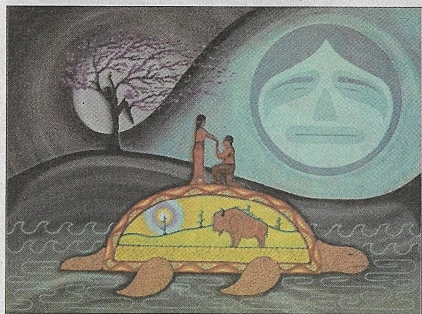


ENTERTAINMENT

Loretta Gould 'honoured' to be part of installations

Indigenous artist's work to adorn EHS stations across Nova Scotia



Titled "Forever," this is another work from We'koqma'q First Nation artist Loretta Gould.

by **Corey LeBlanc**

WE'KOQMA'Q: Loretta Gould says, "I have always considered myself as an artist."

As a young girl growing up in We'koqma'q First Nation, she remembers dreaming of becoming a fashion designer.

"I was always sketching women and their clothes," Gould explains, noting that she always focused on "getting the colours right."

She adds, "I was always doing something artistic."

That creative focus continued as she started making quilts, like her late mother, Annie ('Katie'), who was a seamstress.

"She passed on her sewing machine to me," Gould notes. One day, as she worked on a project with her special keepsake – while her daughter, who also has an artistic flair, was painting across the kitchen table – it broke down.

"I was so bored," Gould bemoans, noting repairs on her sewing machine took more than six months.

She remembers her friend – Rolf Bouman of Cleveland,



This painting by Loretta Gould is called "Carrying Our Future."

Richmond County, the founder of Friends United, a philanthropic initiative that connects Indigenous art and culture with the world – suggested that she try her hand at acrylic painting.

"I don't like watching paint dry," Gould says, with a laugh, of her initial response which was a firm "no." She eventually relented and took his advice.

"I was hooked. I don't even quilt anymore," she adds. Gould made her transition to painting more than 11 years ago.

"Whatever is happening around me," Gould explains, when asked where she comes up with her ideas.

Or, on some occasions, she tries to convey someone's story, or at least an element of it, on the canvas.

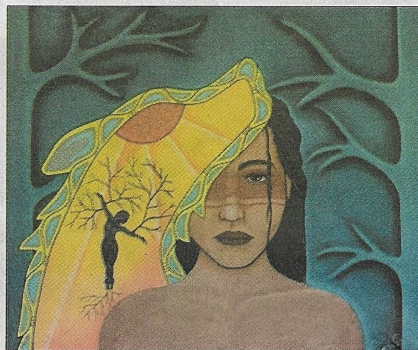
She starts with a drawing; usually, on the canvas, or it could be a piece of paper, depending on where the inspiration strikes her.

"I don't even think about the colours," Gould notes.

She describes her ability to pinpoint the appropriate shade as something that "comes naturally."



"Protect Our Waters" is the title of this Loretta Gould painting.



Contributed images

This work by Loretta Gould is called "Wolf Warpaint Dance"

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Loretta Gould 'honoured' to be part of installations

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Gould's paintings are renowned for their use of colour.

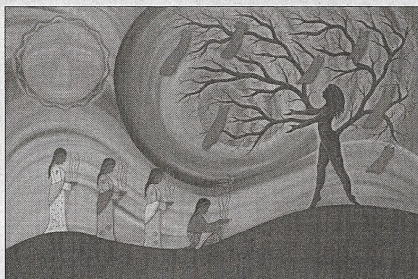
As for her favourite pieces, she names "Seal Hunter," a painting that shows her exploration with blending and contrasting colours. She was inspired by watching a television program on that subject.

"I am really proud of

that one," Gould says.

Speaking of taking pride in her work, she notes her participation in a recently unveiled project, one in which Friends United has collaborated with Emergency Health Services (EHS), the paramedical care provider in Nova Scotia.

"I am so honoured," she says, one day after the un-



This 48 by 72 painting from Loretta Gould is titled "Honouring Our Missing Sisters."

veiling of the first installation at an EHS station in Sydney on June 21, which also marks Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada.

Gould adds, "When they wake up every day, they dedicate their time to going out and saving lives."

She hopes that paramedics will gain comfort and enjoyment from the displays in their depots and offices.

More than 60 Mi'kmaq

pieces contributed by Indigenous artists, including Gould, will be showcased across the province.

As for the connection between Friends United and EHS; Bouman's son, Lucas, is a paramedic with the service.

Describing it as her "way of life," Gould says that she is never far away from the canvas.

"I always have a few projects on the go," she adds.

Gould notes that one she has "almost finished" is a four-panel, each one measuring eight-by-eight feet, painting that will be placed in Annapolis Royal.

She is also penning a book of stories that pair with each of her paintings, along with a couple of children's ones that help teach the Mi'kmaq language.

Gould has an online store featuring clothing adorned with her art. Along with yoga leggings, she offers tank tops, sport tanks and bags. She also sells prints online, while a selection of greeting cards is in the works.

As for advice to anyone thinking about starting to paint, she says, with a laugh:

"If I can do it, anybody can."

For more information about Gould and her work, visit: mikmaq-artist.com

She also has pieces on display around the world, including at the Friends United arts and cultural centre – one of the largest in Canada – which is located on West Bay Road in Inverness County.



Loretta Gould



Loretta Gould called this work "Respect Our Teachings."



Indigenous artist Loretta Gould called this painting "Giver of Life."