

Mackenzie Brown + Co-operators

Mackenzie Brown

I come from a long line of people who weren't able to share their artwork due to the impacts of residential schools, the sixties scoop and ongoing impacts of colonialism and so the fact that I am here as a young Indigenous woman working with an organization who is wanting to walk in this path of reconciliation and walk in this path of truth really means a lot and so for me to amplify the voices of Indigenous people is a true honor and a blessing.

TEXT ON SCREEN

Dancing in Between

I was told once by an elder that when I do my art, my ancestors work through me. And so, every single time I start my art practice, I started with drumming, I started with putting down tobacco and making an offering to help my ancestors guide through me. To me, my artwork is a spiritual being. It has spirit to it, it has life within it and so I like to sing to it the same way that we sing to babies when they're born. To say hey like welcome into this world.

TEXT ON SCREEN

We asked Mackenzie to create a piece of art to symbolize Co-operators reconciliation journey.

The artwork itself is very intentionally made. From elements of growth, relationship building, seven generations and coming together with kindness and love. All of those different elements are really reflected in the piece of artwork. You see the Co-operators logo, but you see it in a different light. You see it with new colors, with the crocus flower and you see some leaves that represent new growth and new beginnings. You'll see this beautiful sweet grass strand that's surrounding it. I wanted to envelop the logo in this sacred medicine because the work that we're doing today needs to be done with positivity and needs to be done with seven generational thinking. Some of the other elements of the artwork work include beautiful plant medicines, including the crocus flower, fire weed, the rose hips and the Wild Rose. All of these different elements of plant medicine were really important for me to demonstrate because the Co-operators is on a new journey and on a really important journey. When people see my artwork I hope that they think of all of these

things that the Co-operators are doing, that allies are doing, that Indigenous people are working towards. It represents the collective efforts that we're all moving towards. For my Indigenous brothers, sisters and two spirit kin who are going through trauma and are being held down by the impacts of colonialism, I think really what Truth and Reconciliation can do is it can create a community that cares about those people. We have so many kin who fall through the cracks of, you know, the system or drug and alcohol addiction due to the impacts that they've faced. And for us to come together as a community of Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people, to just show care, love and respect, I think will move mountains for those people. My hope for the coming generations as we look towards reconciliation is that we honor the two worlds that we are living in. There is a beauty of not seeing one world or one perspective over the other but rather dancing in between. When we open ourselves to relationships, very beautiful things can happen because we learn from one another, we grow together and we come and we meet beautifully in the middle.

TEXT ON SCREEN

To learn more about Co-operators Reconciliation Strategy visit
cooperators.ca/reconciliation.