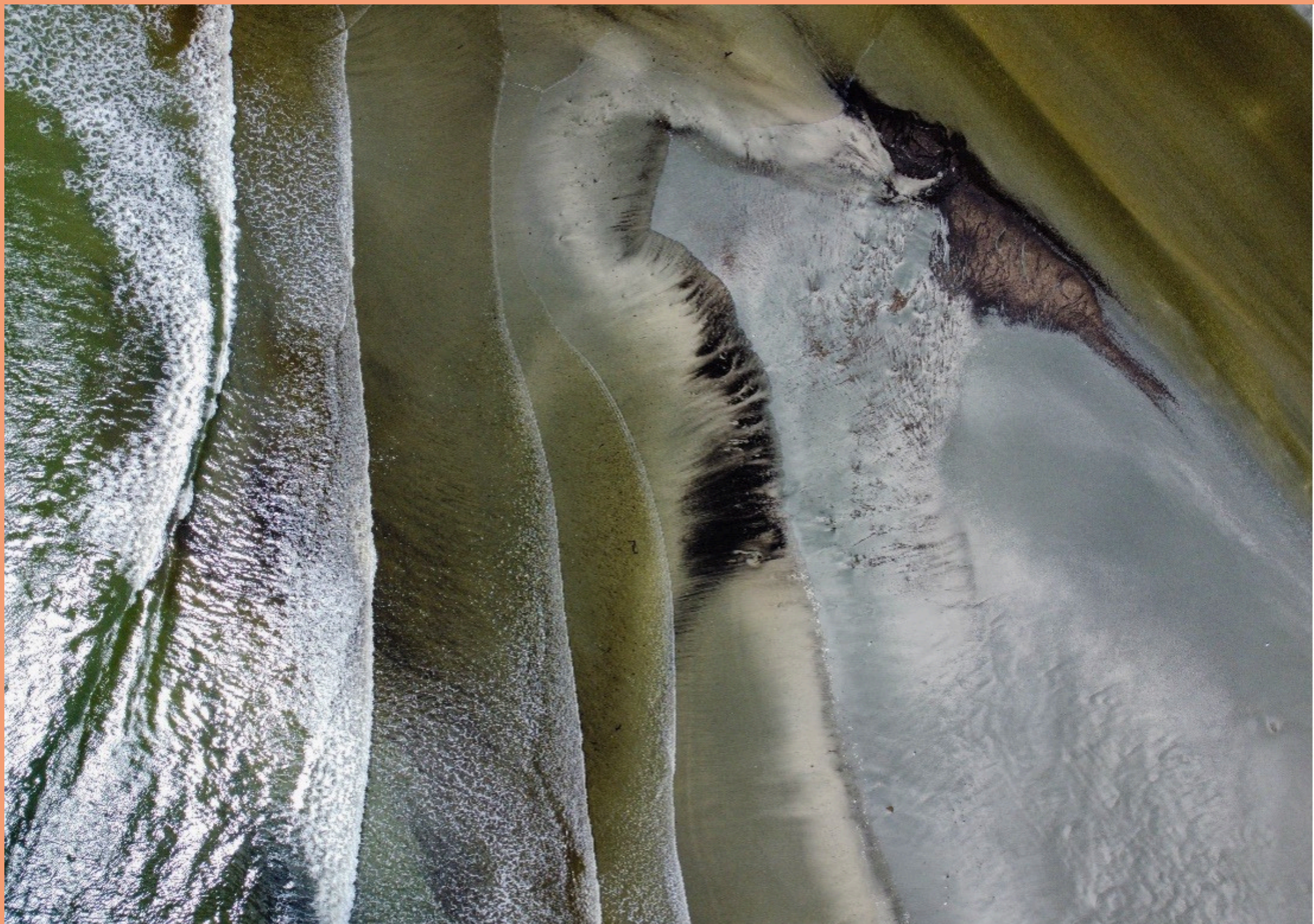


FINALISTS OF THE 2025 MICHIF YOUTH ART CONTEST

NICOLAUS WADDELL



My chosen subject is of “Where the Ocean Meets the Earth,” in Pachena Bay, Bamfield, the traditional unceded lands of the Huu-ay-aht Peoples. I have specifically chosen to photograph the shoreline from a bird’s eye perspective using a drone with the camera pointed at nadir point (directly at the ground) to highlight the colours, patterns, and textures created through interactions between the two elements of water and earth. In a way, this produces an abstract painting like effect that inspires me to explore different viewpoints when approaching all areas of life. The purpose of this artwork is born of that same idea combined with having more appreciation for the natural wonders of our world that are often abused or taken for granted.

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Living on Vancouver Island in the heart of a temperate rainforest has greatly influenced my work as artist. I am naturally drawn to the lush greenery and crystal-clear bodies of water which has inspired me to create art that embodies the vibrant and saturated colours of the foliage mixed with the crystalline, light reflecting qualities of the water – both of which are demonstrated in the submitted artwork. Culturally, you can find these qualities in the floral beadwork (the beads specifically) that the Metis people are known for and I believe this also demonstrates an appreciation for the natural world.

My personal background combined of experiences exploring, cultivating, and admiring the natural world and my teachings from several different Metis Elders and Knowledge Keepers have led me to utilize the natural world as mental health support, creative inspiration, and spiritual wisdom. Pachena Bay is a beach I often go to when I feel I need a cleansing of my energy which I experience as coming from the raw, ocean air. The sensations of walking barefoot in the sand, in and out of the cold water, help to ground me in times of distress.

I have learned through teachings of Elder's and Knowledge Keepers that the natural world is alive and closely integrated with our spiritual bodies. We can draw on it for strength, support, and wisdom as long as we know how to listen and receive it. I feel this is the essence of the theme "Nature Speaks," and so I've provided an artistic view a place in the world that speaks the loudest to me.