

FINALISTS OF THE 2025 MICHIF YOUTH ART CONTEST

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The theme of my piece is exploring the species and natural elements of BC that hold meaning to me as a young Metis individual. The moccasins I have designed represent my connection to my homeland and heritage. The dark moosehide represents the soil that nourishes the earth, and the vamps I designed to include the Rocky Mountains, rivers, and florals, all representing natural elements that mean home to me in British Columbia. The species I have included are moose, rabbit, and sheep. The moose teaches us sustainability, respect, and gratitude, and acts as a reminder of the responsibility humans have to care for the earth and its inhabitants.

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The rabbit teaches us resilience and wisdom. Rabbits' portrayal can be contradictory, brave and cowardly, reflecting the complexities of human nature. The purpose of my artwork is to highlight the significance of our land in BC and encourage viewers to appreciate and respect the plants and species. I hope to inspire viewers to recognize the beauty of our land, the importance of preserving it for future generations, and to remind viewers that they are an integral part of the natural world. My artistic influences are deeply rooted in my heritage and homeland, and teachings that I have learned from Elders, community members, and other Metis artists that I carry forward to new generations. My inspiration comes from my personal experiences living in BC and being out on the land, connecting myself to Mother Earth.

The materials and methods used combine traditional Metis Heritage arts with Contemporary Metis arts. These handmade moccasins are made using dark tanned moosehide, with wool vamps featuring natural silk embroidery. I designed the vamps to include natural elements that represent my home in Northern BC such as florals and mountains, and the embroidery is fully hand stitched. Inside are sheepskin shearling insoles, and I've trimmed the moccasins with grey rabbit fur. I have sewn them using the traditional pucker-toe method, with respect to Lynette La Fontaine (Metis Artist) who taught me these techniques in a 2024 Heritage Arts workshop. The silk embroidery is a combination of Metis Silk embroidery techniques, and contemporary styles. I learned silk techniques from Metis artist Jo-Ina Young, in a 2023 workshop hosted by the Metis Nation of British Columbia. My artwork is made to honor the Earth and its species, the process of designing and assembling the moccasins connects me to my Metis heritage, and to the land and animals I work with. Wearing these moccasins connects the wearer to the land, bringing a sense of connection and belonging, while acknowledging the importance of living in harmony with the natural world.