

National Inquiry
into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls

Artistic Expression as Truth-Telling

The National Inquiry believes that art is a necessary and important component of our work. Most powerfully, art provides a platform for voices that may not have an opportunity to share their stories elsewhere. Art is an important medium for sharing knowledge and truth. The National Inquiry's collection will be a permanent record that shares the truth about violence against Indigenous women, and provides awareness into the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Art is a powerful tool for commemoration. Public commemorations, through art, can help bring forward the personal stories demonstrative of colonial violence. Art as commemoration bears witness to injustice, recognizes the human dignity of victims and survivors, and calls institutions, systems and structures to account.

The collection currently has more than **385** pieces and it continues to grow! It is a diverse collection ranging from: digital music, written poetry, canvas paintings, etched glass vase, books, quilts, miniature red river cart, sacred rattle, turtle medicine bag, Métis sashes, Miskwaabimaag (sacred red willow baskets), baby swaddle and baby booties, miniature birch bark canoe, scarf, seal skin boutonnière, an oral story, wall murals, red dress pins, installation art, Faceless dolls, performance art, and a statue with 1200 polished stones with names of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls carved into them.

These artistic pieces are made out of various materials including: birch bark, felt, paper, turtle shell and hide, beads, feathers, wool, cotton, polyester, leather, stained glass, ceramic, softwood, caribou antler, glass, buttons, cedar, and organic material.

The National Inquiry is honoured to share several artistic expressions that have been gifted throughout the Truth Gathering Process.



“A Mother’s Love”

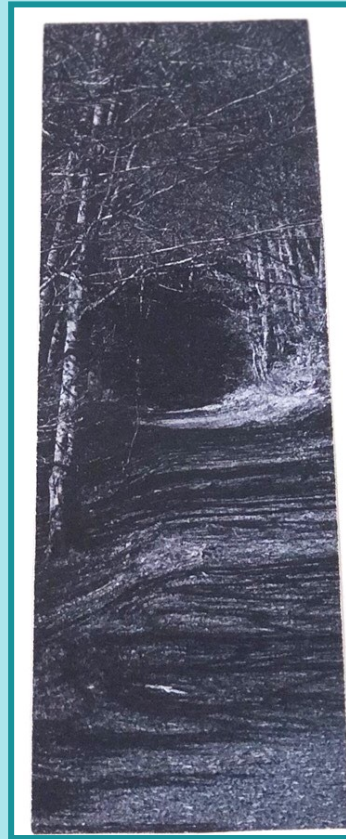
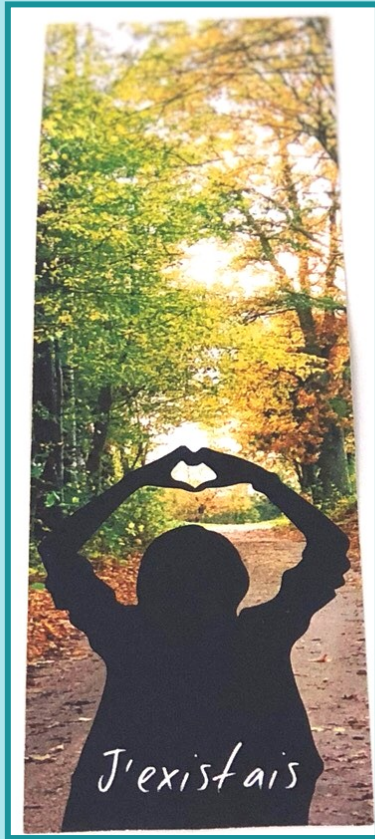
“A Mother’s Love” was painted and donated by Dee-Jay Monika Rumbolt, who is a member of NunatuKavut, to reflect her experience of growing up in a single parent family and to show the importance of keeping families together. Her mother worked three jobs to support and provide for Monika and her brother, often not eating herself as she could not afford enough food. Monika reflects on her mother’s ability to keep them all together, raise them and to ensure that they were healthy and happy. “A Mother’s Love” shows three loons representing Monika’s family: her mother (right), her brother (middle) and herself (left). Her mother, who is on the outside and has her wings open as loons do when they are being territorial, represents the fact that her mother was both provider and protector to Dee-Jay and her brother. Dee-Jay’s brother is closest to their mother in the painting as he shares a special connection with her.





“Walk with Us” / “Bella Spirit”

“Walk with Us” and “Bella Spirit” were painted and donated by Nicole Carpenter from Bella Bella, BC who is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation. Nicole was at the Greater Vancouver Region Community Hearing to support her sister and was asked by her sister to create something to bring. Painting is Nicole’s therapy and “Walk with Us” and “Bella Spirit” represent the strength that has been passed down from her grandmothers: the family was her grandmother’s strength, her sister and herself were her mother’s strength and her daughter, mother and sister are her strength. The paintings, which can be placed together to make a larger painting, show Nicole’s community of Bella Bella from the view of her Gran’s house on the beach. “Walk with Us”, which makes up the bottom of the larger painting, shows Nicole, her daughter, her sister and her mother dancing and celebrating on the beach. Nicole’s mother is in a black and red blanket and holding copper for protection. Her sister is in a brown and purple blanket and holding a feather. Her daughter is in a black and brown blanket, wearing the same headband as Nicole. “Bella Spirit”, the top portion of the larger painting, shows the water and landscape of mountains across from the beach. It is on those mountains on another island that their loved ones are buried and there are three red blankets on the mountains representing Nicole’s late sister and grandmothers.



“J'existais” Bookmark

This bookmark was donated by Jeannette Vollant in memory of her niece so that her niece and all the other women are not forgotten. The dark forest path on one side of the bookmark represents all missing and murdered women. On the other side, the same forest path, now brightly lit by sunlight, has a silhouette of a woman with her hands in the shape of a heart and the words “J'existais” (“I existed”) to remind us that these women existed, that they were alive.



Children's Books

Published by Bouton d'or Acadie, these books make up their Wabanaki Collection and were donated by Louise Imbeault at the Youth Panel at the Moncton Community Hearings. These books tell Indigenous stories in French, English and either Mi'kmaq or Passamaquoddy. The idea for this series of books originated with Madame Marguerite Maillet who saw that there was a lack of French-Indigenous stories in New Brunswick. She thought it was important for Indigenous youth to learn these stories, so she, along with other writers, gathered together these stories and produced these six books. These books are now being used in New Brunswick schools for grades one to six and an educational guide has been developed for them. When asked about the importance of the books, Indigenous children in Neguac, New Brunswick said that it was important for them to learn their own stories.

