



MÉTIS NATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA

NATURE SPEAKS: **MICHIF YOUTH ART CONTEST**

*Métis youth sharing their unique
connection to nature*



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations to each of the Métis youth who submitted an artwork for this competition! **The Nature Speaks: Michif Youth Art Contest** issued a call to those who were ready to embrace the challenge of using art media to demonstrate what they care about. It is inspiring how many youth answered the call and expressed devotion to the mountains, trees, living beings, and natural elements.

I was asked to write a forward for this booklet because I am a Métis person who has chosen a full-time practice of art and natural resource stewardship, and the youth who entered this contest might be interested in that journey. So, I am happy to share a few thoughts about my experience.

Today, art is something I do regularly if not daily. I love dip pens and ink, markers, colour and great paper. I love doing portraits, especially of historical people. I also teach and perform Métis jigging. I tailor my artwork to what is requested by my Community, or by the stories I want people to know. I take ongoing classes to learn new skills. For example, right now I am beginning to do a lot of my artwork digitally, so I am getting used to different apps and different tools.

Thinking about those years of my life we call “youth”, ages fifteen to thirty, the years that the contest participants are now living, I consider how those years formed me into the full-time artist and environmental steward that I am today. At fifteen, I enjoyed many different subjects at school not just art class, but then the challenging realities of home life, including health struggles and food insecurity were a consistent obstacle.

By the time I was twenty, I had managed to do a couple of years of university with support from Indigenous bursaries and grants. That was the beginning of my sense of public identity as a Métis, that I received those awards. But it felt like a contradiction that I was getting money intended for native students while I looked white. I did not yet have a sense of deserving the sheltering embrace of my Nation.

By thirty years old I graduated with a degree in Nutrition Science, but I did not yet identify as an artist. I was even ashamed of the occasional artworks I made, often putting them in the garbage. I wanted a practical and lucrative career in food and science.

Those years from fifteen to thirty years old, I got very far from where I began. I lived in France, Montreal, New York City and Seattle. I deeply missed home, spending years feeling anxious and alienated. At a certain point many years after my youth, I was faced with some major losses and grief and suddenly art was there for me, subtle and beautiful enough to convey what was in my heart. I finally understood that I had one chance to live exactly the way that would be most meaningful to me. I chose art as my priority.

Out of that journey I found confidence that whichever art material I desired to pick up was the right one. Whichever story I wanted to tell was the right one. When I poured out my ideas in inks on paper, it touched people's hearts, and they seemed to remember the artist in themselves. I found purpose. I celebrated my 50th birthday in Saskatchewan when I was Artist-In-Residence with a three-month solo exhibit at Wanuskewin Heritage Centre.

It took me that long to finally know who I was. When encountering the greatest of challenges as mentioned above, I had to cling to just a few simple things I knew to be true. I knew I was Métis, I knew I was born in Chilliwack, I knew I wanted to live as an artist, and I was deeply committed to protecting the natural environment. I decided to build the rest of my life from those basics and settle back in BC. I now had obtained a Master's of Science in Agriculture, Food Science & Management. I found my place among the Captains of the Hunt, who are cultural and environmental stewards through the BC Métis Assembly of Natural Resources (BCMNR). I am grateful that my journey has led me to a life of integrity, harmony, creativity and belonging.

Every time I assemble with the Captains of the Hunt, or the MNBC Board, or Elders, we always say we must share the culture with the younger ones, with the future generations. It is exciting to look at these artworks and see how our Métis youth are connecting with the living beings and natural elements in our Province. I hope each person who holds this booklet is reminded that their artistic voice is precious and unique, that their relationship with Mother Earth is the greatest love they will ever know and that their Nation values them very dearly.

Maarsii,



Holly Tennant

Region 2 BC Métis Assembly of Natural Resources Captain

CONGRATULATIONS

We are honoured to share the incredible artwork submitted to the **Nature Speaks Youth Art Contest**, a celebration of Métis youth creativity, culture, and connection to the land.

This contest invited Métis youth across British Columbia to reflect on the theme "**Nature Speaks**." Through painting, drawing, and digital art, young artists were asked to express what nature means to them, how it speaks to their spirit, and how it connects to their Métis identity. The result is a collection of unique and powerful pieces that showcase not only artistic skill but also deep personal stories, teachings, and relationships with the land.

We are proud to present the **five finalists** first in this booklet. These five pieces appear at the beginning of the collection. After the finalists, you will find **all other submissions**, presented in **alphabetical order by last name**. Please note that, aside from the top five, **the order of the artwork does not reflect judging results, rankings, or placements**.

For the art contest we received submissions from **all seven regions of the province**, highlighting the creativity and voices of Métis youth from communities across British Columbia.

On behalf of Métis Nation British Columbia, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Food Security, and the Ministry of Youth, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the finalists and our deep gratitude to every youth who shared their art and voice with us. This collection stands as a testament to the creativity, resilience, and spirit of Métis youth, and to the enduring relationship between Métis people and the natural world.

Maarsii, Thank you!



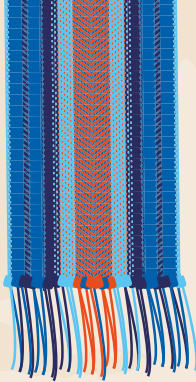
MAK BODIE

Pronouns: They/Them

Age: 17

REGION 4 - KOOTENAYS

Mak Bodie is a 17-year-old Métis artist from Golden BC. Art is so important to Mak for so many reasons, it's a way to express themselves and their experiences in a way words cannot. It has helped them deal and cope with many aspects of their life. Mak is constantly inspired by their friends and family who have supported them relentlessly.



FINALIST

Artwork Title

Papa Bear

Growing up, I never had a solid understanding of who I am; being Métis, being between two worlds. I do understand, however, my deep running connection with my family and how important those people are to me. This piece is an homage to my Papa (grandpa), and how much he means to me. My grandma and papa practically raised me, and I will never thank them enough for love they surround me with. I admire the amount of time my papa spends outside in the quiet, his never-wavering dedication to his camping spot down in the Waitabit. He sent me a picture of a grizzly bear, recklessly up-close, through the window of his truck about a year ago, and I fell in love with the picture, waiting for the perfect time to capture it in my art. I decided this is the right time. My papa is more dedicated to our wilderness than anyone I know, therefore this is for him. The bear also represents him, strong and a protector of his family.

I painted the background valley outside in the sun, looking at the mountains and forests I grew up in all around me. I was mesmerized by how the sun reflected all the different shades of green. I felt homesick while painting, and this piece is more personal than I ever meant it to be. I referenced the mountains outside my high school, not even thinking about how soon I will be leaving this landscape to pursue new and greater things. My graduation is rapidly approaching, my time at high school soon-to-be behind me, and suddenly, it becomes full circle. Neither of my grandparents graduated high school. My papa got his GED when he was sixty, a point in his life where his working days were long-behind him, but he got his diploma anyway. My papa is one of the smartest people I know, I always looked up to him for that reason. Graduating puts things into a perspective that only makes me appreciate him more. How his experiences have shaped the intelligent and caring man I know today. Thank you, Papa, for everything.





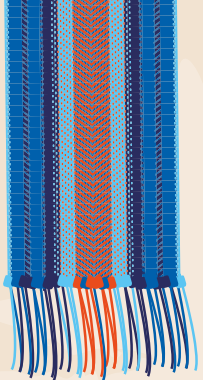
REBECCA COLLIER

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 18

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Rebecca Collier is an 18-year-old Red River Métis artist of mixed Plains Cree ancestry from Swan Lake, Manitoba, and a citizen of MNBC. Currently residing on Coast Salish territory, her practice is deeply influenced by both her prairie heritage and the land she inhabits. Her work integrates traditional Indigenous artistry with personal narrative, creating pieces that honor her cultural lineage. Her art has been exhibited in local galleries, featured in print media, and recognized through a juried competition. She has also facilitated beading workshops within her school district, promoting cultural knowledge and community engagement.



FINALIST

Artwork Title

Kiyāpac Nipasikhon

The title of my beadwork piece is “Kiyāpac Nipasikhon” (Still I rise).

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 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.

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.

SHAE FRASER

Pronouns: They / Them

Age: 26

REGION 3-THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Shae is a 26 year old Two-Spirit beader and illustrator currently residing in the Okanagan Valley. They often use comic art to bridge the gap between traditional design and illustrative storytelling. Through their artwork, Shae strengthens their connection to their heritage, expresses their love for their home in British Columbia, and aims to tell stories that resonate with people within and beyond their community.

FINALIST



Artwork Title

Under the Same Stars

The ocean has always been a big part of my life- I'll always gravitate back to the salt, no matter how far I roam. The British Columbian coast is home to some of the creatures most beloved to me. One of those creatures being the giant Pacific octopus.

For a long time, the giant Pacific octopus has appeared in my dreams. I for one, can't explain what it might mean, but it is the inspiration for the location of this piece. Not quite sea, not quite sky. The stars were given an almost deep sea, bioluminescent quality to further bridge the gap between the ocean floor and the nighttime dreaming. Octopods are intelligent and have the amazing ability to remember human faces. How amusing is the thought that there might be a giant Pacific octopus out there who had dreamt of me as well? She'd recognize me and I would recognize her if we were to ever meet. If octopods can dream, that is.

Life is art and art mimics life. Like the ends of the sash bend and coil, so too does the arm of the octopus. As if they are both reflections of the same being, both imbued with the same life from Creator. The Métis individual pulls a star from their fire bag (also known as an octopus bag), and the giant Pacific presents her own. The two of them are worlds apart in both language and physiology- and yet they share a moment together as two beings in the same dream, under the same stars.

What does this 8-legged, blue-blooded, benthic angel have to teach us about the natural world? She is fully in tune with her surroundings: she can change shades and textures perfectly even while being colour blind. The 3 distinct cellular layers that make up her skin allow her to fully blend into the world around her. One could say the cephalopod invites us to enmesh ourselves within our environments- instead of bending our environment to suit ourselves. For me, that is a core tenet of being indigenous: existing in tandem with the natural world, not separate from it.

RACHEL MCCLOY-ANDREWS

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 23

REGION 5 - NORTH CENTRAL

Rachel McCloy (Mahihkan Iskwew) is a Métis-Dane artist, born in Burns Lake, and a proud citizen of the Métis Nation of British Columbia, residing in region 5 on the unceded and traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh people. Her family ties to the historic Red River settlement in Manitoba further enrich her cultural roots. Family names such as Traill, Cook, Sinclair, McKay, among many others are woven into the tapestry of her ancestry. Rachel's artistic practice is a blend of Métis Heritage and Contemporary arts. She practices techniques in silk and cotton embroidery, moccasin-making, drum and medicine bag creation, and acrylic painting. Her writing also explores themes of identity, culture, and resilience. Through her art, Rachel honors her ancestors and celebrates the beauty and strength of Indigenous culture.

FINALIST



Artwork Title
Kikāwīnaw Askiy (Mother Earth)

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. 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.

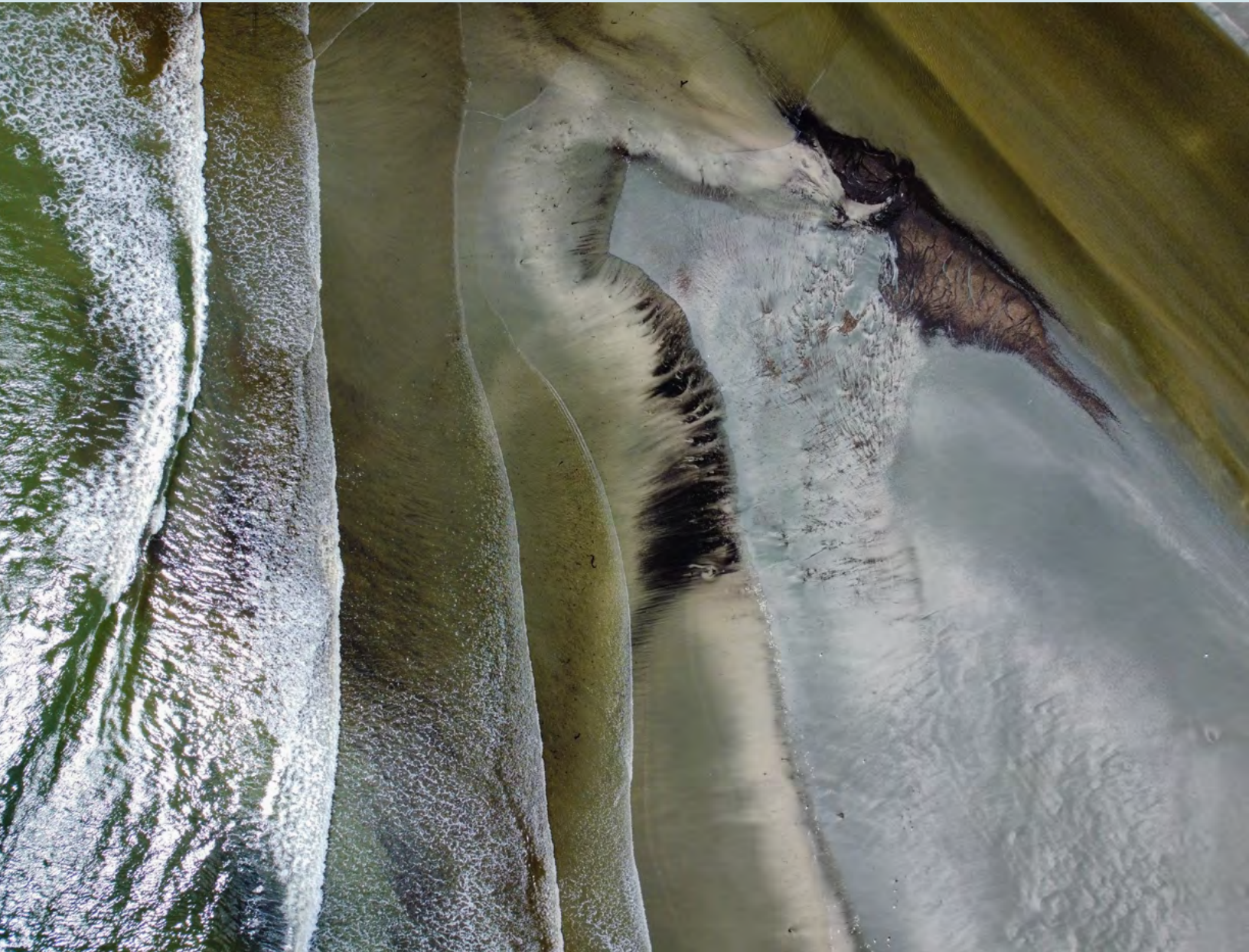
NICOLAUS WADDELL

Pronouns: He/Him Age: 30

REGION 1 - VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER

Nicolaus Waddell is an interdisciplinary artist who focuses on the mediums of music, photography, painting, and beadwork. He was born and raised in Port Alberni on Vancouver Island which is the traditional unceded territories of the Tseshah and Hupacasath peoples. Nicolaus began photographing macro shots of the natural world since the age of 14 and still holds an eye for the beauty of nature at 30-years-old as he transitions out of youth.

FINALIST



Artwork Title

Where the Ocean Meets the Earth

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.

Living on Vancouver Island in the heart of a temperate rainforest has greatly influenced my work as an 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 Métis 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 Métis 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 if 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 of a place in the world that speaks the loudest to me.



SOPHIE ADAMS

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 27

REGION 1 - VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER

Sophie is a proud Region 1 Métis citizen within the Métis Nation of British Columbia and the Métis Nation of Greater Victoria. She has mixed Scottish settler and Métis ancestry, with family names including Grant, Beaudry, McGillis, and St. Cyr. She is proud to carry and share the stories within her family, including those of encountering spirit up close. Sophie believes that when an animal chooses to look into one's eyes, it takes on a bit of their spirit, just as they take on the animal's. This sacred Wahkotowin teaching of interconnectedness helps her stay connected to her identity as a displaced Métis from the Métis Motherlands, growing up on the wild, wet west coast and beginning her journey into this world from the Sunshine Coast.

Artwork Title

Through the Eyes of Spirit

Black Bear Cub peeking its little face around a huge alder tree this spring, as the first blossoms of salmonberries also peek out. The traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation offers a humbling and intimate experience to see wildlife on their territory. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to call this territory home, and I have been living here as a proud citizen of the Métis Nation of British Columbia and mixed settler ancestry.

In the first few moments of this encounter when the depth of this black bear cub's dark eyes met my blue - I felt a strange sense of calm and yet intrigue. I thought to myself that maybe the bear cub and I felt the same, as this sudden unaware encounter occurred.

This Wahkotowin teaching that all things are sacred and interconnected made me think that maybe we both felt the same thing at this moment. Knowingly realizing that mother Bear (and maybe another cub) was probably not far, I slowly backstepped. As I did, I could hear jaw clacking further into the bushes, and then I was convinced that all things are interconnected.

This was one of the closest, unexpected, and spiritual encounters that has been shared with me. This warmth in my chest to see this cub and feel this little spirit within was truly a blessing. It reawakened with my spirit and inspired me to take myself and my photography journey more in depth and passionately. It gave me the courage to create, share my creativity, and share my spiritual encounters in a way that I have never felt safe as a displaced Michif woman from the Métis Motherland.

This sense of Métis pride and passion I hope to show in a good way, by harmoniously incorporating my identity and love of hiking, walking, photography, and being in nature. Also as someone who is fortunate for my health and wellbeing I hope to share these mindful, peaceful, and spiritual encounters to hopefully share this feeling as well with others who may not have the opportunity to be within the deep forests of our West Coast - Or have never seen a bear let alone an adorable cub. My Indigenous lens alongside my Olympus OM-D E-10, 40mm -150mm lens is truly something I feel honoured to share at this moment in time. This Michif Youth Art contest allowed for my heartberry to feel heard, and respected as a newly emerging artist alongside the salmonberries blossoms. I see the colourful berries now starting to grow and ripen; and maybe I also grew alongside them on this journey to further nurture and grow my identity, self, spirit, and creativity. Hiy Hiy



PRAIRIE ANDERSEN

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 17

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Prairie Andersen is a Grade 12 student who finds joy in reading, creating art, and playing the fiddle. Music is a core part of her life, especially during big fiddle sessions with her family. Inspired by nature, especially thunder, deer, and wide prairie skies. Prairie's work reflects a deep connection to the land and her Métis roots. As the oldest of three sisters, she values her role as a big sister and draws strength from family. Her art blends sound, story, and landscape into expressions of identity, love, and belonging.

Artwork Title

Playing Through the Storm

Growing up, I spent a lot of time at my family's cabin, surrounded by nature. Deer were always nearby, bouncing through the trees and fields, becoming a quiet but constant presence in my life. At the same time, I was raised in a musical family, fiddle music was always playing, and gathering for big family jam sessions became one of my favorite ways to connect with the people I love. These two parts of my life, nature and music, are deeply special to me, and both shaped the creation of this piece.

The wide prairie skies have always fascinated me. Part of that connection is in my name, Prairie, but it goes beyond that. There's something about the open land and endless sky that makes me feel free, grounded, and inspired all at once. The prairies are where I feel most like myself, and they hold a powerful place in my imagination and identity.

Music is at the core of who I am. I love listening to all kinds of music, from traditional fiddle tunes to indie rock. I also love to sing, and music is a way I express my emotions when words don't feel like enough. While working on this piece, the song that inspired me most was I Know the End by Phoebe Bridgers. One lyric stood out: "a big bolt of lightning hanging low." That image struck me, literally and emotionally, and it became central to the feeling I wanted to capture in my artwork.

My piece reflects all these things: a deer with human features, caught in a thunderstorm while playing the fiddle on the prairie. It's a surreal, emotional scene that brings together my love of music, my connection to nature, and the sense of wonder I feel when looking up at a stormy prairie sky. It's a tribute to the wildness and beauty of the places, and the people, that have shaped me.

SCOTIA ANDERSEN

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 15

REGION: 2 – LOWER MAINLAND

Scotia Andersen is a 15 year old actor, singer, pianist, and artist who lives in Vancouver.
Her roots are across BC to Manitoba.

Artwork Title

Bison Dreaming

This bison is what I dream about. An animal connected to my family. Great grandfathers and grandmothers intertwined with the life and sacrifice of a majestic beast.



SHALANE BARKER

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 18

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Shalane has a passion for nail art and loves to challenge her abilities. Shalane's journey as a young nail artist began about four years ago to deal with anxiety. It has since expanded beyond a coping mechanism and become art.

Artwork Title

Beautiful British Columbia

I have never considered myself an artist, and I still don't, however, if you hand me a brush with pin-sized bristles and an idea; I think I could get quite close to being one, even if I doubt I could produce a stunning work of art on a larger medium. My canvas is small, but my passion is vast, through the intricate world of nail art I captured the beauty of wilderness and life. Tiny landscapes where the sun rises and falls, the stars twinkle, and the birds soar the open sky. Every detail hand-painted to showcase a small glimpse of our beautiful Northern Landscapes. British Columbia has been my home my whole life, I have had the privilege of visiting other places, but nothing has been able to measure to the beauty of this region, I will always return here. This is the first time I have created a piece this intricate with so many details, there were many do overs and lots of frustration, but I gained so much experience.

My father is the person I give most of the credit to. We used to paint together when I was much younger, he taught me how to use my brush and work with the paint rather than against it. This teaching has resulted in the one painting I have ever created on a large canvas. And although it was not good enough to win the young artists competition, it won a spot by the front door of my home where it has hung for nearly nine years. His teaching carries over to my nail art, the things he taught me remained the same only the scale and medium changed.

Nature is a place that grounds me and allows me to connect with my soul. I will never possess the talent to portray the true beauty onto a canvas, however what I designed from my hands is a gift from the creator and that is beautiful.





NATASHA BEAUREGARD

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 28

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Natasha Beauregard is a Métis youth who grew up on the Traditional Territory of the Kwikwetlem First Nations. She went to post-secondary to study the Environment and got a bachelor's degree in Geography and Biology. In her spare time, you will find Natasha adventuring through nature, looking for birds, climbing trees or floating in a canoe. Natasha hopes to share her love of nature with others to help inspire them to help protect Mother Earth for generations to come.

Artwork Title

Water Connects Us All

The theme of this art contest is “Nature Speaks”. Nature speaks to me through the sound of flowing water, the rain hitting the ground and the wind that chimes through the trees. Nothing is quite as soothing to me as these sounds, and it gives me a sense of connection to the water and land. I was fortunate enough to grow up in the Traditional Territory of the Kwikwetlem First Nations and spent time by the Coquitlam River, which is close to my childhood home. This is where my connection to nature, water and the land started.

The main element that connects me to nature is water. All living things, including us, have water in them, and it is necessary for survival. I created this self-portrait of me walking on the lake surrounded by the forest as my way to represent being connected to the water that Mother Nature provides us.

I chose to wear a red dress in this photo to bring awareness to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous women. I am reaching out in search of our lost sisters who have disappeared. I don't ever want these women to be forgotten. Just like water, we are all connected, no matter where our family comes from. These are our sisters, and they should be remembered.

To create this photo, I purchased a black stool to stand on in the water. I put the stool just below the surface of the water to stand on. I set up the camera on the tripod and lined up the shot I wanted to take. I walked through the cold water to stand on the stool and somehow managed not to fall in. I balanced on one foot on just the front edge of the stool and tried various poses until there was a picture I felt captured my vision.

Once I got back home, I put the photo into Lightroom so I could adjust the lighting and edit out the legs of the stool that could be seen in the water. This photo was taken on a sunny day at Sasamat Lake in **təmtə́míxʷtən** Regional Park, where lots of people were enjoying being out in the water. I edited out these people from the background to allow the focus to be on just nature in the background.

I want to acknowledge and give my gratitude to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, for allowing me to be a guest in their unceded traditional territories while taking this photo. I hope this self-portrait shows my vision of how we are all connected to nature and one another through the water and the land.



BRITTANY BEUKENS

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 29

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Brittany Beukens is a twenty-nine year old sewist from the Fraser Valley. Her family origins are Red River Métis. While she grew up on different reserves throughout the Fraser Valley, it wasn't until she had her own children that Brittany began re-connecting with her heritage and distant family. What was once an overwhelming task, is now a passion. She is eagerly learning more of her families history in order to one day be able to teach her own children. Five years ago, she was gifted her first sewing machine and has loved textiles ever since. She looks forward to incorporating beading into her designs; keepsakes for her children.

Artwork Title

Eternal Kinship

The Canadian Tiger Swallowtail is my inspiration for this piece. Butterflies undergo several stages of change before they become the beautiful insect people know them to be, but not all seasons of their lives appear to be productive. When a caterpillar forms a chrysalis, they are transforming behind the scenes until they are ready to emerge. A reminder from these tiny creatures is that even in the still moments and slow seasons of life there is still work being done every day, and these quiet moments of rest are not something to shy away from. In a world that constantly seems to glorify the push for bigger and better it helps to take a step back and re-connect with the simplicities of life and nature.

Some of my earliest memories are searching for butterflies with my grandmother, something I now do with my own children. Of all the beautiful species we see outdoors nothing excites my children like spotting a butterfly.

This is my daughter's first ribbon skirt, a memory that will always be close to my heart. Searching together for the blue floral fabric and array of ribbons -this will forever be one of my favourite sewing projects as it holds such significance. I never would have thought that I'd be the one sewing my daughter a ribbon skirt for her to dance in. I hope it will remain in my family and one day I may get to see my grandchild dance in it. With its traditional style and personalized touch, it has become her favourite skirt. With a paperbag waist and French seams enclosing the singed ribbon; I structured this skirt to withstand the test of time.

One of the greatest advantages to making your own garments is being able to take your time to create something that isn't just a disposable fast fashion piece but something you can appreciate and customize exactly to your liking. Crafting your own wardrobe gives you appreciation for the amount of work that goes into garment construction, the resources used, and the possibilities of what you can create. I am very much looking forward to when my daughter needs her next ribbon skirt so we may sew matching ones, together.

ISSY BOURQUE

Pronouns: They/Them

Age: 28

REGION 1 - VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER

Issy Bourque is a Two-Spirit Métis artist living in Snuneymuxw Territory with an endless love for nature and the ocean. They miss where they grew up, climbing lodgepole pines and aspen, burrowing in snow, swimming in the golden lily-pad lakes of the Northern interior. They fell in love with the oceans in Haida Gwaii, listening to wild winds, held by glistening moss, scrubbed raw with sand. They are currently playing in the crystal rivers and clambering on the arbutus cliffs of Vancouver Island. They are very excited and grateful to explore, learn, and create on this beautiful land.



Artwork Title

Mycelial Moments

Mushrooms. Fungi. Toadstools. We have many names for this gentle creature, a being that effortlessly evades all attempts to classify, label, or understand it. Is it an animal? A plant? No one knows for sure. I love Mushrooms for how varied, mysterious, and whimsical they can be, and I believe there are many lessons to be learned from these ancient teachers. Lessons in grief, of stillness and breaking down, of painful and difficult transformation, and in the importance of rooted connection and support in community.

Life feels so busy, bustling, blurry, blistering and fast. When I sit with my Fungi ancestors, they remind me of stillness. When my body and breath are still, they reveal themselves. They poke from moss, glistening caps abundant, scents of soil and rain and pines. They hang from branches, delicate gills, teeth, and pores visible only from below. They swarm mossy stumps, bold colours of red, orange, and gold, while subtle jewelled hues of lilac and sapphire dance among tree roots. Deep wedges of thick polypores jut from tree trunks creating outcroppings and shelves that shine sticky with fallen sap. Here, I feel my grief. I release the sharp, heavy pain in my chest, eyes raining floods, dark clouds and rumblings, and wracking sobs that shake my ribcage. Lightning scrapes my throat, and I grieve for all that I have forgotten, all that my body could never forget. Here I break down, embraced by Mushroom kin.

Mushrooms teach me of the unconditional love flowing through them, through me, through everything, even more than is visible around me. You see, Mushrooms are secret giants, mycelial networks spanning entire forests underground, noticed only by charming fruiting bodies atop the moss. Silver strands shine brightly against damp earth, creating complex cobwebs and communities beneath, attracting insects and microbes, conducting electrical impulses akin to our own complex nervous system. Mushrooms show me their mycelium, their roots, and they teach me of community, of togetherness, of the importance of sharing your heart’s-gift with those around you. Great decomposers, Fungi do the impossible, transmuting that which was rotten, painful, and forgotten into accessible nutrients and building blocks of life, creating soil to nourish themselves and the community of life around them.

Fungi have taught me about transformation, of the pain of becoming, of the rawness and brittleness when experiencing overwhelming tides of change. They have taught me to create wonders using my gifts, carving my pain into wood, into something new, something different. From left to right, “Mycelial Moments” represents the uniting of my past, carved from Cottonwood, present, carved from White Pine, and future, carved from Hazelnut. Past is a Fly Agaric, known for its powerful medicines to represent the opening of my mind. Present is a double-capped mushroom, honouring my Two-Spirit identity and accepting my many facets. Future is a Morel, known for flourishing after forest fires. “Mycelial Moments” was hand-carved using an axe, chisels, and a knife, and finished with a beeswax-coconut oil.

OLIVIA CAMPBELL

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 15

REGION 5 - NORTH CENTRAL

Olivia Campbell is a proud Métis citizen living in Prince George. She is 15 years old and attends Prince George Secondary School. Olivia's family roots are from the Delorme Family from the Red River valley in Manitoba. She has always loved to draw and uses many different mediums for her artwork. Her favourite drawings are done using alcohol markers and on-line digital art apps.



Artwork Title

Skeena Salmon

The drawing I have submitted for this contest is of my brother Lucas who was fishing last summer on the Skeena River in Terrace. The Salmon were spawning, and they were allowed to catch fish for a short time. This drawing reflects many of the aspects of the environment that are important to our family and the Métis people. The mountains, the river and especially the fish. My brother is a true Métis hunter and gatherer for our family. He hunts for deer, moose and is always fishing. Our family including our grandparents go fishing together at least once a year and enjoy the harvest all year long.

My grandfather and my brother smoked this salmon which is a way for us to keep the Métis tradition in our lives.

I want viewers to look at this photo and see the joy in my brothers face while he is outdoors and catching fresh salmon for the family to share. We are lucky to live in such a beautiful province with an abundance of mountains, rivers, lakes and wildlife.

My grandfather has taken us hunting and fishing since we were little. His knowledge of the land and the animals has been shared with us, and he has taught us to respect the environment and nature. My great-grandfather passed before I was born so I was not able to meet him. I have heard the stories of how he hunted and fished to have food on the table for the family. My great-great-grandmother was a Métis gatherer and collected many herbs that were used as medicine.

This artwork was done using Procreate which is an app that I often use for drawing. The photo was taken in July 2024, and I used it as a reference in Procreate. The colours were done to look like an old photograph, much different from the original photo.

AMBROSE COLBECK

Pronouns: He/Him

Age: 15

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Ambrose is a 15 year old boy who loves to do all sports and enjoys school. He has a younger brother and two loving parents, who all enjoy sports just as much as he does. He also has two cute cats named Thunder and Lightning. His two favourite sports are mountain biking and skiing. He has been a member of Métis Nation of BC his whole life and is grateful for the opportunity to share his art.



Artwork Title

My Heartland

For my art piece I chose the element of nature that I love most, the mountains. I love mountains so much because of their beauty and that they allow me to participate in my two favourite sports: mountain biking and skiing. When I am in the mountains doing either of these sports, I feel a strong sense of purpose and peace. The only thing on my mind is what I am doing in the moment, and it makes me feel very happy. One reason I love these two sports is because I get to do them with my friends and family. Another reason is because of the thrill and adrenaline rush I get from them.

I chose oil pastels for my medium because of their vibrant colours, which really allow me to capture all of nature's beautiful colours and shades. I love how satisfying it is to put down layers and blend oil pastels, it provides good depth as well as lots of detail when drawing nature. I am particularly pleased with the lake portion of my drawing. I chose to try a new technique by doing multiple layers of different colours (pink, blue, red, white) to provide a more detailed representation of the reflection of the sun on the water. I wanted the lake to stand apart from the mountains despite both aspects being primarily blue.

I feel connected to this image because it is inspired by a photograph my dad took of the Rocky Mountains in Jasper. I have been to Jasper many times to go camping and I love the forests and lakes in the area. I love the damp stillness of being deep in a forest and the zen feeling that goes along with it. I appreciate being disconnected from the urban world and the opportunity to enjoy true nature. Through this piece of art, I tried to share the happy feelings I get from being in nature.

JOLIE CUNNINGHAM

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 18

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Jolie Cunningham, is 18 years old and just graduated from high school. She is the youngest of five children and has lived in Surrey her whole life. She enjoys living in Cloverdale because it is like living in the country, but it is part of a big city. She loves to care for the birds that come to her yard every day. She enjoys gardening with her parents to plant plants for the birds and the bees, and takes care of many birdfeeders, some of which were purchased and some that she has made. She loves taking care of her two dogs, five cats, a rabbit that she rescued, along with her turtle and fish. She loves to work with clay and pencils and sometimes markers. When Jolie was asked to create an artwork for a display in an indigenous exhibit that would be a part of the school library, she knew immediately she wanted to create a bird. She chose a loon as it is her favourite bird. She was asked what medium she wanted to use, and Jolie chose papier-mâché clay. She looked up some of her favourite pictures and cut up some cardboard to create this project. Last summer, Jolie got to see a real loon when she went to visit her extended family in Quesnel. It was one of the happiest times in her life.



Artwork Title

Looner Eclipse

I decided to create my loon out of papier-mâché because I like physical, 3-D art the most. I like art that I can handle and touch.

I chose the loon because I was thinking about the loon and her spirit animal traits of tranquility and peace. These traits are reflected in me as a Métis person too.

Loons are really common in Quesnel and Prince George, where my family is from, so I was also thinking about them when I decided to design “Looner Eclipse”

I chose black, white, and red as they are the natural colours of Loon, and they catch your eye. I made dot and stripe patterns to reflect the natural look of Loon but also to look like stars in the night sky. Loons are nocturnal, birds of the night, so I wanted to honour that part of who they are.

I wanted my audience here in the lower mainland of BC to be able to see a loon which is uncommon to see here, especially in the big cities. With my Loon, I want people to see this part of my Métis culture.



IYANA ENRIQUEZ

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 24

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Iyana is a 24-year-old Métis and Mexican artist who grew up in the rugged beauty of northern British Columbia, Canada. With a background in 2D animation, her passion lies in storytelling through visual art. Iyana spent a transformative year in El Paso, Texas, where she deepened her connection to her Mexican heritage along the U.S.–Mexico border. Iyana’s artwork draws heavily from both of her cultures, often focusing on animals and people that reflect the spirit and stories of her surroundings. Whether she is animating or sketching in her spare time, Iyana strives to blend traditions, environments, and identities into every piece she creates.

Artwork Title

Between Worlds, Still Standing

Art has always been a way for me to process and reflect on the world around me. As a 24-year-old Métis and Mexican artist, I carry with me two strong, rich cultural lineages that shape my identity and how I see the world. Growing up in the northern wilderness of British Columbia, I found deep inspiration in the animals and people around me. These subjects became central to my creative expression, especially as I began to explore how my own sense of self connects with the natural world and my ancestral roots.

This piece—a drawing of a mountain lion—is deeply symbolic to me. The mountain lion, also known as a cougar or puma, is an animal I’ve long admired for its quiet strength, adaptability, and instinct for survival. To me, this creature embodies the power of resilience. It exists across a range of environments, from rugged mountains to desert edges, constantly adjusting yet never losing its essence. It moves silently, confidently, and fiercely through spaces that are often uncertain or threatening.

In many ways, I see myself in the mountain lion. As a young Métis woman, I am still learning how to navigate the complexities of a modern world that often feels disjointed or overwhelming. I have had to grow, shift, and adapt to find where I belong—both culturally and personally. Spending time in El Paso, Texas, allowed me to connect more deeply with my Mexican heritage and helped me understand how place and identity are deeply intertwined. Returning to Canada, I brought with me not just memories, but a broader understanding of who I am and how I can bring both sides of my heritage into my art.

This drawing represents more than an animal in nature—it reflects inner strength, survival, and growth. In its eyes, I see both the wild and the wisdom that comes from walking a path alone but grounded in ancestral knowing. Through this work, I want to share a message about identity and endurance: that we all have the power to move through change with grace, to protect what’s sacred to us, and to carry our cultures proudly into new spaces.

Ultimately, this piece is about becoming—learning how to live in harmony with both my roots and my surroundings, much like the mountain lion itself.

ISOBEL HEINRICK

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 15

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Isobel Heinrich lives in Penticton, British Colombia. She is 15 years old and is currently in grade ten. When out in her community she constantly sees hummingbirds buzzing around. Her parents and grandparents constantly compare her to a hummingbird because she is always on the go and always doing something and has to move fast as a result. The hummingbird is very near and dear animal to Isobel’s heart because they symbolize a positive spirit who uplifts people. To be constantly compared to a beautiful animal like that makes her very happy.

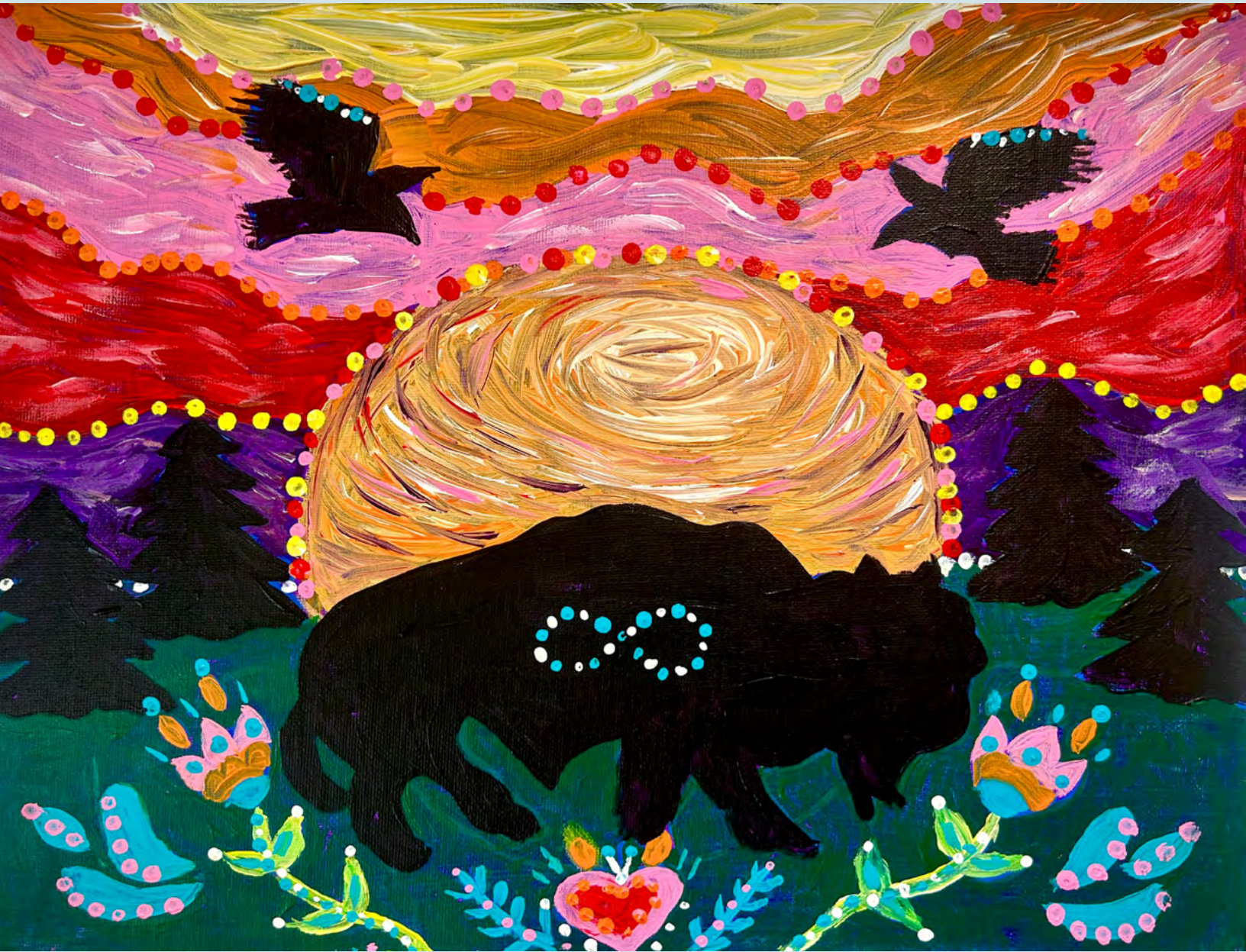


Artwork Title

Spirit of The Hummingbird

I call this piece the spirit of the hummingbird because the hummingbird is a very special animal to me and my grandparents and parents constantly tell me I have the spirit of a hummingbird because I am always on the go. I chose to express this concept in the form of beadwork because I love to bead, and I feel that beading is a very important part of Métis culture. I was first taught to bead by one of the Elders in my community and instantly loved it. I thought it was so cool how you could express so much with just plastic beads and some thread. I love learning new things and to learn from such an experienced elder in my community was super fun. I think it is important to keep the culture alive and to learn our traditions.

For this art project I found a cab (cabochon) for this piece which instantly inspired me to make a pair of earrings because of how special hummingbirds are to me. The pair of earrings took me about 5 hours to complete. They may be small pieces of art, but they sure take a long time as any beader can attest. I am still relatively new to beading as I have only been doing it for a year, so I had to work slow and patiently to make sure it was my best work. The beads and thread I got from a local Métis beader who sells kits and supplies who lives about 3 hours from me. The back is tanned moose hide that has been ethically sourced from hunters around BC who have used all the animal they can before selling the hide to people like me who want to make earrings, moccasins, etc. I had so much fun making this set and can’t wait to wear them to events around the community. I am currently teaching others how to do some beading techniques because I just love spreading the culture and want as many Métis citizens to learn their own culture as possible. I am extremely grateful to have learnt from an elder who taught me so much useful information and to have the opportunity to learn these skills from my own culture. Thank you so much for the opportunity and to hear my story and recognize my art.



BAILEY JOHNSON

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 26

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Bailey Johnson is a citizen of Métis Nation BC from Region 3 in the Thompson Okanagan. She is an Educator and works as a Cycle and Yoga instructor to her local community. Over the past several years her relationship with Art and Culture has begun to grow as she continues to become involved in community and local initiatives. Bailey had the opportunity to be shown the techniques of her art piece by local artists, and is excited to continue to broaden her horizons and continue to create Métis Art pieces.

Artwork Title

Interconnection

This art piece was curated using acrylic on a flat canvas; I was guided in this art piece by teachings in my local community. In this piece I have tried to weave together several art techniques such as shadow animals, abstract techniques for the landscape, and Métis pointillism all to contrast and enhance their various qualities. I was inspired to curate an abstract representation of the landscape to challenge our perception of our surroundings. By encouraging fluidity and colour amongst the elements, I believe it invites a quality of animacy to the landscape. By acknowledging that our land is animate and connected to our spirit, we can begin to build an equitable relationship with it - with respect, humility, and care being of utmost importance. The shadow animals in contrast to the vibrant landscape is a very explicit polarization, yet they complement each other very well; this showcases the reciprocal and crucial relationship between land and animals and the interweaving of their teachings.

I also wanted to incorporate Métis dot art into this painting to highlight the foundation upon which our community and identity is built - and that is land. In order to encapsulate all my identity, I must weave together the teachings of my community, land, and all its resources. To me, land is synonymous with who I identify as - as this art piece demonstrates.



AJA KING

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 29

REGION 1 - VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER

Taanishi kiyawow, Aja King dishinihkaashoon. Aja's family names are Sayers and Beauchamp, among others. She is a Métis woman who grew up in the Okanagan Valley and now lives on Vancouver Island. Living in both the Okanagan and on Vancouver Island has given her endless opportunities to be outside enjoying nature. Some of her favourite outdoor activities include walking, riding horses, skiing, snowshoeing, and swimming. Aja currently works as a Registered Massage Therapist while completing her Bachelor of Health Science degree. Besides being outside, she really enjoys reading, knitting, doing beadwork and learning Michif.

Artwork Title

The Serpent, the Sunflower, and the Horse

Growing up in the Okanagan Valley in B.C. gives you a lot of material to work with for a nature art contest. There are mountains, orchards, and of course, lakes. There are deer, fish, and birds.

I've recently begun to embrace my Métis identity, and one of the ways I've done that is by learning beadwork and horsehair piping. I was first taught to bead by members of our local Métis community. The beading on this piece is done with Czech seed beads on melton and backed onto brain-tanned deer hide from a local Métis artist. There are two species that I wanted to include in the beadwork of this piece: the snake and the sunflower.

Snakes are very common in the Okanagan - especially rattlesnakes. You don't always see them, but they are there. They are resilient and adaptable, much like the Métis Nation. From the fur trade to modern day, our people have faced many challenges. We continue to face many challenges. Yet, we're still here. I'm still here.

I chose to use blue beads in the snake to reflect the waters of the many lakes in the Okanagan, where I spent my summers swimming, boating, or fishing. I can't think about growing up in the Okanagan without thinking about sunflowers. I think about sunflowers and I remember my mother's garden and the seed spitting contests my brothers and friends and I would have. I think about warmth, happiness, and hope. Sunflowers also have strong and complex root systems - not unlike us Métis with our family systems, our shared history, and our shared traditions that help keep us together.

Finally, I can't do a piece representing species that were important to me growing up without including the horse. This one isn't represented in the beadwork, but rather in the horsehair piping. Of the species represented in this piece, horses are the most significant to me personally and culturally. I did not grow up in community or learning about culture. I did grow up with horses and they were the first true connection I could make to my Métis heritage. The Métis were known as expert horsemen, and horses were vital to Métis culture and life for many reasons. Just as horses have been vital to my life and have helped shape the person I am today. The piping in this particular piece holds extra importance and its own special place in my heart. It is made from the tail hair of my own horse, Lear - who is enjoying a well-deserved retirement on a family friend's farm.

In short, there are many different mediums and species I could have used to create this piece. Many different landscapes too. I wanted something that could somehow encompass it all - that could reflect the place where I grew up while honouring the culture of my people that I choose to embrace.



KAITLYN KWITKOWSKI

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 15

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Kaitlyn Kwitkowski is a 15-year-old artist from Kamloops with a passion for both art and music. She enjoys spending time with her family, camping, and traveling to new places. Raised to take pride in who she is and to celebrate her heritage, Kaitlyn draws inspiration for her artwork from her deep connection to nature. Her illustrations often feature flowers and animals, reflecting this bond. Outside of her creative pursuits, she balances her time between school, family, and friends.

Artwork Title

Tiny Traveler

For my art piece, I've chosen to depict manijhoosh roozh (a ladybug) resting on a leaf with tall grass and a blue sky. Watercolour isn't my usual medium, but I wanted to challenge myself with something new. I began with a light sketch so I knew where I wanted things to be, before I just went in with the watercolour. After my painting dried, I glued it to a piece of black cardstock, so it had a border. My inspiration for my painting was my aunt and her role in my life.

I chose to title my art piece "Tiny Traveler", as ladybugs are known to travel great distances, and I feel that aligns with my love for adventure and travel. Ladybugs have always held meaning to me, as all my life I've been associated with ladybugs. I've been told ladybugs represent protection, good fortune, healing, and grace (with Grace also being my middle name). When I was a baby, my aunt gave me the nickname "Kaity-bug", as a play on the word ladybug. Throughout my early childhood I was, and still am, gifted things revolving around ladybugs because they remind my family members of me. My choice to paint a ladybug comes from the fact that I've been taught to celebrate my heritage and my identity, as now I tend to see ladybugs as an extension of myself and a part of who I am. They bring me great comfort and remind me of my connection to nature and the Earth as a whole, not just the connection they give me to my family.

I really wanted to thank my family, but mostly my aunt, for encouraging me and for suggesting that I partake in this submission. I'd also like to say maarsii to MNBC for their consideration, as well as for presenting this opportunity. I had fun creating, and it also gave me a moment to reflect on myself. I hope that others viewing my artwork feel the same calm positivity as I did painting it.

ALEX MACAULAY

Pronouns: He/They Age: 18

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Alex is a queer, self-identifying Métis artist, and has had the privilege of living and creating on Salish lands for most of his life. Alex has always been aware of the importance of respecting the land, its caretakers, and taking inspiration from its beauty. This perspective is the foundation for the art Alex creates. Through his experiences as a teen, he found the importance of appreciation. Alex views each piece created as a reflection and thank you to his experiences. This outlook has led Alex to investigate the city in which he resides and learn more about its history. Alex’s main focus with his art is the environment, culture, and the body. Having never really been a fan of words, Alex views art as a way to vent his feelings and share his thoughts with the world. Alex’s main and favorite medium of art is crochet. Alex has been crocheting for over five years and it has been a way for him to work through his mental health.



Artwork Title

Where Did It Go?

For the past 10 years I have lived in an area of Vancouver called the “River District”. This area has been in development for around 20 years now, although when I arrived, they had just built the first town houses on the east side of Kerr (where I moved with my family). There were areas that had already been demolished, but the land was still covered with trees that you could run through. You were able to fish in the Fraser River, which was good for catch and release. There were a lot more birds and wildlife roaming around. You could not count them all except for the two bald eagles who never left the area.

I remember coming home from school one day and being able to see the Fraser River in a way I should not have, from my car on Marine Drive, at least two kilometers away from it. My heart sank seeing the “New Sports field this year!” sign in the place of at least 50 trees. To this day, seven years later, they have yet to finish and actually use this large patch of land. Yet in this time, they were able to demolish more trees and build over five new apartment buildings, promising lower cost housing but most of which are just investment properties rented at unaffordable prices.

Watching this neighbourhood change, good or bad, has brought my soul a lot of pain. I’m watching the river get sicker, the birds leaving to find a safer home, and new people coming in not knowing the beauty that was destroyed so that they could exist here. This is why I created a crochet mural to depict parts of these changes. I made four trees that, if you look closely, are coming apart. The strings attaching to the fence go into the apartment building behind the mural, showing where all the trees that were cut and the river go. To make the trees stand up, I used discarded wood I found around the neighborhood left by construction. In between the trees, I have a river with two salmon looking sickly, with no other fish but themselves. My hope is that when people see this work, they can look at the land around them and ask themselves how they feel about it and if they are comfortable with what had to happen for them to be there.

PAYTON MAFFIOLI

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 20

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Payton Maffioli was raised on the unceded territory of the Syilx and Sinixt Nations in Grand Forks, British Columbia. Payton has always felt a deep connection to the mountains, lakes and rivers that surround her home and knew her purpose was to protect it. he is currently studying Natural Resource Science at University and aspiring to become an environmental lawyer. One of her favourite hobbies is photography; her passion began at age 11 when she got her first camera, and hasn't put it down since. Photography helps her keep that connection to nature when she feels far from home, and she shares her images to promote the conservation of ecosystems and wildlife.

Artwork Title

Kindred Souls

Taanishi, I have learned much from interacting with the wild side of nature, and how to keep my distance and respect their presence. Wildlife photography unleashes a different kind of feeling, one where you feel more connected to Mother Earth. Each soul I encounter is unique and full of personality, and I have the honour to capture that in still time. Each animal, each individual photo represents a teaching I have learned in life. “Kindred Souls” is the reflection of every being I have crossed paths with during my time on Turtle Island. The way I find them, or the way they’ve found me, is a sign of something I may be missing, and they are the reminder I need to continue my work. The purpose of my photography is to raise awareness around the conservation of wildlife and ecosystems through art that you can feel within yourself, and see yourself in their eyes. To consider yourself one with nature, and to be a guardian of the land and sea, is a great privilege. As a Métis woman it is my duty to carry the teachings and the spirit of the ancestors on my shoulders and be a beacon of their light in every step I take.





MAYA MARTIN

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 23
REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Maya Martin is a blossoming artist based in Vancouver, British Columbia, with deep roots in the serene Alberta prairies. Drawn by the West Coast’s beauty, she pursued a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Fueled by nostalgia and being homesick, her work reflects a deep connection to her heritage and the land she grew up on. Martin creates dreamlike and feminine narratives through illustrations, paintings, and ceramics in her practice. Martin honors her Métis heritage by admiring the organic world, learning traditional Indigenous mediums and expressing her relationship between nature and femininity in her artwork. Martin weaves her individuality, spirit, and aura into her artistic repertoire and all the pieces she creates.

Artwork Title

Shoovreu (Deer)

Shoovreu, meaning “deer” in Michif, is an illustration that speaks to the deep and enduring connection between the land, animals, and Métis people in British Columbia. My connection to the White-tailed deer began in Alberta, where I was born and raised, and has remained with me since moving to British Columbia—my home for the past four years.

Growing up on the prairies, I was surrounded by wildlife—bison, coyotes, and deer were a common sight. At my family cabin near Cold Lake, Alberta, I shared the land with black bears, lynx, and moose. This closeness to nature was foundational to my connection with my Métis heritage. I learned to hunt, fish, sew, and canoe on this land—skills passed down to me by my Métis father. The land I come from grounded me for many years, and the land I live on now continues to do so, enriched by the vibrant Métis histories of Alberta and British Columbia.

My ancestors walk with me no matter where I am. For me, the White-tailed deer symbolizes gentleness, peace, and an abiding connection to the natural world. Though I live far from my family, I continue to learn and practice Indigenous traditions, such as making Bannock, beading, and tufting. The land I now inhabit—the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations—may look different from where I grew up. Still, my Métis identity continues to live, rooted in resilience and community connection.

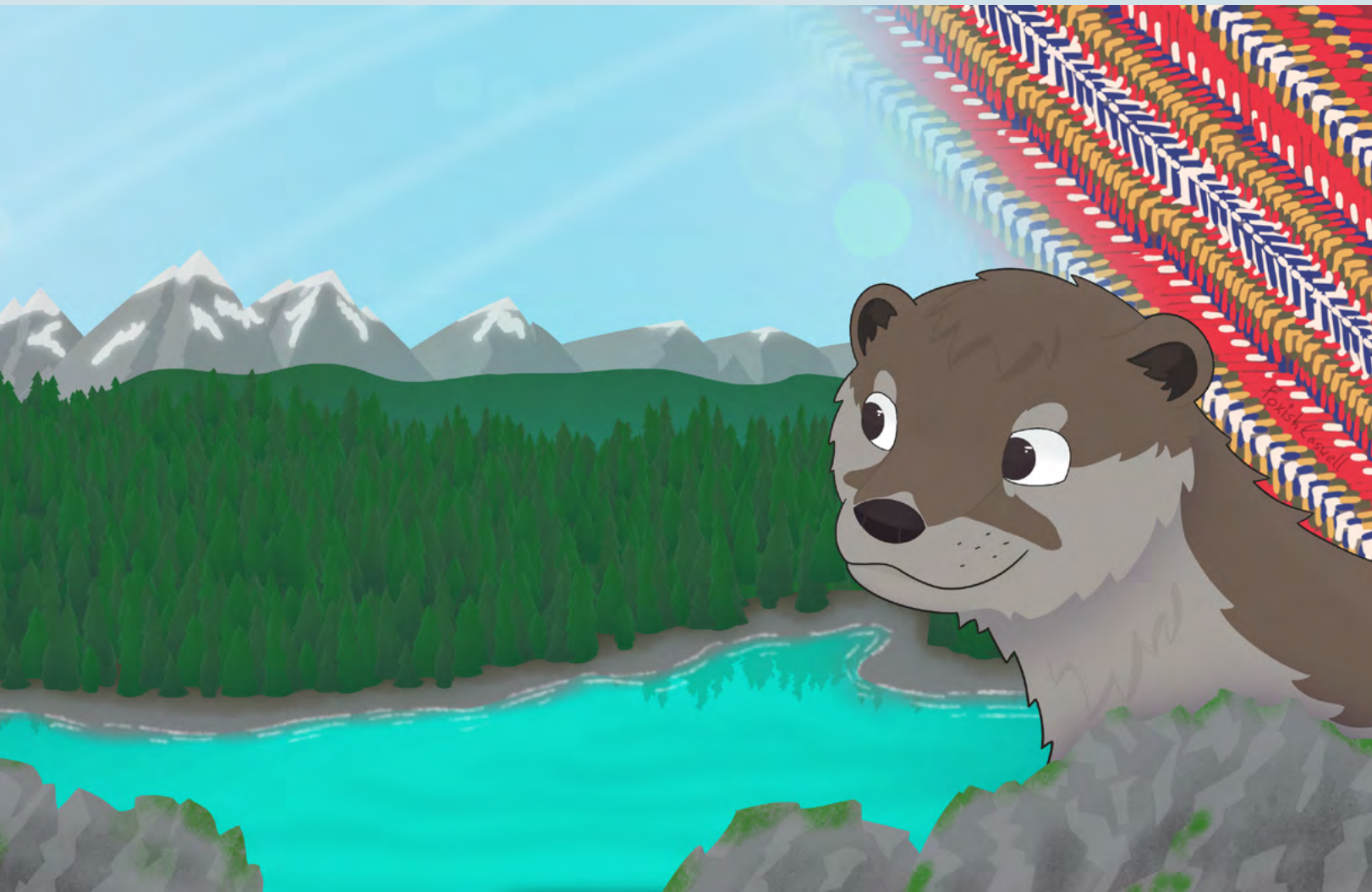
LIAM MCCARNEY

Pronouns: He/Him

Age: 16

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Liam is sixteen years old and a proud Red River Métis. He will be going into grade 11 and loves to draw and write. Liam mainly uses Procreate as his program of choice, but also draws traditionally and on Photoshop.



Artwork Title

The BC River Otter

The species I have chosen for this art contest is the river otter, a famous animal in British Columbian waters. I chose this animal for its connection between land and water, a semi-aquatic species, also having great history in Canada like in the fur trade.

Problems with otter reintroduction are still present today, an issue that can date back to the rise of pelt hunting for the fur trade. Even though it is considered of least concern by the IUCN, portions of North America continue to be uninhabited by river otters. This species is also my favourite, not just one I advocate for.

I feel connected to the local waterways. My mom and I walked every day to elementary school through the Nicomekl River trails and bridges. We would see deer, muskrats, birds, and beavers regularly, but I still watch and hope to see an otter when I walk by myself to high school these days. The forest makes me feel centred and connected, so I can face the day in a good frame of mind.

The drawing that I have done is digital, created on the illustration program Procreate. I used a few different brushes and experimented with rule of thirds in a landscape style. To include more of the nature theme, the background is a lake and a natural habitat of a river otter. Mountains are also featured in the distance, ones like the Coastal Mountains of British Columbia. To wrap up the background and tie it into my ancestry, I added a Métis sash behind the otter.

JAMES MCKAY

Pronouns: He/Him

Age: 15

REGION 7 - NORTHEAST

James McKay is 15 years old from Chetwynd BC, a little town in the Peace River District, and part of a large family of nine. James loves to fish in the lakes near his home, as well as whittling to make figurines. He also enjoys drawing, particularly when he is outdoors and can sketch what he observes, animals being the most fascinating. James’ parents own a small farm with chickens and a few sheep, which not only provides fresh eggs and wool, but teaches a sense of responsibility that comes with the shared ups and downs of rural living.

Artwork Title

Just beyond my hook

For my entry in this contest, I sketched a rainbow trout. My love of fishing has overshadowed almost all other outside activities; it has just the right mix of patience, competition, and silent reflection that suits me perfectly. The very first fish I ever caught was a rainbow trout, so there is an additional personal connection on my part with this species. As a person who carries my Métis heritage close to home, fishing is how I connect to my heritage and the natural world. I’ve placed the rainbow trout just beyond my hook, deciding whether to bite in my drawing. In this image, I attempted to convey the balance between hunter and hunted, marking the thrill of the sport.

To make this drawing, I used charcoal and coloured pencils—my favourite materials that beautifully bring out the vibrant colours of the rainbow trout. Charcoal adds texture through shadows, while colour gives the fish life. I have always been passionate about drawing since childhood, with nature serving as my greatest source of inspiration.

In this drawing, I would like to convey my love for nature and its beauty in the best possible way. Few things in life bring me greater peace of mind than fishing, with the soothing sounds of nature all about me. The excitement of landing a large trout is an overwhelming prize and proof of the reason why serious fishermen boast of their ability. Fishing is a thrilling dance of wits—a battle of reason against instinct. With each toss of my lure, I am engaged in a careful chase where my observations of the fish’s behaviour collide with their deep-seated instincts developed over the years. It’s a peaceful competition, where each ripple in the water and subtle movement of the spinner may be able to outsmart these fish or betray my presence.



BETH MCLEOD

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 17

REGION 3 - THOMPSON & OKANAGAN

Beth is a 17-year-old Métis artist from Kamloops, BC. She has loved making art since she was a kid—it's always been one of her favorite ways to express herself. She is also passionate about horseback riding and dance, and feels most inspired when she is surrounded by nature. Beth's Métis heritage and the land she lives on are a big part of who she is, and they often guide what she creates. Through her art, Beth aims to share the peace, beauty, and strength she sees in the world around her.



Artwork Title

Stillness in the Valley

This piece was created with the feeling of quiet evenings in mind—those soft, golden moments just before night settles in. The painting is inspired by the Kamloops mountains and the view from my own backyard, where the light touches the landscape in deep blues and glowing oranges. On peaceful days, especially when the sun sets slow and low, the valley seems to hold its breath. That stillness, that calm—that's what I wanted to capture on canvas.

At the center of this scene is a lone horse grazing in the meadow. Horses have always held a special place in my heart. They're strong and powerful, but also gentle, kind, and deeply aware of their surroundings. I feel connected to them in a way that's hard to explain—as if they carry a quiet wisdom that's easy to miss if you're not paying attention. For me, the horse represents both freedom and grounding. Painting it was the hardest part of this piece, but it was also the most meaningful.

I used acrylic paint on a simple canvas, working slowly in layers to build up the sky, the mountains, and the valley floor. The trees were tricky to place in a way that felt natural, and I spent a lot of time getting the textures right. The sky was especially important—I wanted it to feel like the moment when the world softens, when the sun sets and shadows begin to stretch. That in-between time, when day turns to night, holds a kind of magic I wanted to share.

As a young Métis person, my connection to the land is not just about place—it's about identity, memory, and respect. The mountains, the animals, the skies—they're part of who I am. This painting reflects the feeling of being part of something older and quieter than ourselves. It's not just about a horse in a field—it's about returning to a place of peace, of belonging, and of deep listening.

I hope that when others look at this painting, they feel that stillness too—the kind that settles in your chest and makes you breathe a little slower. For me, this is a way to honor the land and *lii biyet di la preri* (the beings of the prairie). It's my offering to *lii lyeu di la tayr* (the spirits of the land), and a reminder that we are never separate from nature—we are part of it.



MADI PERREAULT

Pronouns: She/They

Age: 16

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Madison "Madi" Perreault is a Métis and Ojibway artist from Surrey BC with mixed European heritage on her father's side. She began experimenting with Métis dot art about a year and a half ago after noticing it was hard to find in a contemporary style. Madi draws inspiration from the natural world, horror films, and pop culture.

Artwork Title

Wondering Through the Garden

"Wondering Through the Garden" captures a childhood memory of exploring my grandmother's lush backyard, where clusters of plants and berries grew in every corner. I chose the heart berry as my central motif because it symbolizes both sweetness and resilience. That is why they surround the pink flower.

Working in a mixture of cartoon and dot art, I layered hundreds of small circles to build texture and depth across the canvas. My purpose is to invite the viewer into that sense of wonder and discovery. As you follow the playful cartoon outlines and intricate dot patterns, your eyes will uncover hidden details, just as I once did among the leaves and blossoms. This piece honours traditional Métis dot art practice while reflecting my personal journey of reconnecting with family, memory, and the living world.

SISELY ROETERS

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 17

REGION 4 - KOOTENAYS

Sisely Roeters is 17 years old from Golden, BC. She is in grade 11 and plans to go to nursing school when she finishes high school. Sisely is also the Youth Representative at Métis Nation Columbia River Society. Sisely loves beading, jigging, and is a leader in her small community. She is an active being who loves snowboarding, gymnastics, aerial silks, climbing, dirt biking, and camping.

Artwork Title

Berrys feather

I would like to start by saying, I am not an artist!

But for my “art”, I decided to draw a feather and “paint” it in with two types of berries that are native to BC, huckleberries and haskaps.

Huckleberries and haskaps are two of my favourite berries that grow in nature. I chose to draw a feather because they symbolize spirituality, strength, honor, and so much more that is inspiring to me. Specifically, I chose an eagle feather, even though it does not look like one. The reason I chose an Eagle-feather is because I hope to come back as an eagle. I chose seven stars because stars symbolize Hope and guidance and the number seven is linked to the Holy Spirit, seven directions, and is used to symbolize the end of a cycle. Although my work is simple, it has many meanings.

The simplest things in life are sometimes the best things.



MICHELLE SILVA

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 19

REGION 1 - VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER

Michelle Silva is a crochet artist and full-time psychology student from Vancouver Island. She began crocheting during the pandemic after being taught by her grandma and has been creating ever since. Michelle creates a variety of plushies with a focus on beautiful British Columbia's fauna.

Artwork Title

Sockeye Salmon

Sockeye salmon are an important keystone species to British Columbia due to their cultural significance and environmental importance in nutrient cycling and as part of the food chain for many animals. Salmon is important to the ocean and the forest, as well as to the process of carrying nutrients from the ocean to the forest.

Sockeye salmon holds a special significance to me because growing up my family smoked sockeye salmon every year. It was a multi-day process with all hands-on deck between setting up, preparing the fish, and refilling the wood chips to smoke it. Afterwards, we had a significant number of smoked salmon to last us for the year, and every time we ate it, it reminded me of the process and journey it took to get to that step. I hope my artwork helps others understand the process of making this food and feel the importance of these fish to families throughout British Columbia.

This crochet piece is very special to me. As I worked to crochet each fin, I felt more connected to the culture and British Columbia's diverse species, which motivates much of my work. I chose red and green to show the sockeye salmon spawning phase. I chose this phase to show the salmon's preparation to journey to their stream to spawn. They use all of their energy to return to their stream, and after spawning, they die, creating food for other species or ultimately decomposing to add more nutrients to that stream. These salmon help shape our ecosystems in what seems like a minuscule way but broadly impacts the rest of the species.

I chose to create a sockeye salmon with the hope of a plentiful return of this species, and I created this piece with my hands to remind myself of the hard work and many hands put into this process. With the sockeye salmon population dwindling, my art highlights this fish's beauty, importance, and the necessity for a solution to their endangerment.





DESSERAY STEPSKI

Pronouns: She/Her

Age: 26

REGION 5 - NORTH CENTRAL

Desseray Stepski is a proud Métis woman who enjoys multiple hobbies including but not limited to coding, reading, and mead-making. If you don't find her working on her web application project, or any of her various hobbies, you will find her outside gardening, or walking her Cane Corso mix, Chief. Art has always been a passion for Desseray and a constant throughout her life. In her youth, she has taken up various art forms like cross-stitching, embroidery, painting, sketching/drawing, and many more. Art is an avenue for her to "let loose" and express herself through creativity.

Artwork Title

The Garden's Whisper

My experience growing up in Northern British Columbia has built the foundation for my love of nature and the environment. By immersing myself in the natural environment, through camping, gardening, and hiking, it has guided me in rekindling my relationship with my Métis culture and my connection to the environment and land.

Nature in general, along with pollinators, shape my sense of belonging by helping me feel connected to the Earth and the elements around me. Every day I am grateful to be able to connect with the environment and appreciate the importance of all the pollinators around me. I am lucky to be able to observe how such tiny plants and insects can have such an immense impact on the world around us.

The species and natural elements that I chose to focus on for this project are pollinators in relation to local vegetation. My wish was to emphasize the significance of bees, wasps, and butterflies in correlation to the natural environment. Pollinators play such a vital role in our ecosystem, by aiding in successful production of food and crops, promoting biodiversity and sustainability in supporting ecosystems. Bees, Butterflies, and wasps are paramount to our ecosystem, which is why they hold a special place in my heart and hold my utmost respect.

The story I am aiming to portray through my artwork is to highlight the gravity that pollinators hold in British Columbia and in our world. It is important to recognize the beauty in the value that pollinators hold as it is truly immeasurable.

My wish is for viewers to take a moment to step back from their lives to appreciate the beauty and importance of nature and in preserving the biodiversity of our land.

The cultural and environmental influences that I had in mind while creating this piece was the natural environment that surrounds me and my Métis culture. My artistic influences for this art project include Emillie Ferris, an embroidery expert from Suffolk, England who focuses primarily on plants and animals, in addition to my sister, Vanessa Stepski, who principally paints abstract fiction plants and animals.

The materials I used were all gathered by myself from camping trips, hiking trails, and my garden. When located, all insects were deceased and the wasps' nests empty. I sculpted the mushroom top out of clay and sealed the log, bee, wasps, and butterfly with a gloss medium to enhance the natural features of the materials used.

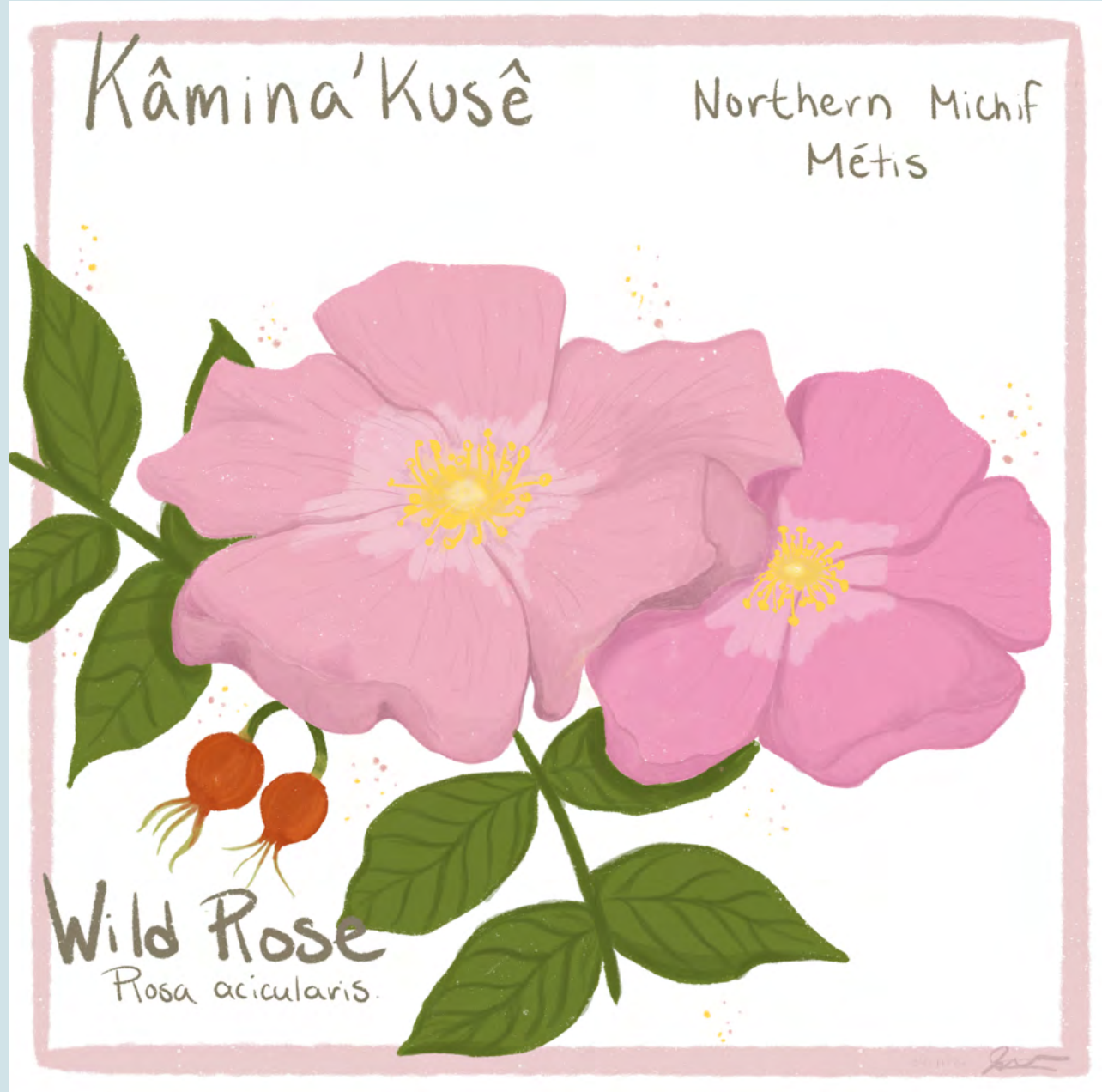
When one takes the time to envelope themselves with the land, plants and animals that surround us, one can observe the seven teachings. (Love, Respect, Honesty, Courage, Truth, Wisdom, and Humility.) When observing the land, plants, and animals, their resilience is prominent.; Dandelions growing through cracks in the concrete, Leopard Gecko's regrowing their tails, and pollinators striving to pollinate every plant to sustain our ecosystem.

JOS STEVENS

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 25

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Jocelyn Stevens is a settler Métis artist and student who grew up in northern “BC” on the traditional territories of the Saik’us First Nations and is now living on the lands of the Coast Salish Peoples. Her art tends to explore Indigenous knowledge, language and memory, often drawing from personal experiences and interests. She works primarily in drawing and mixed media, and focuses heavily on plants and species located on the Pacific Coast. She also loves to incorporate acts of remembrance into her drawings, connecting each drawing to personal stories and experiences to those who are close to her. She is currently majoring in Indigenous studies and Resource and Environmental management at university, where her art supports deeper engagement with land-based knowledge and her Métis identity.



Artwork Title

From Her Teachings to Mine

My drawing is of the Wild Rose that blooms within “British Columbia” every spring. This flower is especially important as it has ties with my grandmother, who we call grammy. When I was young, my grammy would take my sister and I out for walks outside our old farmhouse and would point out plants and animals that would be around us and teach us about them. I loved learning about plants like the pussy willow, the castilleja (paintbrush flower), and particularly the wild rose bush that grew right at the end of our driveway. I remember being so in awe of this flower because it was so irresistibly pink, and I loved pink as a little girl. I asked my grammy what kind of flower it was, and she said it was a wild rose, and was also edible! I remember going up to the plant, picking a flower, plucking a petal and eating it all with her beside me. She told me you could eat it when you have tummy issues, and I was so surprised that a little flower could do something like that for humans.

Years later, this teaching continues to follow me in my career path with my current education at university. My major in Indigenous studies has opened my eyes to so many teachings, knowledges and ways of life for not only other Indigenous communities, but my own Métis heritage. It also had me come to the realization that my grammy was passing down a teaching without me realizing it at the time, being that I was disconnected from my heritage. I also believe my minor in resource and environmentalism, while also just having a big interest in plants and nature, has added another important layer in how I see the world and also how I create my art. Learning about environmental systems, land-use, and Indigenous-led stewardship has deepened my understanding of our role as humans that we play and our responsibilities to the land and our non-human relatives. It has helped me to see how our relationships to plants, animals and ecosystems are interconnected.

All these teachings have helped shape how I express myself in my artistic journey, having personal connections while also creating a twist on modern scientific plant identification cards. The wild rose in my drawing represents memory, teachings, and responsibility and relationship with the environment. I hope to reflect the importance of remembering and sustaining the connections we have with the land, while also how these connections can guide our learning and our art.

SHAYNE TURNER

Pronouns: She / Her

Age: 19

REGION 7 - NORTHEAST

Shayne is a young Métis/Cree/Settler photographer who is passionate about storytelling through visual art. Inspired by family heritage, her creative expression explores cultural identity, land connection, and historical narratives. Shayne enjoys outdoor adventures and documenting meaningful moments with her family.



Artwork Title

Cameron Lakes: A Métis Homeland

My photography project explores the deep connections between my Métis and Cree ancestors and the land they made home in northern British Columbia, known to us as “Cameron Lakes.” Historically, my family, the Camerons, journeyed from the Michel Band Reserve and the Lac Ste. Anne and Kelly Lake Métis settlements to settle at the lakes later named for them. Their homestead and cabins were built on what was then called Long Lake by the West Moberly First Nation. Albertine and Patrick Cameron arrived first, followed by their parents and siblings. Through marriage, the family became closely connected with the nearby Saluteau First Nation. Their migration reflects cultural resilience, shaped by necessity and the desire to live independently on the land and water.

I focus on natural elements, especially the lakes, as reflections of our family’s ties to the land. These waters offered nourishment, travel, and belonging, while the surrounding landscape provided food, medicine, and spiritual grounding. The lakes served as a home base from which they travelled to guide hunters and provide medicine. For Métis people like my great-grandmother Albertine, a medicine woman who often travelled, the land was a sanctuary that provided safety and healing when few other places could. Nearby at Moberly Lake lies our connection to the Catholic Church, where many Camerons are buried at Indigenous burial sites. This region still resonates with the complex identity of the Métis people, juxtaposed between Church, First Nations and contested land ownership.

My artistic process involves careful observation and patience to find where they settled, built their winter home and their summer cabin across the lake. Like my ancestors, I was looking for their home. These photographs are part of an ongoing dialogue with them, acknowledging their wisdom, resilience, and the ways they lived in relationship with the land that sustained them. I want that to remain integral to my identity.

Through my work, I invite viewers to recognize the importance of preserving natural spaces that hold cultural significance for Indigenous communities. I want people to see these photos and understand that this land carries my history and continues to shape my future. My goal is to honour the spirit of my ancestors, especially my kokums, by affirming our lasting connection to Cameron Lakes and the kinship we share with the West Moberly and Sauteau First Nations. The lakes represent a refuge, a home, and a reminder that the land welcomed my family when the world around them often did not. It offered a place to build a life.

I included the moccasins made by my great-grandmother Madeline Gladue, and the ribbon skirt my mom made for me, set against the forest and cabin by the lake. These pieces carry the love and knowledge of the women in my family. I also included our family burial site, at the Catholic graveyard in Moberly Lake. Though overgrown and unmarked, their graves still hold presence for my six ancestors buried there. It is a sacred place, if also strangely sad. By returning, my family remembers, honours, and reaffirms our lasting connection to both our heritage and the land itself.



SPIRIT VIESULAS

Pronouns: She/Her Age: 17

REGION 2 - LOWER MAINLAND

Spirit Viesulas is a 17-year-old Ojibwe and Métis artist based in Port Moody. Passionate about art from a young age, she has pursued it seriously throughout high school, painting a large piece for her high school, and earning recognition such as the Marge Wright Award and the Indigenous Student Art Award. Her practice is fluid and intuitive, often working in pencil and paint while exploring a wide range of mediums and surfaces. With a strong creative influence from family, siblings who create, a father who was an Indigenous carver and tattoo artist, and a deeply supportive mother, her work is grounded in both tradition and experimentation. Spirit is committed to developing her voice as an artist and plans to pursue a career in the arts.

Artwork Title

The Bear Called Galen

The Bear Called Galen is a reflection on growth, healing, and the quiet strength that carries us through hard times. It captures that moment of calm that comes after chaos, when everything finally slows down and you can breathe again. Galen, whose name means ‘calm’ and ‘healer,’ isn’t just a bear in this piece. For me, he’s a symbol, a guide, and a sacred presence that connects deeply to both my culture and my personal experience.

As a young Métis and Ojibwe artist, my identity is at the heart of everything I create. I was taught by my kokum (grandmother) the understanding that everything is connected, land, people, spirit, and all our animal relatives. Now this connection is not only something I’ve learned, but also something I feel. I’ve always felt especially close to bears. I don’t fear them, I respect them. In many ways, I see myself in them. They represent deep emotion, solitude, and transformation, something I believe many Indigenous people can relate to.

In both Ojibwe and Métis teachings, the bear is more than just powerful, it’s sacred. It teaches us to take time to heal, to go inward when we need to, and to come back stronger. Bears hibernate not to escape, but to rest, to recharge. That’s what *The Bear Called Galen* is about. Even when we’re surrounded by chaos or pain, there’s still a quiet place inside us where healing can happen. This kind of peace takes effort; it’s something we protect, something we earn.

This painting is really personal to me, but I hope it also speaks of something universal. It’s about making it through pressure and pain and still being able to find moments of beauty and stillness. For me, it also reflects the journey that many Indigenous people carry, one of survival, resistance, and returning to our culture after generations of being pushed away from it. Creating this work was a way for me to reconnect, to reclaim a part of myself that colonialism tried to silence. It’s a reminder that our stories, our spirits, and our cultures are still here and still strong.

Visually, I used contrast on purpose; the bold, sharp lines and patterns move all around Galen, showing the pressure and noise, we all deal with, especially the weight of generational trauma and modern life. But Galen stays calm. He’s not completely untouched by it, but he holds steady. He reminds me, and hopefully others, that peace isn’t just about escaping difficulty. It’s about staying grounded, even in the middle of it.

The Bear Called Galen is a reminder to slow down, to listen to ourselves, and to come back to the land and our own inner balance. Healing is sacred work, and in a world that moves fast and demands so much from us, creating art like this helps me to hold space for myself, for my community, and for anyone who might need that reminder.

Every brushstroke in this piece is rooted in care, connection, and the journey of finding my voice as a young Métis and Ojibwe artist. This is where I honour where I come from, and where I hope to go.

BETH WATMOUGH-FLANDERS

Pronouns: She/They

Age: 26

REGION 1 - VANCOUVER ISLAND & POWELL RIVER

Beth Watmough-Flanders is of Michif, Nehiyaw, & Settler descent and has family connections coming from Neepawa Manitoba, Rocky Boy Reserve in Montana, as well as Ireland, Norway, & Belgium. She was born in Treaty 7 Territory “Calgary, Alberta” and is now lucky to be a guest on the beautiful lands of the Lekwungen and WSANEC people. She was taught to bead by Lindsay Delaronde.

Artwork Title

Kwetlal Medallion

The featured artwork is titled Kwetlal Medallion and measures 3”x4” made with size 0/11 seed beads, 0/10 seed beads, White acrylic felt, and swarovski crystal cut beads, on commercially tanned moose hide.

I make art because my Grandma Judy Watmough made art. I bead because she never got the opportunity to learn, and so my family beads to reconnect.

On this medallion there are five Kwetlalt (Camas), three in bloom, two still in bud. Their violet petals stretch toward the sun, while the unopened buds hold a promise of arrival. I see myself in them. As I have aged, I find myself learning to open, slowly and deliberately, realizing that vulnerability is not a weakness, but a strength. Tenderness and Vulnerability is a key to reconnection: to my culture, to the land, and to community.

I chose Camas to honour the Traditional, Unceded Territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ Peoples. This flower, once a staple food and now a symbol of renewal, emerges each spring to remind us of the cycles of care and kinship that sustain life here. As a Métis person living on this land, I carry a responsibility to walk with respect and humility, knowing that I am a guest, and to keep in mind the importance of helping to sustain and create space for this renewal.

Opening myself to this responsibility, and to the stories held by the land, has deepened my relationships with others. I believe that when we allow ourselves to be seen in our full complexity, we create space for stronger, more compassionate communities. The Camas reminds me that growth is both individual and collective, and that healing often begins with patience.

I am in awe of the knowledge keepers who have nurtured the return of Kwetlal/Camas, despite generations of displacement and suppression. To me, this flower is more than a plant, it is a living monument to Indigenous Resistance, Love, Care, and Continuity within so-called “Victoria.”







MÉTIS NATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Produced by Métis Nation British Columbia 2025