

ART THAT SPEAKS TO THE **HEART**

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mike Alexander is Anishinaabe, originally from Swan Lake First Nation. His work can be seen online at thunderclouddesigns.org, on Instagram @tundercloud924, as well as in person at Skwachays Lodge located in Vancouver.

Website thunderclouddesigns.org
Instagram @thundercloud924

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FROM THE ARTIST

My professional art journey started in 2016 when I began a healing journey. I had been doing a lot of ink drawing and was challenged to try using colour. I painted my first painting and was happy to keep painting. My art has always been about identity and culture. Many of the pieces are celebratory in nature, drawing from stories and teachings and expressed through the traditional Ojibway Woodlands School of Art. I consider this style to be my birthright. Additionally, I explore contemporary themes in a more figurative style that incorporates atmospheric elements to convey emotions I have about loss, grief, and anger. These emotions are close to me and I think it's important to express them in a healthy way.

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FROM THE ARTIST

I am the son of a Residential School survivor who I never met in this life. My father passed before I could find him and this loss is the direct result of the Sixties Scoop. While my mother did not attend the Residential Schools, I was taken from her and this upheaval caused disconnect for all of us. I continue to heal from my early life experiences and subsequent issues with addiction as a means to cope. My father was an advocate for his fellow survivors and without ever meeting him, I have long been an advocate for Indigenous people. This work is sacred medicine for the next seven generations including my children and their children.

I would be happy for people to read the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to understand the history of this country. I know there has been progress in schools, churches, and in other sectors, and I hope my work helps to remind viewers of the work that still needs to be done while seeing that there is so much hope for a better tomorrow.