

The Flower People: Melanie Monique Rose Education Guide



Summer Sleeping #1
1/5 edition giclee print
27.5" x 27.5"
2020

Created by Melanie Monique Rose

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Flowers for the People – The work of Melanie Monique Rose in *The Flower People*

Flowers are ubiquitous the world over, both in their presence in most ecosystems across the globe and in their importance to humanity. Métis artist Christi Belcourt, in discussion with late Elder Max Assinewe, affirms the crucial role of plants, which Max describes as “‘first family’ because all life forms depend on the plant world for survival” (3). Accordingly, pollination ecologist Stephen Buchmann states that “[f]lowers accompany us from cradle to grave” (ix). Flowers, Buchmann continues, “feed and clothes us. Their fruits and seeds keep the world’s 7.2 billion people from starvation” (ix). As part of the animal kingdom, humans are deeply reliant on these intricate ecological dances that keep us and other plants and animals alive and well. Among the many other ways helpless humans are dependent on the various plants, animals, and elemental beings and natural forces, we starve without flowers. We starve from lack of nourishment, we starve from lack of sustenance, beauty, creativity, food, all of which are important parts of living with some measure of wholeness, of spiritual and social wellness.

One of the first times I met Rose in person she casually mentioned that she was Métis and Ukrainian. I shared that I was also Ukrainian and Métis, and we discussed briefly our mutual observations that both cultures seemed to share a certain reverence for plants, and especially flowers, which figure prominently on much of the traditional clothing and material culture of these respective peoples. Rose notes that the traditional dance outfit she wore as a child when enrolled in Ukrainian dance classes included floral motifs and often the *vinok*, or floral crown, worn by women that continues to play an important role in contemporary Ukrainian culture (Satenstein). In Métis understanding, the flowers represented in the famous floral beadwork patterns served a number of purposes. They were meant to both claim/identify the maker’s friends and family as such, offer prayers of protection for the wearer, as well as providing often elaborate decoration. Additionally, Métis elder Rose Richardson notes that, prior to widespread literacy among Métis peoples “stories or knowledge were beaded or embroidered into clothing and on items of everyday use”(8). The Métis tradition of storytelling through decorative imagery on material culture items is alive and well in Rose’s exhibition *The Flower People*.

Each of the works in *The Flower People* reveals people, places and events of personal import to Rose, either through familial or cultural connections. Rose makes use of the floral motifs common in Métis material culture, although her preferred method of adornment is through felting rather than beading or embroidery. Using old wool blankets that are either thrifted or given to her, Rose creates highly adorned wall works and Capotes (a style of jacket from the fur-trade era that was typically made using wool blankets) that hold stories in her choices of textures, colours and design. Rose’s interest in textiles stems at least partially for a growing concern for the state of the environment, and re-using or “upcycling” vintage blankets into a sort of canvas for her work, in combination with the relatively low environmental impact of small-scale, needle-felting, is a creative way to continue a creative practice that considers the impacts on the environment that plants, and, therefore, people, rely so heavily upon.

Some work, such as *The Road Allowance People*, acknowledges the lack of access to a land base that has historically faced many Métis people and saw entire communities living in what were essentially the ditches (i.e. the “road allowance”) in certain parts of Saskatchewan after the 1885 Métis resistance at Batoche. Considering this history in light of Western concepts of ownership and property, Rose asks, “Where can I go as a landless Métis person?” (Rose).

Cleverly using the differently coloured solid lines that can be found on many old wool blankets, Rose strategically positions them to represent rivers and roads, alongside which flowers would grow, such as in *River Woman*. Rose's view of family is expansive and inclusive, as Métis family structures tend to be, making room for her Ukrainian ancestors, but also for her Palestinian relatives by marriage. The re-worked vintage Hudson Bay coat that is the piece entitled *Coalesce* is an acknowledgement and celebration of her Ukrainian and Métis parents union. *The Flower People salmon* explores the ongoing tangled processes of colonization and imperialism at home and abroad, by linking them to her own experience of spending time in Nelson, BC and observing the ongoing, active erasure of the Sinixt peoples from the area, as well as considering the sudden, recent passing of her dear friend and Palestinian activist Suha Jarrar.

As a Métis person who actively engages with the layered questions of land rights and responsibilities, Rose is keenly aware of the violence of erasure of Indigenous presence from Indigenous lands, through words and actions, and sometimes inaction. The flower demonstrates our interconnections as humans, both with each other and the many beings with whom we share the planet. Diverse cultural understandings of the roles and symbolism of flowers are, perhaps, what distinguishes one group of people's specific interactions with plants from the next, and whatever we may think of them, they have, so far, continued to provide for us. Let us not lose sight of the fact that, despite their resilience and persistence in the face of much environmental adversity, we must take care to rekindle our respect for all that flowers do for people.

Belcourt, Christi. *Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use*. Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2007.

Buchmann, Stephen. *The Reason for Flowers: Their History, Culture, Biology, and How They Change Our Lives*. Scribner, 2015.

Richardson, Rose. "First-Hand Knowledge of Traditional Indigenous Medicines." *Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use*, edited by Christi Belcourt, Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2007, pp. 8-10.

Rose, Melanie Monique. "Studio Visit with Melanie Monique Rose." Interview by Jessie Ray Short, Feb 3 2022, Regina, SK.

Satenstein, Linda. "In Ukraine, That Flower Crown Means More Than You Think." *Vogue*, 2016, <https://www.vogue.com/article/ukraine-flower-crown-vinok-trend>.

Artist Biography

Melanie Monique Rose is a visual artist from Regina, Saskatchewan Treaty 4 Territory, and a long-time contributing member of Sâkêwêwak Artists' Collective Inc. She attended Kootenay School of the Arts with a major in the Fibre Arts in Nelson, B.C. Melanie has exhibited her artwork in both group and solo exhibitions. One of her greatest honors was to receive the distinction of Excellence in Textiles in Dimension's 2013 touring show. In 2020, CBC celebrated Melanie as a Future 40 for her work in arts and culture. Most recently she was a recipient of the Saskatchewan Foundation of the Arts Endowment Award. In addition to showing her work, Melanie has worked in the province as gallery facilitator, story-keeper, and art instructor for the Mackenzie Art Gallery and in addition teaches various workshops at both public and private institutions.

In 2018 her daughter Meadow Rose was born and is currently a full-time mom, caregiver, and artist. Becoming a mother has increased Melanie's desire to share the stories of her culture and family and has challenged the way she creates independently and as a shared experience with her daughter. Melanie is excited to see where the journey takes her as an Artist.

Artist Statement

The Flower People is a story about me, my family, my people and our connection and relationship to the land, ourselves, and each other.

An ongoing study for me is my work with the theme, The Flower People. It is derived from the name 'The Flower Beadwork People' a name given to the Metis who are well known for their floral beadwork. Felted pieces, combined with the use of collected blankets create a canvas for my personal exploration of identity as a contemporary Indigenous Artist, alongside my Ukrainian heritage. My floral imagery invokes stories of people, place, and the land. Inspired by culturally traditional art forms of the Métis and Ukrainian folk art, my works are wholly fresh and new, but my past/ancestors are very much present.

Personal, cultural, and universal symbolism are woven into the fabric of my work with an emphasis on movement, colour, and narrative. The slow, process orientated execution of felting becomes meditative and at times acts as healing and a prayer to my family and community. My most recent works are personal acts of Indigenous survivance & solidarity, which have made me critically look at how I tell my story as an active Indigenous presence in the world today.

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITIES

Pre-Tour Activity #1: Story Circle

POSSIBLE CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Kindergarten

CHK.1 Investigate arts expressions found in own homes and school community in relation to own lives

CRK.1 Respond to arts expressions verbally and non-verbally (e.g. through movement or drawing).

Grade 1

CH1.1 Describe the arts and cultural traditions found in own home and school community.

Grade 2

CR1.1 Examine arts expressions to determine how ideas for arts expressions may come from artists' own communities

CR2.1 Identify key features of arts and cultural traditions in own community.

CP2.7 Create visual art works that draw on observations and express ideas about own communities.

Grade 3

CR3.2 Respond to arts expressions that use the environment (natural, constructed, imagined) as inspiration.

Grade 4

CR4.2 Respond thoughtfully to a variety of contemporary Saskatchewan arts expressions.

CH4.1 Investigate and share discoveries about the arts in Saskatchewan through collaborative inquiry.

Grade 5

CH5.3 Analyze and describe how arts and pop culture expressions convey information about the time and place in which they were created.

Grade 6

CH6.1 Investigate how personal, cultural, or regional identity may be reflected in arts expressions.

Grade 7

CH7.1 Investigate how artists' relationship to place may be reflected in their work.

CH7.2 Investigate how Indigenous artists from around the world reflect the importance of place (e.g. relationship to the land, geology, region, urban/rural environments).

Grade 8

CP8.12 Solve visual art problems using a variety of processes and media.

CH8.1 Research and share insights about arts expressions that incorporate social commentary.

CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.

Grade 9

CH9.2 Investigate diversity of artistic ideas, styles, and media in contemporary arts expressions

CR9.3 Investigate and identify how arts expressions can challenge thinking about values, ideas, and beliefs.

Visual Art 10-20-30

CR10.1 Investigate Saskatchewan art works that convey perspectives about topics related to Treaties and building of relationships.

CR10.3 Reflect/respond critically to art works of professional artists, including Indigenous artists, to explore artistic intent.

CP20.4 Use inquiry to create a work of art inspired by the work of local and international artists.

CH30.1 Investigate how visual art in Canada can support and build relationships and deepen understanding that we are all treaty people.

CH30.2 Examine how visual art expressions have changed over time and/or inspired change in individuals, communities and societies.

Visual Art Module 3 Local and Regional Culture, Module 16 Visual Art in Canada, Module 18 Social Issues and Visual Art

Read foreword, Stories of the Road Allowance People (the revised edition)
Read/Listen to Joseph's Justice in the book, Stories of the Road Allowance People (the revised edition)

"Degrade or silence the voices, and you kill the cultures. Take away a people's language, insult its ways of expression, and you rub out their singularity and character."

You will need: Stories of the Road Allowance People (the revised edition w/ CD), CD player, paper & pencil/pen/markers, clipboard, talking stick or special stone.

*This way of doing Circle was taught to the artist, Melanie M Rose by Elder Norma Jean Bird. This activity is inspired by those teachings.

Circle: Sitting in a circle, listen to the story, Joseph's Justice from Stories of the Road Allowance People. Choose a recorder (can be the teacher or a classmate) and give them the clipboard, paper, and pencil. The recorder will write down the words they hear from circle participants in a free form way (see example). The speaker is the one with the stone, starting with the first person and moving clockwise, each person has a chance to respond to the story. This can be one word, an emotion, whatever the story arises in the listener – there is no wrong answer. The recorder will write down each response. Each person in the circle is encouraged to participate with their response to the story. Participants can simply pass by passing on the stone to the next person. This can be done once or several cycles until the students all have had a chance to give their first impressions and response to the story – Joseph's Justice.

Once this is complete the recorder/and/or teacher will look at the words collected. Depending on time, you may go through all the words or just select a few.

Here is an example:

Word: halfbreed

Question: what was it in the story that made you say this word? The person who responds can be the student or someone else in the circle. Discuss.

Circle each word after discussion. Draw lines to words that are connecting, or that help to shine light or explain the other word.

Continue to another word and follow same process.

Context. Are there some words or concepts that need some context? Some more research or investigation?

For post circle class discussion:

1. What language is this story being told in? Have you ever heard someone speak like this before?
2. Do you speak another language, other than English?

3. Do you know anyone who speaks another language (other than English)? What is it? Where does this language originate?
4. Do you know anyone who speaks an Indigenous language (to Canada)? Do you?
5. What is the importance of sharing stories? Of storytelling?
6. The Metis traditionally speak a language that is now critically endangered. What is this language? Do you know anyone who speaks this language? Can you think of any reasons why there is language loss for Metis & First Nations here in Saskatchewan? Why is preserving language so important? Discuss.
7. Where is Batoche? Have you heard about the battle of Batoche? What was this battle about?
8. Who is Louis Riel?
9. Who is Gabriel Dumont?
10. What did this story teach you about the Metis people/community?

Alternatively for younger audiences – listen to Rou Garous (Stories of the Road Allowance People, the revised edition). Do circle exercise and discuss questions #1 - #6. From your imagination draw what you imagine the Rou Garous to look like. View Sherry Farrell Racette's depiction of the Rou Garous.

Vocab words:

Culture, degrade, expression, character, endangered, preservation, justice, worldview, halfbreed, high treason, court, originate

Additional resources:

Watch: In the Shadow of Dumont; <https://shadowofdumont.com/>

<https://www.metismuseum.ca/>

<https://gdins.org/metis-culture/>

<https://gdins.org/shop-gdi/>

Listen: <https://metisnationsk.com/2021/01/12/paykiiwikay-metis-culture-podcast/>

Pre-Tour Activity #2: The People Who Own Themselves

The People Who Own Themselves: The Metis people call themselves by many names. How many are you aware of?

Here are nine provided by Melanie M Rose:

1. Âpihtawikosisân
2. Otipemisiwak
3. Flower Beadwork People
4. Wiisaakodewinini
5. Bois-Brûlés
6. Road Allowance People
7. Michif
8. Halfbreed
9. Metis

Divide your class into nine groups and assign one term per group. Research.

- What does this word/term mean?
- What are the origins of this word/term?
- Is there any geographical significance to the name? On what land does it originate? Community? Treaty?
- Research, interesting stories, facts, and things that you learnt by researching the many names of the Metis people.
- Are there any traditional art forms specific to these folks? Each group present your findings with the whole class.
- Do you think all Metis folk identify with all these terms?
- Are any of them potentially problematic?
- What is reclaiming a word? Reclamation?
- Were there any interesting traditional or contemporary characters you met/learnt about by doing this research? Why do you think they use a specific term to describe themselves?

Vocab words:

Treaty, significance, geographical, originate, community, derogatory, problematic, reclamation, reclaim, traditional, contemporary, potentially

Additional Resources:

Stories of the Road Allowance People (the revised edition) by Maria Campbell

The Flower Beadwork People by Sherry Farrell Racette

Road Allowance Kitten by Wilfred Burton

The Voyageurs: Forefathers of the Métis Nation by Zoe Roy

Women of the Metis Nation by Lawrence J. Barkwell and Leah Marie Dorion with Anne Carrière-Acco.

A SHORT STORY COLLECTION OF A LIFE LIVED AS A ROAD ALLOWANCE MÉTIS by Arnolda Dufour Bowes

MÉTIS LEGACY II: MICHIF CULTURE, HERITAGE AND FOLKWAYS by Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah Dorion, and Audreen Hourie

The People Who Own Themselves by Heather Devine

The Tour

1. Focus Attention

Provide an opportunity for all members of the group to participate. Ask some questions which focus the group's attention and introduce some key concepts in the exhibition. Invite participants to consider their own experiences.

- How many of you have seen an art exhibition before?
- What did you see?
- What do you expect to see today?
- Why do artists make ART?
- What materials do they use?
- How do art works communicate ideas?

2. Introduce the Exhibition

The viewing process often involves dialogue—either a silent one between the viewer and the work of art or a verbal one involving two or more viewers discussing an artwork. You are a catalyst. Your task is to stimulate dialogue and initiate discussion. You will not tell a group about each work. You will supply some information at appropriate points.

What is the title of this exhibition and where did it come from?

At the entrance of the gallery there will be a panel that introduces the title and theme of the exhibition. The exhibition is touring the province through the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils' (OSAC) *Arts on the Move* touring exhibition program.

Why has this exhibition come to your (our) community?

The exhibition is being toured by OSAC to communities like yours throughout Saskatchewan. OSAC is a non-profit organization of groups of volunteers in over 50 Saskatchewan towns and cities across the province. The vision of OSAC is that the arts will be integrated into the lives of Saskatchewan people through assisting the arts council members in developing, promoting and programming the performing and visual arts.

Before we talk about the images, I would like each of you to quietly walk through the exhibition and look at all the work. We will take about 5 minutes to do this, and then meet back here to talk about what you saw.

3. Questioning Strategy

The purpose of questioning is to set up conditions for learning. Questions can focus the group's attention on specific concepts or ideas. Following are a wide range of questions. They are presented to offer you options and stimulate your thoughts. A good questioning strategy starts with good knowledge of the exhibition being presented. See background information about the artist and the exhibition.

Questions should be:

- Clear in their meaning
- Easily understood
- Simple
- Specific
- Definite and direct
- Thought provoking and challenging

a. First Impressions

Gather the group together and ask guiding questions that will allow them to describe their first impressions of the exhibition. Begin by focusing on one artwork. Ask the following questions in order.

What is the first word that comes into your mind when you look at this artwork?
Record their answers on a large sheet of paper with a marker.
Collect as many words as possible. Select one word from the list.

What has the artist done, specifically, to make you think of the word _____?
The viewer may describe what they see in the artwork. This will generally lead the viewer from an initial impression into a more analytical exploration of details.

* Subjects * Lines * Techniques * Colours * Textures * Space * Shapes

Analysis

Analysis is a process of gathering evidence. This step acknowledges that the artist has manipulated the materials (media) and the elements in such a way as to elicit the viewer's first impression.

The group will compare and contrast visual elements, analyze relationships among visual elements and gather evidence that leads to meaning in the work.

Begin by taking a visual inventory of the formal elements, such as, line, colour, shape and texture and describe how the artist has used these elements in the artwork.

Ask the following:

- What do you notice first and where does your eye travel from there?
- What other details do you see in this artwork?
- What techniques and devices (medium) did the artist use?
- What do you see up close, and what is noticeable far away?
- What visual elements are repeated?
- Compare this artwork with another work in the exhibition.
- What is different and what is the same?
- What shapes or symbols have you seen before? Where?
- How did the artist use colour? What effect did the artist achieve through their use of colour?
- To what effect did the artist use line? Do the lines draw your eye along any particular path of movement? Do they emphasize any one part of the work?
- Are the shapes you see geometric or organic? What effect did the artist achieve through her choice?
- What role does contrast play in this work?

Artists are aware of our expectations and cultural conditioning. They can use them when planning the impact of their work. Sometimes they deliberately challenge our ways of thinking.

b. Interpretation

At this stage, you will be asking questions that encourage the group to explain the meaning they discover in the works. Comparing works often makes the interpretation process flow more easily.

Please ask the following questions:

- If this artwork were the cover of a CD, what kind of music would it be?
- If this artwork were the cover of a book, what would the book be about?

- Do the art works tell stories? Which ones? What stories?
 - What symbols does the artist use?
 - Where do these symbols come from? What do you think they mean?
 - What was the artist's purpose in creating these works? (See Exhibition Essay)
 - Do these artworks speak of the past, present or the future?
- Remember that there is no right or wrong answer to any question!

c. Context

Information about the artists and the exhibition (found in the exhibition essay) can be shared with participants during the tour as the opportunity arises. Split this information up, especially for younger students. Too much lecturing on the part of the tour leader breaks the momentum of the tour.

- If you were able to give this artwork a title, what would the title be?
- What title do you think the artist chose for this artwork? (Look on the title card to see what title the artist chose for the artwork.)
- Now that you know what title the artist has given this artwork, does it bring new meaning to the work?

d. Synthesis

Now it is time to combine all of the information gathered during the stages of: First Impressions, Analysis, Interpretation and Context, so the viewer may arrive at a personal evaluation of the artwork. Ask the following:

- What will you remember most about this artwork?
- What is its significance to the community?

Next, review the artist's intent (refer to the Exhibition Essay). Compare the artist's intent with the viewer's personal interpretation and evaluation. Ask the following:

- Did the artists achieve their purpose?
- What one thing will you remember most about this exhibition?

Tour Activity #1: Detective Work

You will need: Clipboard, paper, and pencil.

Allow the students to take in exhibition by giving them space/time to take in the exhibition on their own – five to ten minutes maximum. After time is up, ask them to freeze and slowly walk to their favourite artwork, or one they want to know more about. Depending on your time available choose one to three artworks, by the most popular (#s of students). You may wish to speak to every piece the students chose if time is available.

The teacher will stand in front of the artwork and ask students to sit in front of them. Once everyone is sitting, choose a side and sit beside the students facing both them and the artwork.

First Impressions – like the pre-tour activity #1 choose a student or teacher to be the recorder. By calling out or raising their hands ask the students to give first words or impressions that come to their minds when viewing the artwork (remember there is no wrong answer). Examples may be like – what it looks like, how it makes you feel – anything goes! The recorder will be writing these answers.

When finished go back to some of the words, for example: Word – soft, "what is it about the artwork that makes you feel this way, why was this your word". The recorder will write down these responses.

Go through all the words gathered. Undoubtedly you will find that through this exercise you will start to deconstruct the artwork, finding meaning and story. Notice – how do each others words connect and begin to form story in relation to each other.

Context. Read the title of the piece, and the materials that were used to create it. How does this information begin to give more clues and meaning of the artwork? Read artist statement, and any additional writings about the work or about the artist and the exhibition in its entirety.

Tour Activity #2: Blanket Stories

You will need: Watercolour pencil crayons, clipboards (if unavailable be seated and use gallery floor as hard surface), wet wipes, 'blanket paper' and laminated blanket artwork examples (provided). Alternatively, you may use blank paper a pencil and hard surface for drawing.

Part #1

Give your group the following two questions to answer and let them walk through and view the exhibition for five to ten minutes.

1. What are the materials used to make these artworks?
2. Is there anything familiar about these artworks to you? Do you know of anyone who creates with similar materials, forms or themes?

Once your group has had a chance to view the exhibition and time to answer or consider the questions given, gather in a circle or in front of an artwork (suggested artworks: River Woman (next page); The Road Allowance People (page 16). Share your findings with the group.

Some of your answers may look like, "they are made from blankets", "my grandma does embroidery", "reminds me of a blanket that was made for me when I was a baby". Discuss.

Share with the group the selection of blanket artworks that have inspired and informed Melanie's artworks and artistic practice. Present images and then pass along to students for closer inspection. How are these artworks similar or different from Melanie's? What do you think is important to these artists? What kind of story do you think they are telling and why? Discuss.

*artist blanket examples; Bob Boyer; Sherry Farrell Racette; Marie Watt; Leah Dector & Jaime Issaac, Wally Dion

Part #2

Making! Place your pencil crayons and wet wipes in the centre of your circle or in front of your group for communal use. Give each student a 'blanket paper' and clipboard (if available).

Now it's your time to create – make your own personal blanket story! What would you like personalize your blanket? Are you inspired by designs of your heritage and cultural background? Maybe it's a memory of your favourite blanket from when you were little – or even currently! This is your time to make your own story on a blanket!

If time allows, do a sharing circle of your completed pieces, discuss the inspiration and why you drew what you did.

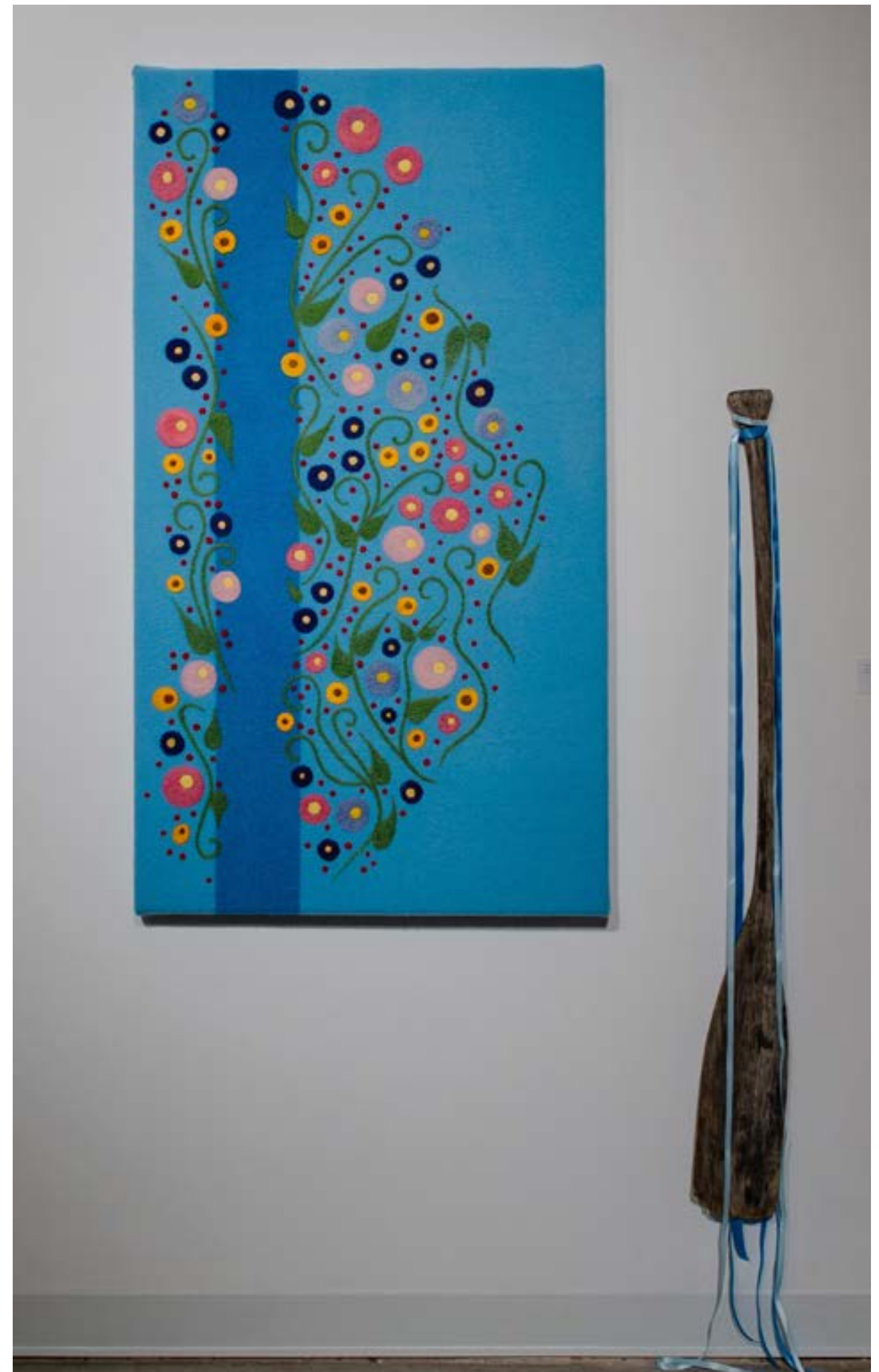
*using a wet wipe with the watercolour pencil crayons you can activate the watercolour – this is good for blending colours. You may wish to try this or just stick to the pencils without wetting.

Vocab

Familiar, theme, materials, form, informed, inspired, artistic practice, activate, blending, trade value, denial, 2D

Blank templates on pages 24, 25, 26

Examples next 2 pages:

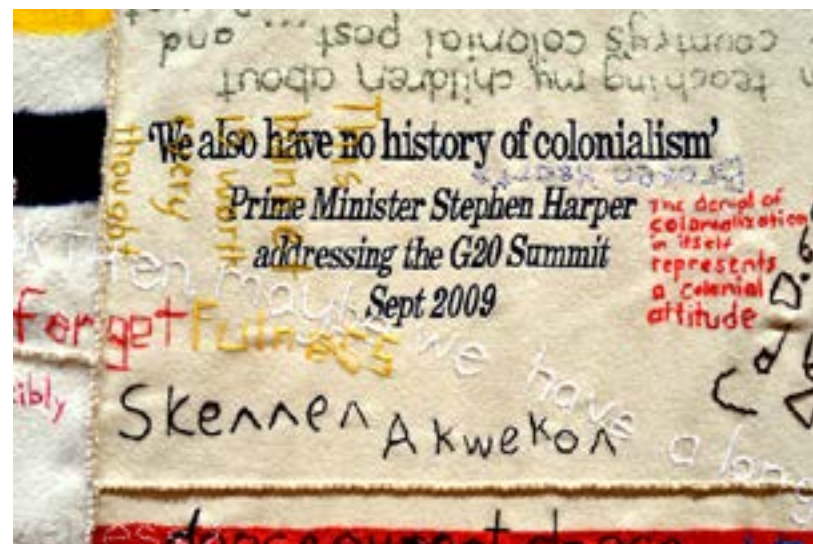




Turn sideways to view



Bob Boyer
A SMALLPOX ISSUE, 1983
Blanket, oil, rawhide
75 x 48 in
190 x 122 cm



Leah Decter & Jaimie Isaac
 (official denial) trade value in progress
 2010-2016
 dialogic project: trade value series
 In collaboration with Jaimie Isaac
 Hudson Bay blankets, waxed thread, thread, yarn, beads
 12'x15'



Wally Dion, evening star, morning star. 2019, 47 height x 95 width inches., circuitboards, auto paint, steel wire, steel tube.

Wally Dion, Starquilt, 2017, 68¼ h x 63½ w, circuitboards, wire, copper pipe

Wally Dion, green star quilt, 2019, 75¾ height x 70 width inches., circuitboards, brass wire, copper tube.
(image credits: KT Kanazawich)



Tour activity #3: Blanket Stories (simplified version of activity #2)

You will need: Watercolour pencil crayons, clipboards (if unavailable be seated and use gallery floor as hard surface), wet wipes, 'blanket paper' and laminated blanket artwork examples (provided).

Alternatively, you may use blank paper a pencil and hard surface for drawing.

After viewing the artwork in the exhibition sit and gather in front of one of the 2D textile artworks (suggested artworks: River Woman; The Road Allowance People).

Have a student volunteer or teacher/facilitator to read the title of the artwork, the materials list and any artist statement or text that goes with it.

If time allows, discuss this art piece. The artist, refers to these artworks as 'blanket stories' – what kind of story do you think the artist is hoping to share with its audience? Are there any stories that the artwork invokes that perhaps the artist did not consider? Perhaps a personal memory or story.

Making! Place your pencil crayons and wet wipes in the centre of your circle or in front of your group for communal use. Give each student a 'blanket paper' and clipboard (if available).

Now it's your time to create – make your own personal blanket story! What would you like personalize your blanket? Are you inspired by designs of your heritage and cultural background? Maybe it's a memory of your favourite blanket from when you were little – or even currently! This is your time to make your own story on a blanket!

If time allows, do a sharing circle of your completed pieces, discuss the inspiration and why you drew what you did.

*using a wet wipe with the watercolour pencil crayons you can activate the watercolour – this is good for blending colours. You may wish to try this or just stick to the pencils without wetting.

Vocab

Invoke, heritage, culture, blending, activate, 2D, textile, memory

Post-Tour Activity #1: Felted Blanket Stories

You will need: sharp scissors, one wool blanket cut into several pieces (suggested size 5x7/8x10), felting needles (one per student with extras to account for breakage), coloured wool, sponge

Optional: visual inspiration books – for example books with images of the various textile and surface traditions both traditional and contemporary, landscape and botanical imagery...

Suggested supply sources:

- Check your local thrift shop for wool blankets, ask a family member or friend, check online for some selling locally.
- You can order directly from Sharon Ottenbriet based just outside of Regina, Saskatchewan. You may contact her for your colored wool and felting needle needs. gwfiber@sasktel.net
- The dollarama sells a three pack of heavy-duty car sponges 7.7" x 4" x 2" for \$3. You can also purchase similar sponges at Rona <https://www.rona.ca/en/product/richard-professional-grouting-sponges-foam-rubber-yellow-3-per-pack-8-in-l-x-5-in-w-x-2-in-t-05596-02715447>

View OSAC's Arts on the Move Online tutorial by Melanie M Rose

<https://www.artsonthemoveonline.com/arts-on-the-moveonline/melaniemoniquerose>

Option #1

Watch tutorial. After instructions given in online workshop, start your needle felting project

Option #2

Watch initial instructions on video tutorial once technique is understood, continue to watch video while students begin their own felted blanket stories

Option #3

Watch tutorial. After instructions given in online workshop, start your needle felting project while listening to artist talk provided through the above link while students are felting their blanket stories.

Additional listening suggestions:

- Artists in Conversation presented by Godfrey Dean Art Gallery & Sakewewak Artist's Collective – featuring Melanie M Rose & Tristen Durocher <https://godfreydeanartgallery.ca/the-flower-people-2021/>
- Braiding Sweetgrass read by author Robin Wall Kilmer (ebook)
- Metis Fiddling – Victor Rose, Melanie's uncle! <https://gdins.org/product/vics-picks-old-time-metis-fiddle-tunes/>
- Tristen Durocher <https://gdins.org/product/tristen-durocher-the-metis-fiddle-of-tristen-durocher-in-the-key-of-kiyam-digital-version/>
- Metis Kitchen Party <https://gdins.org/about/events/metis-kitchen-party/>

Happy Felting!



Post-Tour Activity #2: Digital Blanket Stories

*Inspired by the online event, Chat & Drawing Jam organized by Sakewewak Artists Collective & Godfrey Dean Art Gallery in support of Melanie's exhibition, The Flower People from December 2021.

You will need: access to computer with internet, aggie.io, blanket templates (provided pages 24, 25, 26)

Create your own blanket story either as a collaborative project or on your own. Using images from actual blankets as templates you will draw digitally on the blankets. Print your finished artworks and make a mini exhibition.

The following examples were done as a collaborative exercise. How will you make your story?



Post-Tour Activity #3: Art as Activism

Read the following three quotes out loud, take a few moments between each writing to deeply listen and consider meaning.

"My people will sleep for 100 years but when they awake it will be the artists who give them back their spirit." – Louis Riel

"Canada, you are in the midst of an Indigenous renaissance. Are you ready to hear the truth that needs to be told? Are you ready to see the things that need to be seen?" – Jeremy Dutcher

"All Indigenous art is a statement about our continued existence, an existence that must be erased for settler colonialism to win." ... "Protest is common across the entire world of Indigenous art, from the city to the place city folk imagine is the "bush". It was always there, from the beginning. All you need to do is learn how to look at Aboriginal art, how to read the language. Once you know what you are looking for, you learn something important: Indigenous protest art is everywhere." – Claire Coleman

Ask the following question to your students:

"Whose land are you standing on?"

Context.

What does your school's land acknowledgement sound like? Read it. Whose ancestral land are you currently occupying. What is your Treaty territory?

Read the following out loud:

"As long as the sun shines, the river flows, and the grass grows"

Where does the above quote originate? Investigate and share your findings.

In *The Flower People*, Melanie M Rose has three artworks with the title, "Summer Sleeping" (see images of artworks provided)

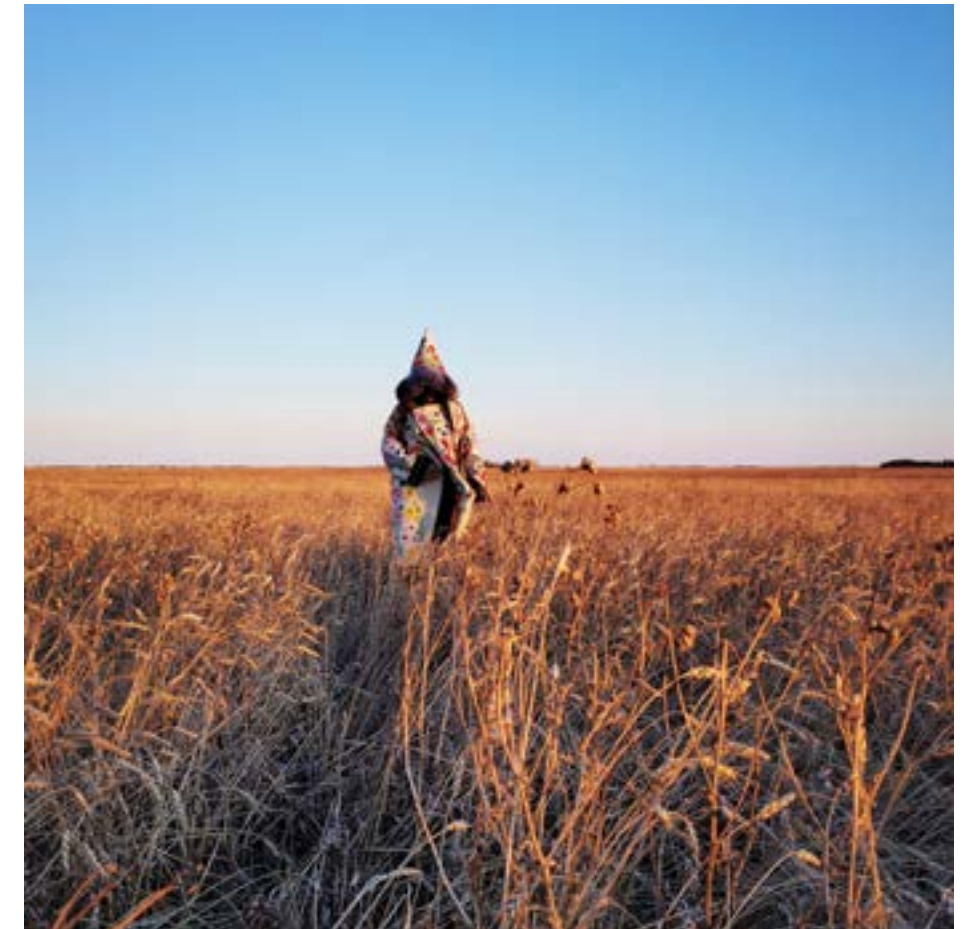
1. Summer Sleeping #1 2020, 1/5 edition giclee print
2. Summer Sleeping 2020, handstitched Hudson Bay blanket capote, needle felted wool, antler, and fur. Collection of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
3. Summer Sleeping #2 2020, 1/5 edition giclee print

Melanie writes this about these artworks:

"With every winter is the promise of summer. Spring is the season of hope, of return and rebirth. Man has shown that he can alter these natural cycles. The melt comes too soon for the hunters of the north, the birds do not return from their homes in the south. Land Protectors are jailed by a broken system built on over 500 years of lies and mass destruction. The children are trying to wake us up, but some are still sleeping. Summer Sleeping is a handstitched Capote worn by me placed on the landscape. It has various layers of conceptual meaning and stories. I specifically chose the white and black striped blanket to create this Capote – this colour/design was popular in the prairies for how well it was camouflaged in the winter. I thought about how in my own Metis family we hid who we were. This is something that I no longer want to do – thus I wanted it to make this Capote bright and loud and full of happiness. What lies beneath the snow is the promise of spring – this sacred bargain of continuation. I call this piece, 'Summer Sleeping' and it represents HOPE."

Ask the questions:

1. Do you think the art works are telling a story? If so, what is it?
2. Do you consider these artworks a form of activism?
3. Can art be political?
4. What is activism?
5. Research activists. Share.





The following are recommended reading for discussion in relation to the concepts and topics presented.

<https://exclaim.ca/music/article/art-is-our-language-inside-the-indigenous-renaissance-with-jeremy-dutcher-and-snotty-nose-rez-kids#:~:text=When%20asked%20to%20contextualize%20his%20coining%20of%20the,something%20that%20I%20was%20immersed%20in%20growing%20up>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/sep/23/all-aboriginal-art-is-political-you-just-need-to-learn-how-to-read-it>

<https://www.cbc.ca/music/junos/news/read-jeremy-dutcher-s-powerful-2019-junos-speeches-in-full-1.5060354>

<https://www.cbc.ca/music/a-tribe-called-red-wab-kinew-tanya-tagag-on-the-indigenous-music-renaissance-1.5451417>

<https://edusites.uregina.ca/jml258/2019/10/16/as-long-as-the-sun-shines-the-grass-grows-and-the-river-flows/> (for educators)

<https://mackenzie.art/exhibition/duane-linklater/>

<https://moa.ubc.ca/exhibition/shame-and-prejudice/> (mature audiences)

<https://gdins.org/product/louis-the-heretic-poems/>

As long as the grass grows by Dina Gilio Whitaker

Nibi's Water Song by Sunshine Tenasco (Author), Chief Lady Bird (Illustrator) (perfect for little ones)

Perception: A Photo Series by KC Adams

Listen to: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=645632006060061> Burnt Sienna w/ Kris Alvarez & Tristen Durocher

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/first-person-durocher-lesson-on-hope-1.6120826>

The following are some of Melanie's favourite youth Indigenous artists whom she considers both storytellers and activists.

Quill Violet Christie-Peters <https://artsandscience.usask.ca/galleries/exhibitions/2022/spilling-out,-spilling-over.php> (mature audiences)

Maria Rose Sikyea <https://www.caribouwomancreations.com/>

Chief Ladybird <https://www.matriarchmovement.ca/blogs/matriarchmonday/chief-lady-bird>

Jazz Aline <https://www.artbyjazzaline.com/>

Vocab:

activist, activism, renaissance, spirit, truth, settler, colonialism, capitalism, political, indigenous, colony, land back, protest, occupy, acknowledgement, ancestral, treaty, conceptual, activism, activist, storyteller, storytelling, capote, sacred, continuation, camouflaged, bargain

Artivism involves using art as a tool to not only comment on needed societal changes but also to inform others on these pressing issues and inspire them to take action (urbandictionary.com)



The Flower People
List of Works / Hanging Order

Please feel free to hang the exhibition however it suits your facility.

OSAC Leader Panel

Exhibition Essay Leader Panel

All works by Melanie Monique Rose:

1. *Ukin B the Sun*, needle felted wool on blanket, 2021
2. *River Woman*, needle felted wool on 350th edition Hudson Bay blanket, 2021
3. *River Woman #1*, 1/5 edition giclee print, 2021
4. *River Woman #2*, 1/5 edition giclee print, 2021
5. *The Flower People salmon*, needle felted wool on wool blanket, 2019
6. *The Flower People red/black #2*, needle felted wool on wool blanket, 2019. Collection of Saskatchewan Arts Board
7. *The Flower People red/black #1*, needle felted wool on wool blanket, 2016. Collection of Bruce & Sharon Medhurst
8. *The Flower People red/black #3*, needle felted wool on wool blanket, 2016. Collection of Crystal Massier
9. *The Artist, the Scientist, and the Lawyer*, triptych, needle felted wool on wool cloth, 2021
10. *The Road Allowance People*, needle felted wool on wool blanket and wool cloth, 2021
11. *Summer Sleeping #1*, 1/5 edition giclee print, 2020
12. *Summer Sleeping*, handstitched Hudson Bay blanket capote, needle felted wool, antler and fur, 2020. Collection of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
13. *Summer Sleeping #2*, 1/5 edition giclee print, 2020

Tour Schedule

Tue, Feb 1, 2022 to Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at the Estevan Art Gallery & Museum

Fri, Apr 1, 2022 to Sat, Apr 23, 2022 at the Indian Head Theatre and Community Arts Inc.

Thu, Sep 1, 2022 to Fri, Sep 23, 2022 at the Watrous Art & Cultural Centre

Sat, Oct 1, 2022 to Sun, Oct 23, 2022 at the Biggar Museum and Gallery

Tue, Nov 1, 2022 to Wed, Nov 23, 2022 at the Mistasinik Place

Thu, Dec 1, 2022 to Fri, Dec 23, 2022 at the Council Chambers, Leader Town Office

Wed, Feb 1, 2023 to Thu, Mar 23, 2023 at the Station Arts Centre Cooperative

Sat, Apr 1, 2023 to Sun, Apr 23, 2023 at the Humboldt and District Gallery

Mon, May 1, 2023 to Tue, May 23, 2023 at the Gallery Works and The Third Dimension

Fri, Sep 1, 2023 to Mon, Oct 23, 2023 at the Grand Coteau Heritage and Cultural Centre

Fri, Dec 1, 2023 to Tue, Jan 23, 2024 at the John V. Hicks Gallery at the Prince Albert Arts Centre



The Flower People is a solo exhibition by artist **Melanie Monique Rose**. It is toured by the **Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC)** through OSAC's *Arts on the Move* Program.

The **Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC)** is an umbrella organization that enables community arts councils and schools to tour and hold live, professional music and theatre performances, visual arts exhibitions, workshops and special events across Saskatchewan. OSAC is a Provincial Cultural Organization (PCO), funded by Saskatchewan Lotteries. A group of volunteers representing eight arts councils across the province founded OSAC in 1968. It has grown since its inception into a vital network of approximately 48 member arts councils and more than 70 school centre associate members throughout Saskatchewan. 2018 marks 50 years of OSAC bringing performing and visual arts to the people of Saskatchewan.

Since 1975, OSAC's ***Arts on the Move*** program has provided communities throughout the province with visual and media arts exhibitions & screenings. Each exhibition is accompanied by education materials that compliment the Saskatchewan Education Arts Curriculum, offering arts councils, gallery staff and teacher's strategies and means of engaging youth and audiences with the touring exhibitions. The program annually tours 15 exhibitions of visual and media arts to over 50 arts council communities. Exhibitions are curated and organized from partnering institutions, from public and corporate collections and from artist and curator submissions.

The **Local Adjudications** program, partially funded by OSAC and organized by arts councils, provides an opportunity for artists to participate in an exhibition, attend professional development workshops, have their work critiqued by an adjudicator, and network with their colleagues. Artists, who are noted to be accomplished emerging artists at the adjudication by the adjudicator/s, will be invited to submit exhibition proposals to OSAC to be considered for a touring exhibition. Submissions from artists are juried by a committee of arts professionals, who select works for a solo, two-person, three-person or group exhibition, based on a curatorial premise or determined theme for the exhibition. Artists' works that are chosen by the committee tour throughout the province in OSAC's *Arts on the Move* program for two years.

The **Visual Arts Program Grants** offer arts councils funding for adjudications, classes, workshops, professional development seminars, exhibition extension activities in response to touring exhibitions and exhibition tour guide training.

For further information about our programs:
visit our website www.osac.ca, email us info@osac.ca or call us at (306) 586 1252
Our office is located at 1102 8th Avenue, Regina, SK S4R 1C9

Funded by:

