

MIRWATISIWIN [THE HEALING]

Mural by Marie-Claude Néquado

The Musée d'art de Joliette and the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière have made a concrete commitment to supporting reconciliation by promoting Indigenous art throughout the Nitaskinan territory.

In September 2020, following the death of Joyce Echaquan, the MAJ invited the artist Eruoma Awashish to create a commemorative artwork in her memory. Since then, the MAJ and the CAAL have resolved to transform this initiative into a recurring, collaborative project based on the concept of filiation. Every two years, an artist selected from a list of recommendations made by the previous edition's artist will be commissioned to produce a new mural. Through this jointly developed programming, the MAJ and the CAAL want to provide greater visibility to practices that inspire the Indigenous creators who benefit from this initiative.

In the spring of 2022, the MAJ, the CAAL, and Eruoma Awashish selected Marie-Claude Néquado, an Atikamekw artist originally from Manawan, to create the next mural, which will be on view for a two-year period in the Museum's glass-walled front room. Néquado is one of three artists recommended by Awashish to the selection committee.

In this showcase to the CAAL, Néquado presents a new work based on her series of portraits of dancers dressed in full regalia, the traditional clothing worn during pow wows. Néquado's imagination is fueled by the rituals and

stories of her community, and her projects allow her to share her culture by giving it a positive, contemporary image. Pow wows are celebratory occasions that highlight the vitality of Indigenous cultures and provide opportunities to build intercultural relationships. These traditional dances also offer a space for healing to those who participate.

At the MAJ, Néquado has chosen to portray two jingle dress dancers, Andréa Ottawa and Waneska Flamand, whose journeys are deeply inspiring to her. The Ojibwe story behind the traditional jingle dress dance tells the tale of a young girl who has become ill, but with the help of her community is cured by performing this dance. As Néquado explains, “Today, when young women dance with their jingle dresses, they welcome others into their dance with tobacco that was given to them by those who are sick. They dance to songs that speak of healing, and afterwards, the tobacco is burned in a sacred fire.” Néquado’s mural is in keeping with the previous edition by Awashish, who wished to help heal the wounds caused by Joyce Echaquan’s death.

Marie-Claude Néquado is the winner of the 2021 Indigenous Artist Prize from the Grands Prix Desjardins de la culture. A reproduction of her graduation project *Awin kirano?* (2018), which reflects on intergenerational transmission, can be viewed at the Place de la Fresque in Joliette. The MAJ and the CAAL are pleased to support the development of Néquado’s practice by celebrating her current work.

MARIE-CLAUDE NÉQUADO

Atikamekw Nehirowisiw, Manawan, Kepek, 1978

1. *Mirwatsiwin*, 2022

[The Healing]

Mural, acrylic paint, 365.7 x 684.5 cm

FLOOR PLAN

1st floor

Salle Power Corporation du Canada

