottom video still to play the video documentary of the process and performance.¹

Video credits: Production-Barbara Bickel; Editing-Barbara Bickel, Camera-Barbara Bickel, Cindy Lou Griffith, R. Michael Fisher, Jennifer Peterson; Co-creators & Performers-Barbara Bickel & Tannis Hugill

We are White middle-class woman artist-educators-priestesses with a combined sixty years of art practices that have been infused by Spirit. Tannis is a dance and drama therapist and Barbara an artist educator. We met in 2002 while volunteering for an annual women's spirituality conference.⁴ Our mutual interest in art as a transformative and healing spiritual practice led us to this project, which also served as an important precursor to the group a/r/tographic dissertation study led by Barbara with women on the Women's Spirituality Celebration planning team (Bickel, 2008)⁵. As co-researchers in our a/r/tographic process, our goal was to stay connected to Spirit, which meant being willing to work with/in the unknown. To remain present to the void and to trust that the inquiry as led by Spirit was a requirement for new knowledge to surface, taking us beyond our "egoic" self-understanding as humans. We both also understand performance ritual to be the manifestation of art and Spirit through our bodies and the body serves as a "site of scholarly awareness and corporeal literacy" (Spry, 2001, p. 706). Gesturing, breathing, sounding bodies were the "guide" that repeatedly *Re/Turned us to Her*.

Opening to the unknown of inquiry echoes the "apophatic" spiritual path, which entails a contemplative and dialectical practice of being within "intuitive darkness" (Shannon, 1981, p. 12) as a way of "knowing by unknowing" (Shantz, 1999, p. 65). This apophatic study, which took place over an eleven-month period, focuses on the collaborative art-making experience of the co-a/r/tographers with Spirit. Our understanding of

4. The conference is called the Women's Spirituality Celebration (1991-2011). It began as an ecumenical Christian conference on the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus and in 2001 officially shifted its mandate to a multi-faith conference in response to the presence of women of diverse religious and Spiritual practices on the planning team. Since 2007, the conference has taken place in Vancouver, British Columbia at the Centre for Peace. Prior to 2007 and during this study it took place on the UBC campus at the Vancouver School of Theology. For more information on the conference see <http://www.wscelebration.com>

5. Barbara would like to acknowledge her dissertation supervisor Dr. Rita L. Irwin, as Rita in her wisdom suggested this research project be done as a pilot project for the larger study. The learning and new understandings that came from this pilot study working with one collaborator had a positive impact on the larger study where Barbara worked with thirteen collaborators.