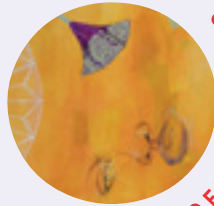


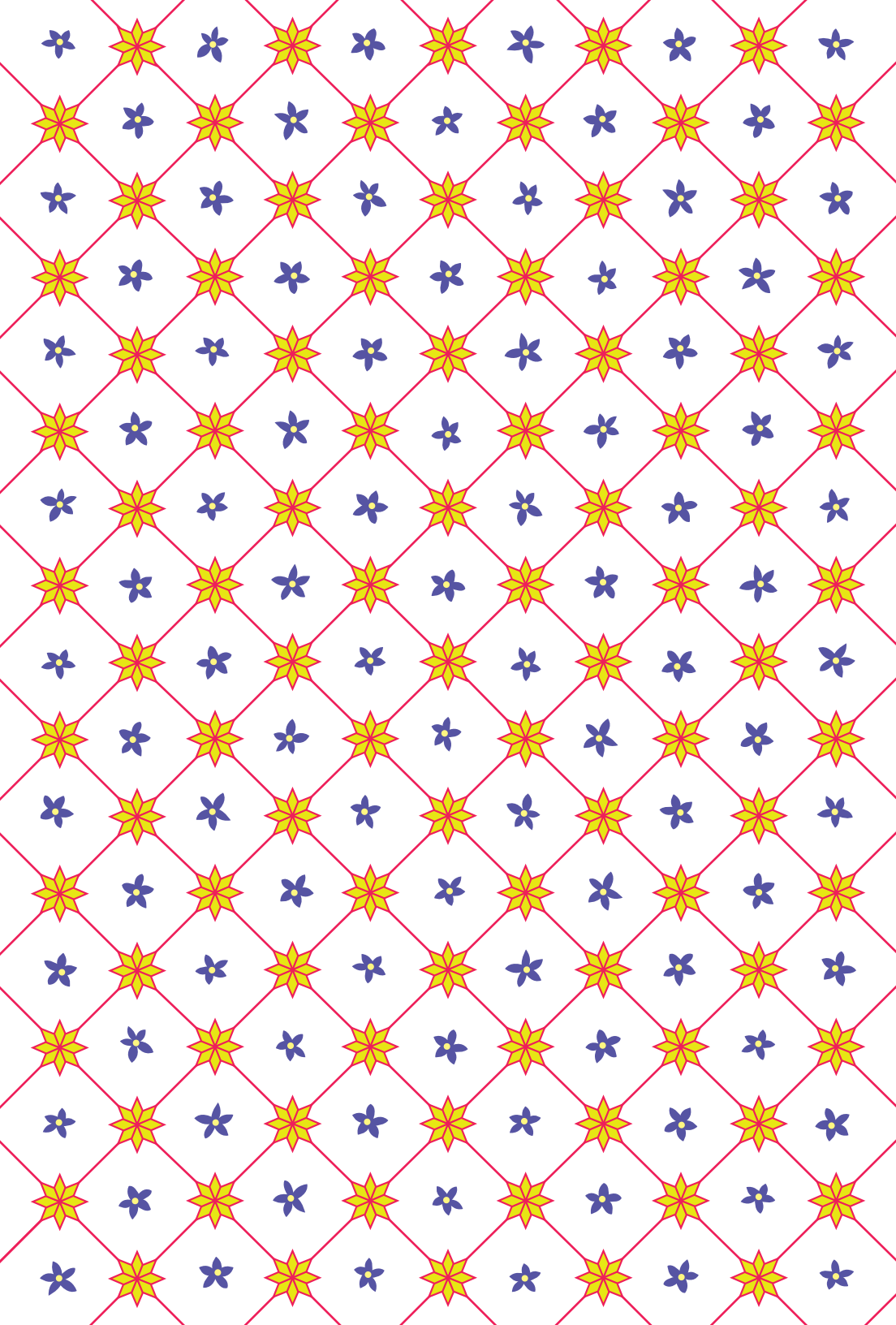


# PATCH PORTRAITS

MICHELLE SOUND



RANECE BUDDAN



# PATCH PORTRAITS

Interpretive Guide

Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
Travelling Exhibition Program

TREX Southeast

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RANEECE BUDDAN, *Ingrained in the Fabric IV* (detail), 2023, stone lithography print, oil paint, synthetic hair, paper and textile on wood

MICHELLE SOUND, *Seventies Chick - Tiger* (detail), 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur



**Patch Portraits** showcases artwork by Michelle Sound and Raneece Buddan, two artists who employ the fabrics and materials of their respective cultural heritage to explore the genres of portraiture and identity. Stitching, hand dyeing, block printing and collaging together found and fabricated textiles, the resulting bodies of work showcase multiple ways threads and fabrics can be deployed in contemporary art practices.

Fabrics and clothing populate our everyday lives. We dress for the day, sleep wrapped in sheets and blankets, cover our furniture, and create decorative, playful, and cherished items: teddy bears, wall hangings, hair wraps and bags of all sorts. Common yet essential, textiles are integral to our well-being and sense of personal expression. They are intertwined with culture and tradition and connect us to our humanity and histories.

Through the fibre medium, Cree and Métis artist **Michelle Sound** celebrates the matriarchal figures who have deeply impressed upon her life. About her exuberant series of cloth-wrapped drums, Sound states, “**Seventies Chick is a tribute that celebrates the style and close bond between two sisters: one who was my mom who raised me and one who was my birth mom. This drum series is inspired by their fashion when they were both young mothers in the 1970s. A series of drums made from jackets, rabbit fur dyed in a seventies aesthetic, and fringe stretched across drum frames. These drums are both a tribute and a portrait of my mom who raised me, Elizabeth (Chick).**”

Sewing, darning and other skills required to work with textiles tend to be passed on through parents or elders. These skill sets signify cultural inheritance and ideas of repair – valuing and mending what you have. Considering this backdrop, Sound’s work operates against Canada’s dark history of residential schools, a system purposefully created to erase intergenerational opportunities for Indigenous peoples to pass on their culture, tradition, and language. Despite the legacy of this history, Sound’s artistic practice is rich in narrative optimism. Her heartfelt portraits offer healing meditations on family history and the significance of the people and clothing that shape our lives.

Jamaican artist **Raneece Buddan** explores the transcultural histories of her mixed Afro and Indo-Caribbean ancestry through an arsenal of traditional craft techniques, including woodworking, weaving, and printmaking. Constructing images by combining paint, fabrics, synthetic hair, and raw wood, Buddan has created an intricate series of self-portraits rich in material exploration and personal meaning. About this series, Buddan states **“I looked back at ancient Indian relief sculptures, Kalamkari paintings, and more modern paintings by Indian artists as influences for my pieces. I was influenced by the line work, compositions, and colours but I put my own Jamaican spin on it. I substituted traditional Indian motifs – the peacock and their ‘Tree of Life,’ the Banyan Tree – to include Jamaica’s national bird, the hummingbird, and our version of the ‘Tree of Life,’ Jamaica’s national flower, Lignum Vitae. I wanted the work to relate to me as a mixed raced person from Jamaica and**

the multiculturalism of our society. Reconnecting with a culture lost and being inspired by it to create.”

The alchemical melding of fabrics, symbols, and other materials in Buddan’s self-portraits complicates each image’s picture plane and perspective. With multiple visual reference points, the work has an unstable, almost liquid quality, indicating the spectacular yet unknowable complexity of her personal history and identity.

A ‘patch’ is a piece of cloth or other material used to mend or strengthen a torn or weak point. Sound and Buddan are both concerned with the work of patching, and in so doing, demonstrate how the fibre medium can be used to explore the constituent elements of identity and portraiture. The textile sculptures and fabric collages in **Patch Portraits** offer layers of meaning and worlds of multiplicity for viewers to explore. I hope audiences will find moments of recognition, healing, and pure visual enjoyment within this exhibition.

CURATORIAL TEXT BY GENEVIEVE FARRELL  
ESPLANADE ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE, TREX SOUTHEAST

images opposite, top to bottom

RAÑEECE BUDDAN, *Ingrained in the Fabric II* (detail), 2023, oil paint, synthetic hair and textile on wood  
MICHELLE SOUND, *Seventies Chick - Fringe 1* (detail), 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and textiles





# RANEECE BUDDAN

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

is a Jamaican visual artist who resides in Treaty 6 territory, Amiswaciwâskahikan (Edmonton). She immigrated to Canada in 2015 and completed her BFA in Art and Design with Distinction at the University of Alberta in 2020. She focuses on her cultural identity as a Jamaican woman reconnecting to her Afro and Indo-Caribbean ancestry through material exploration and textile research with portraiture. She shows the beauty of merging these cultures while addressing the connection one loses generationally to their ancestral culture because of slavery and indentured servitude in the Caribbean. By replacing her skin tone with fabrics meant to represent each ethnicity and incorporating synthetic hair, she touches on the role of colourism and texturism in racial identity and beauty standards in Jamaican society and these ethnic communities. As an interdisciplinary artist, Raneece finds joy in a well-rounded practice of oil painting, woodworking, clay sculpting, resin casting, printmaking and weaving.

Raneece has exhibited at the Art Gallery of Alberta, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Stride Gallery, SNAP Gallery and more internationally through Artsy and in New York and Vermont.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

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# MICHELLE SOUND

is a Cree and Métis artist, educator and mother. She is a member of Wapsewsiipi Swan River First Nation in Treaty 8 Territory, Northern Alberta and she was born and raised on the unceded and ancestral home territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyem (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Wautuh) Nations. She is a multidisciplinary visual artist with a practice including a variety of mediums such as photo based work, textiles, painting and Indigenous material practices. Her artwork often explores her Cree and Métis identity from a personal experience rooted in family, place and history. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Simon Fraser University, School for the Contemporary Arts, and a Master of Applied Arts from Emily Carr University Art + Design.

Michelle is currently an Indigenous Advisor at Douglas College and has taught workshops as a guest artist at the Richmond Art Gallery and the Contemporary Art Gallery. Public art pieces include a utility box art wrap (City of Vancouver), street banners (City of New Westminster) and a painted mural exhibition in Ottawa in 2018 ***nākatēyimisowin / Taking Care of Oneself***, curated by Joi Arcand. Michelle was a 2021 Salt Spring National Art Award Finalist and has had recent exhibitions at Neutral Ground ARC (Regina), Daphne Art Centre (Montréal) and Polygon Gallery and grunt gallery (Vancouver). Michelle has recently completed an artist residency at the Burrard Arts Foundation culminating in the exhibition ***Aunties Holding it Together***.

- 1 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Tiger**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur, 10 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 2 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Maroon**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 3 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Avocado**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 4 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Shearling**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and textiles, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 5 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Fringe 1**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and textiles, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 6 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Rust**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 7 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Harvest Gold**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 8 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Collar**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and textiles, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 9 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Blue**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 10 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Fringe 2**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and textiles, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.
- 11 MICHELLE SOUND, **Seventies Chick - Leather Jacket**, 2021, wood drum frame, sinew and textiles, 8 inch circumference. Collection of the artist.



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RANEECE BUDDAN, *Ingrained in the Fabric V*, 2023, oil paint, resin and sequins on canvas, 18 × 24 inches. Collection of the artist.

13

RANEECE BUDDAN, *Hummingbird Kalamkari II*, 2023, acrylic and oil paint on canvas, 8 × 10 inches. Collection of the artist.

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RANEECE BUDDAN, *Hummingbird Kalamkari I*, 2023, acrylic and oil paint on canvas, 10 × 12 inches. Collection of the artist.

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RANEECE BUDDAN, *Ingrained in the Fabric II*, 2023, oil paint, synthetic hair and textile on wood, 18 × 24 inches. Collection of the artist.

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RANEECE BUDDAN, *Ingrained in the Fabric III*, 2023, oil paint and textile on wood, 18 × 24 inches. Collection of the artist.

17

RANEECE BUDDAN, *I see them in me*, 2023, oil paint and textile on canvas, 18 × 24 inches. Collection of the artist.

18

RANEECE BUDDAN, *Ingrained in the Fabric IV*, 2023, stone lithography print, oil paint, synthetic hair, paper and textile on wood, 11 × 24 inches. Collection of the artist.





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**EDUCATION GUIDE**

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# ABSTRACT FIBRE PORTRAITS

## INTRODUCTION

The artists in **Patch Portraits** both employ fibrous materials to create abstracted portraits of themselves and of people close to them. Abstraction in art refers to representing things in a way that is not true to how they look. Things can be abstracted in many ways, for example, artists can remove details to create more simplified depictions, skew, stylize, exaggerate or otherwise alter how a subject is depicted. Abstraction exists on a continuum: on the subtle end of the spectrum, an abstracted outcome is still quite recognizable as the source subject, on the extreme end, the final output is no longer identifiable to anyone other than the artist, and there are an infinite number of progressions between these ends.

In this activity, participants will create abstracted portraits using coloured felt. The felt will be cut and arranged in interesting ways, with a focus on using abstraction to emphasize certain qualities of the chosen subject.

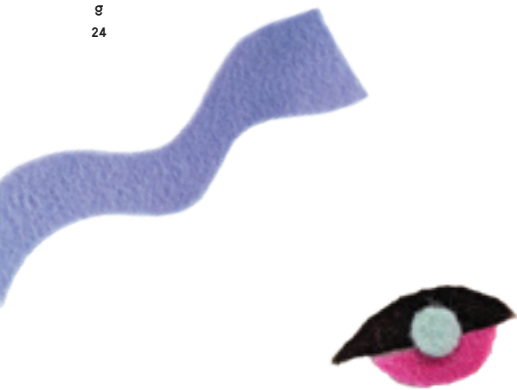
## MATERIALS

- Scrap paper
- Pencils
- Coloured felt
- Scissors
- Black markers
- Fabric glue
- Scrap fabrics, jewels, synthetic hair or other embellishments (optional)

## PREPARATION

Prior to the activity, spend some time investigating the pieces in **Patch Portraits**. Notice how the artists have chosen to abstract portraits to varying degrees. For example, in **Ingrained in the Fabric V**, Raneece Buddan depicts different features in different ways. The ear is quite realistic, while the eye, nose and hair are recalled through more abstract shapes and colours. In her series **Seventies Chick**, artist Michelle Sound rejects the literal representation of portraiture, choosing instead to represent her loved ones through a more extreme form of abstraction, employing colours and materials she associates with them. Works are made from textiles and dyed rabbit fur stretched across drum frames. The artist considers the drums both “tribute and portrait” of her mom who raised her.

Through these examples, it becomes clearer how abstraction in art exists on a continuum; there is no single “right way” to abstract so participants should feel free to experiment and have fun with the process!



Ingrained in the Fabric V



Seventies Chick - Shearling

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Have participants select who they would like to be the subject of their portrait. This could be a self-portrait, a friend or family member, an imaginary character or even a pet.
- 2** Next, have participants discuss the level of abstraction they would like to employ for their piece. To what degree do they want the final piece to resemble their chosen subject? Does the subject have any invisible traits that the artist would like to depict in the abstract portrait? What techniques will be used to achieve the desired result? Consider shape, scale, inclusion / omission, colour and placement of features.
- 3** Using a pencil and scrap paper or sketchbooks, start creating a loose sketch of what the portrait might look like. The sketch doesn't have to be too detailed, and it is okay if the finished portrait ends up looking different from the sketch.
- 4** Cut a large shape out of the felt to serve as the base of the portrait. This will be the background that all the other shapes are attached to. Place the background shape on a flat working surface.
- 5** Add additional shapes to the portrait working from the background to the foreground. Experiment with layering different colours on top of one another (for example, the colour of the cheek might stretch from ear-to-ear and the nose can be added on top). When choosing your colours, think about how colour relates to the subject. Play with using colours that are not typical skin colours. If it helps to draw the shapes before cutting the felt, use a black marker.
- 6** Use fabric glue to secure the shapes in place.
- 7** (optional) Use fabric glue to add any embellishments such as fabric, jewels or synthetic hair. Be intentional, trying to use items that relate to the subject of the portrait.



## VARIATIONS

**Felt storyboard** – for younger participants, pre-cut different shapes and facial features for the portraits in a variety of sizes and colours. Have them experiment with adding and removing different facial features to a solid felt background. The felt will stick to itself without any need for glue.

## FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

How much does your final portrait resemble your original subject?

Did you enjoy working with abstraction? Did it make the process easier or harder? Did you find it freeing or limiting?

Encourage participants to share how elements of their abstract fibre portraits relate to the subjects they are depicting. Are there any hidden meanings embedded in the portraits? This could spark a larger conversation about symbolism in art.



abstract fibre portrait example

# DRUM MAKING BY BRENDA MERCER

## INTRODUCTION

Making a rawhide hand drum requires some specialized tools and materials as well as some knowledge of drum-making techniques. The following step-by-step general guide for making a 14 inch rawhide drum is offered to us by the Indigenous artist-storyteller Brenda Mercer. Mercer has been sharing her knowledge with communities situated on Treaty 7 and Treaty 4 for over a decade. For more information on her artistic practice, find her on Instagram [@redcliffperson](#) and Facebook at [White Horse Rider Co.](#)

## MATERIALS

- Wooden hoop (14 inch diameter)
- Sandpaper
- Rawhide (about 28-30 feet)
- Scissors or utility knife
- Warm water
- Large container or bathtub
- Paint, beads, feathers or other decorations (optional)

\*\* Support Indigenous owned business by sourcing your materials from Tribal Spirit Music (based in Quebec). Order online at [tribalspiritmusic.com](#). Alternatively, Halford's in Edmonton, Alberta offers leather and fur supplies which can also be purchased online at [halfordsmailorder.com](#).

*drum making in progress*



3 - placing the hoop on the rawhide



two holes



3 - threading the first

3 - lacing the drum from side to side



4 - centering the rawhide and pulling lacing taut

4 - making a



knot in the centre of the lacing

5 - wrapping groups of lace to form prongs



5 - four wrapped prongs



6 - smoothing sides with clothes pins



## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Soak the rawhide in warm water for at least 60 minutes, until it becomes soft and pliable.
- 2 While the rawhide is soaking, prepare the wooden hoop by sanding it down and smoothing out any rough edges.
- 3 Once the rawhide is soft, stretch it over the wooden hoop. To start, cut the rawhide lacing on an angle to form a point (this makes it easier to thread through the holes) then work from the inside out to lace. Go from the first two holes on one side to straight across on the other side and continue in a counter clockwise direction until you reach the end.
- 4 When you reach the last hole, try to centre the rawhide on the wooden frame. Then work the slackness out of the lacing, pulling taut but not too tight. With a new piece of rawhide, make a knot in the center around all the lacing, then separate the lacing into groups of three strands.
- 5 Working with one group of three at a time, wrap the rawhide strand around the group of lacing to form a sort of prong. At the end of each prong, work the loose strands through the middle so it looks like there is a nice knot underneath to finish. Repeat this process with the remaining groups of lacing. When complete, there will be four wrapped prongs extending from the central node.
- 6 Use clothes pins to smooth out the sides of the rawhide flap and attach it to the wooden drum frame. Turn the drum so that it rests on the clothespins and leave to dry completely overnight.
- 7 Finally, remove the clothespins and decorate the drum however you like, with paint, beads, feathers or other materials.

Your 14 inch rawhide hand drum is now complete and ready to use! Remember to treat it with care and respect as it is not only a musical instrument but also a sacred item with cultural significance to Indigenous peoples who have used these drums in ceremonial and healing contexts for centuries.

# ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial Travelling Exhibition program (Trex) since 1980. The mandate of the AFA Trex program is to provide every Albertan with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their community. Three regional galleries and one arts organization coordinate the program for the AFA:

**TREX NORTHWEST** – Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie

**TREX NORTHEAST AND NORTH CENTRAL** – Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton

**TREX SOUTHWEST** – Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary

**TREX SOUTHEAST** – Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat

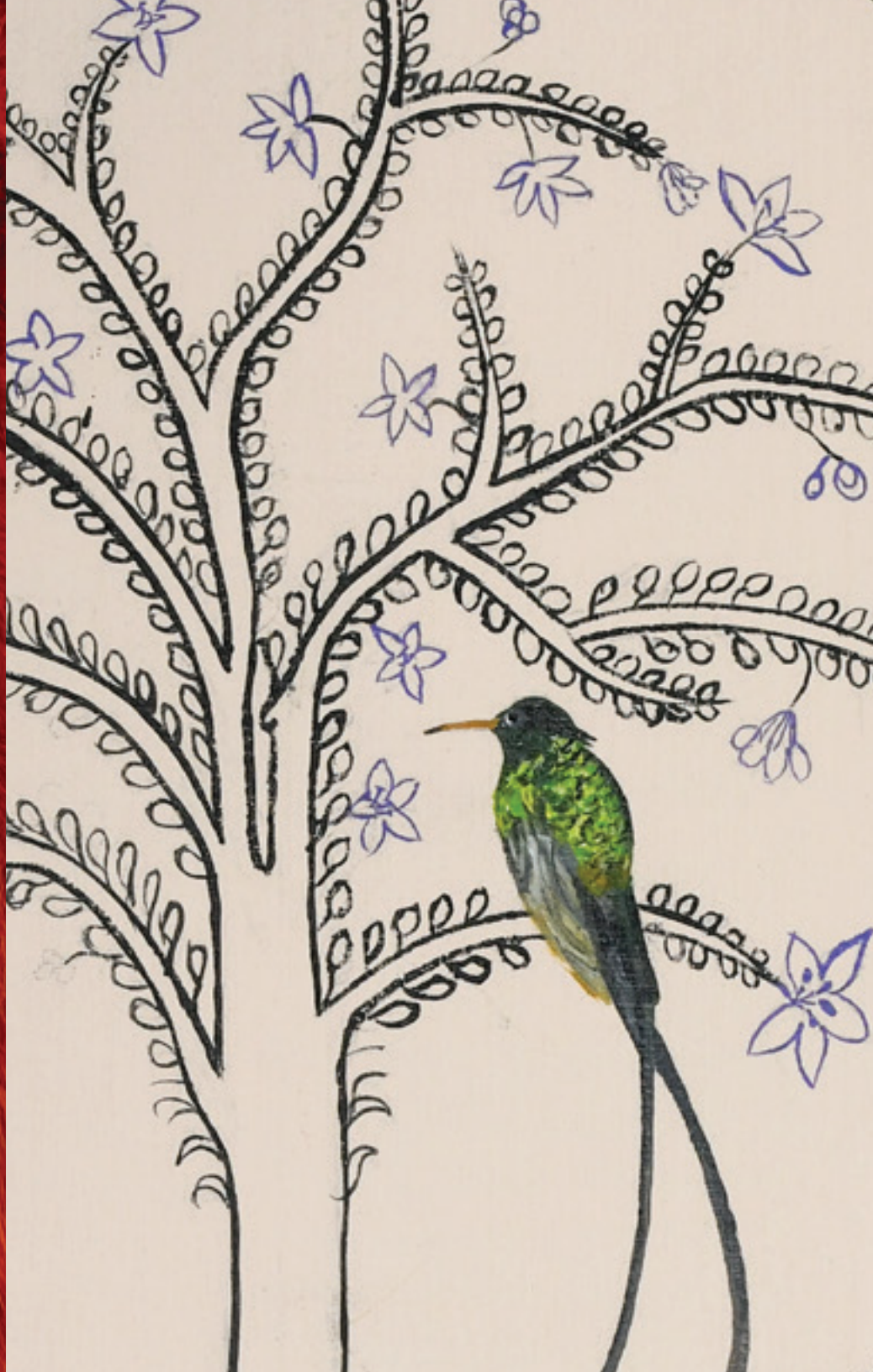
Each year, more than 300,000 Albertans enjoy many exhibitions in communities ranging from High Level in the north to Milk River in the south and virtually everywhere in between. Trex also offers educational materials to integrate the visual arts into the school curriculum.

Exhibitions for the Trex program are curated from a variety of sources, including private and public collections. The program assists in making the AFA's extensive art collection available to Albertans. This growing art collection consists of over 9,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 2,000 artists. As the only provincial art collection in Alberta, the AFA collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.

## ESPLANADE ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE

The Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre is located in Medicine Hat, Alberta. This building facilitates the sharing of our great collective culture through musical and dance performances, contemporary and historic exhibitions, plays and concerts, research and city archives, education programs and private events. The Esplanade opened in celebration of Alberta's centennial in 2005 and ever since, Medicine Hat has welcomed a steady procession of artists and audiences, storytellers and story-lovers from around the region and around the globe. To discover more about the Esplanade and its many offerings throughout the year, visit [esplanade.ca](http://esplanade.ca).





Images left to right  
MICHELLE SOUND, *Seventies Chick - Rust* (detail),  
2021, wood drum frame, sinew and rabbit fur  
RANEECE BUDDAN, *Hummingbird Kalamkari I* (detail),  
2023, acrylic and oil paint on canvas

Curated by **GENEVIEVE FARRELL**, Program Manager / Curator, TREX Southeast

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  [@trex.southeast](https://www.instagram.com/trex.southeast)

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Travelling Exhibition program (TREX) acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations, and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.

This publication was produced in conjunction with the TREX Southeast exhibition **Patch Portraits**.

It will tour throughout Alberta to non-traditional gallery spaces from September 2023 to August 2026. Visit [trexsoutheast.ca](http://trexsoutheast.ca) to find out more about the program and locations of each exhibition.

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