

FINALISTS OF THE 2025 MICHIF YOUTH ART CONTEST

REBECCA COLLIER



This piece is a visual map of my journey as a youth Métis artisan, represented through a series of flowers and plants native to BC. Each plant—Western Trillium, Lupine, Salal, Pacific Dogwood, Nootka rosebud, and wild blueberries—holds a deep personal meaning. These are plants I harvested with my Métis family or learned about as traditional medicines and foods from my Coast Salish community. While all of these plants grow in BC, those on the right - wild blueberries and roses - also grow in Manitoba, symbolizing my early childhood and family heritage. This duality reflects my experience growing up in B.C. while staying deeply connected to my prairie roots. It reflects the ongoing development of my indigenous artistry, molded by the diverse communities I have encountered across Turtle Island.

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The materials selected for this project reflect the deliberate care and cultural principles instilled in me through indigenous tradition. By selecting moosehide tanned by an Elder in BC and repurposing a piece left from previous projects, I demonstrate my commitment to honoring the teachings I received and making full use of what the land provides. Additionally, a variety of colored seed beads were used, as beadwork is a traditional Métis art form. Using these materials is a way to connect physically and spiritually to my culture. Each stitch is intentional, weaving together place, memory, and identity.

Through the series of medicinal flowers significant in Métis culture, I aim to illustrate the beauty and complexity of living between places and cultures. Growing up in BC, being taught of their significance, my relationship with the land and my understanding of how plants hold cultural, spiritual, and practical significance was formed. I am influenced by traditional Métis beadwork patterns, the natural colors of prairie and coastal landscapes, and the enduring practice of passing knowledge through generations.

As a Red River Métis artist of mixed Plains Cree ancestry, my personal background is central to this piece. Although I live on Coast Salish territory, my family's roots are in St. François Xavier, Manitoba. My Mom's work within community often brought us back to the prairies, allowing me to maintain a connection to my heritage. This experience of moving between regions and cultures has shaped my identity and is reflected in the plants I chose, which exist in both provinces and both parts of my life.

I wish to express the sentiment that being of mixed heritage and growing up away from our traditional territories can still be rich in meaning, culture, and connection to the land. Despite the challenges it presents, we will find our way through the connection we share with the land and its people. And so, still I rise
- Kiyāpac Nipasikhon.