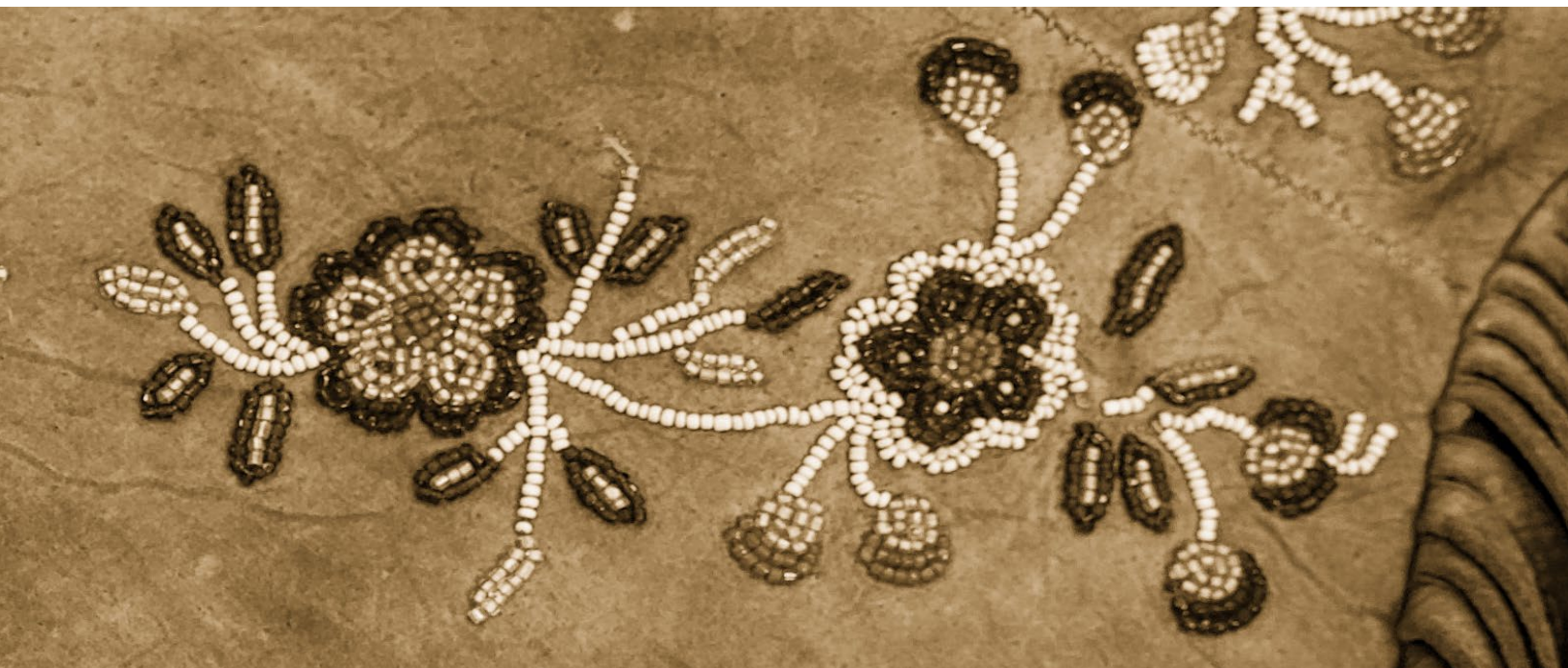


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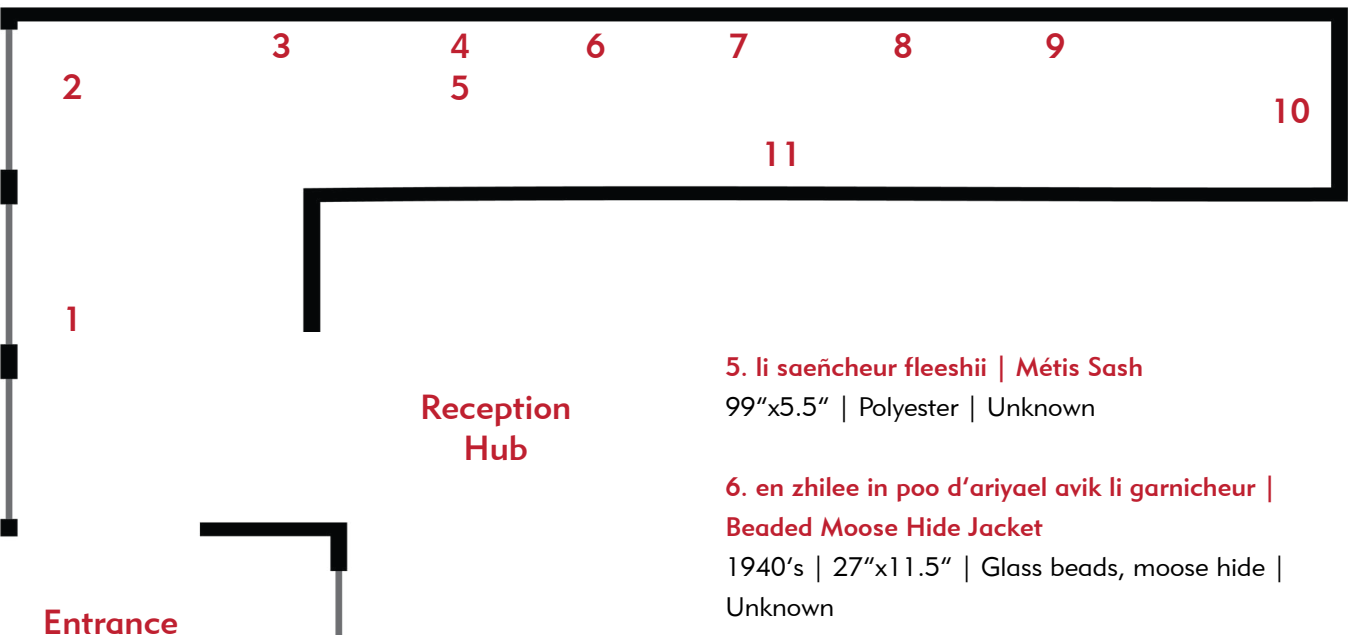
— *The Words of Our Ancestors*

September 30 – November 7, 2026



COMMUNITY GALLERY FLOORPLAN

LII MOO DI NUTR PARAANTII-INAAN KAYAASH OOSHCHI THE WORDS OF OUR ANCESTORS



1. Li zheup avik lii roobaan pi la sayncheur poor li moond kaa nootnikaychik | Warrior Sash and Ribbon Skirt

Warrior Sash | 99"x5.5" | Polyester | Unknown

Ribbon Skirt | 2024 | Cotton, satin or grosgran ribbon | Fleurette Borsboom

2. li taañboor por kahkiyaaw awiyak, lii bwaa'd taañboor | Community Drum, Drumsticks

2024 | 27"x11.5" | Yellow cedar, elk hide from the Sayward area, elk hide lacing | Members of MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Cowichan Drums

3. li liivr di kishishayhk | Métis Cookbook (Version 2)
2024 | Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)

4. lii paan d'aray aan rasaad | The Beading Earrings
2026 | beads, thread, earwire | Mary Young.

**Reception
Hub**

5. li saeñcheur fleeshii | Métis Sash

99"x5.5" | Polyester | Unknown

6. en zhilee in poo d'ariyael avik li garnicheur | Beaded Moose Hide Jacket

1940's | 27"x11.5" | Glass beads, moose hide | Unknown

7. lii sooyii moo avik la garnicheur | Beaded Moccasins

2022 | Size 8.5 | Deer hide, rabbit fur and beads | Elder Mabel Kelly

8. aen shmiizh avik lii roobaan | Ribbon Shirt

2000's | 27"x11.5" | Cotton, satin or grosgran ribbon | Mrs. MacCully

9. piko awiyak sooñ taañboor | Chrys Sample Personal Drum

2024 | 15"x3" | Maple, elk hide, elk hide lacing | Drum made by Luke Sample, painted by Esther Sample

10. aen kapoo, li saeñcheur fleeshii | Elder Bryce Personal Capote, Métis Sash

Capote | 2019 | Wool | Brenda Beatson

Métis Sash | 99"x5.5" | Polyester | Unknown

RESOURCES

MNBC's 10-Year Michif Language Revitalization Plan:

<https://www.mnbc.ca/michif-language-revitalization-plan>

MNBC Work & Programs / Culture, Heritage and Language:

<https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/ministries/culture-heritage-languagez>

About Métis Culture & Heritage:

<https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/ministries/culture-heritage-language#about>

The Michif Languages:

<https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/ministries/culture-heritage-language#language>

Supporting Métis Artists and Knowledge Carriers:

<https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/ministries/culture-heritage-language#artist>

The Amelia Douglas Institute

<https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/ministries/culture-heritage-language#adi>

APTN - Métis Culture & Traditional Knowledge:

Explore stories highlighting Métis culture, community, land, and traditional knowledge.

<https://www.aptn.org/the-heartbeat-of-metis-culture/>

Michif Foodies - Full Series

An English-language series exploring Métis food, family, culture, and community.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSb9tXA-abM&list=PLRsXAXzBvJ88>

Ancestral Echoes - An Intergenerational Storytelling Project:

<https://comoxvalleyarts.com/partnerships/ancestral-echoes/>

Episode FIVE – Ava & Bryce:

Ava McKenzie talks with Bryce Mercredi about his Métis heritage and sash, which honors his community work and symbolizes important aspects of Métis history. Bryce reveals his great-great-grandfather's role as an explorer and fur trader, and shares stories about his family and travels. The episode also touches on the impact of residential schools, including personal experiences of his family.

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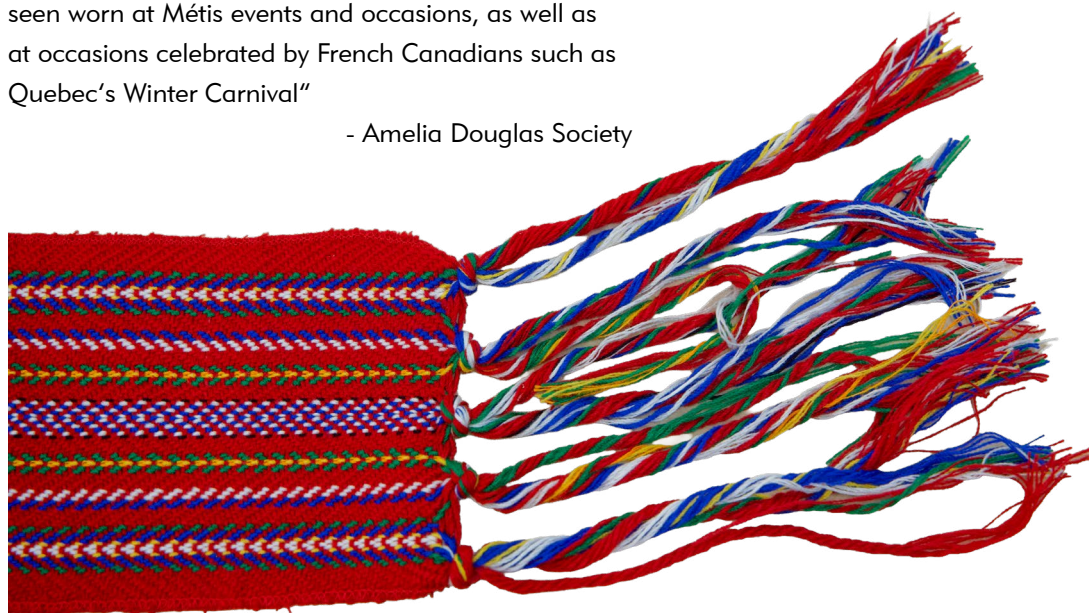
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MÉTIS SASH

Is the most distinctive article of Métis clothing and is considered by many to be a visible symbol of their identity. It is typically worn wrapped around the waist for men or over the shoulder for women. Today, the sash is often worn as a ceremonial dress to recognize the members of a Metis Community. The sash was used as a working tool for various purposes such as ssina belt, tourniquet, washcloth, back support when holding heavy objects, rope, calendar system, identifying one's kill in a buffalo hunt.

"Métis people are well known for their colourful woven sashes. The ceinture fléchée or Assomption (arrow) sash is a traditional piece of French clothing that became an essential item and tool worn by fur traders. Over time, Métis people adopted the sash as a symbol of Métis identity. The original sashes were finger woven, a style of braiding. The thread count of the sashes would depend on the overall width, pattern and weight of the thread used. Each sash would take 70 – 300 hours to complete, depending on the pattern and experience of the weaver. In time, sash makers switched to looms, which proved to be a more efficient process. While the majority of sashes that are made today are manufactured by machines, there are still Métis weavers who practice the beautiful art of sash making by hand and by loom. Sashes can be seen worn at Métis events and occasions, as well as at occasions celebrated by French Canadians such as Quebec's Winter Carnival"

- Amelia Douglas Society



Métis Sash | Unknown

WARRIOR SASH

The Warrior Sash is a symbolic garment used in community ceremonies to honour, respect, and protect Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. The colours of the Warrior Sash carry different meanings: white represents a connection with the earth and Creator; pink represents a commitment to protecting, loving, and nurturing women and girls; yellow represents a commitment to protecting, loving, and uplifting 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; magenta honours ancestors and life givers; and black represents taking a stand against violence.

11. kishkeeyihteeataak | Let's Learn! Photography Project

2026 | 8.5"x11" in each | 13 digital photographs printed on matte photographic paper | ARTparadox Photography, Katya & Sasha | photographs of Elder Bryce by Charlie Karumi, Courtesy of CV/Arts.

Bryce Mercredi Scott L., Bowen & Goat Chrys Sample Scott L. Ben & Goat Diane S. & Zelig

Jack Wiley Bryce M. Chrys S.

Scott LeBlanc, Ben, Bowen Bowen & Goats Diane Sampson Chelsey Newton & Jack W.



Warrior Sash, Ribbon Skirt | 2024 | Cotton, satin or grosgrain ribbon | Fleurette Borsboom

CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

The vision for this arts-based installation is to celebrate Métis culture and support Michif language revitalization in the Comox Valley region.

The words featured in this installation are in Southern Michif, one of three distinct Michif languages: Southern Michif, Northern Michif, and Michif French. At its heart is a desire to reconnect with the language of our ancestors and make it visible, present, and alive within our community. Many Métis today are learners of Michif, finding their way back to a language that was disrupted or lost through generations of colonialism and displacement.

"Like many other Indigenous languages in Canada, the Michif languages are under critical threat. Colonization has eroded the natural course of intergenerational transmission of Michif languages, and today there are very few first language speakers living in British Columbia. . . . Michif language revitalization is about much more than just language, as language is inherently intertwined with culture, identity, family, and wellness."

- NAan Michif Piikishkwaytaak
(Let's Speak in Michif) MNBC's 10-Year
Michif Language Revitalization Plan

ABOUT MIKI'SIW

The MIKI'SIW Métis Association is a non-profit organization, a registered society with the Province of British Columbia, and a Chartered Community of the Métis Nation of British Columbia.

The organization is administered by a volunteer Board of Directors, who are elected at the Annual General Meeting in May of each year.

We exist to strengthen our community through gatherings and cultural events. We connect our members to the services of the Métis Nation of BC, and we also educate the public and our own members about Métis people and our culture.

OUR VISION

Thriving, healthy, MIKI'SIW Métis community contributing in ways that benefit all.

OUR MISSION

We are a welcoming home to access programs and services for the MIKI'SIW Métis community.

OUR VALUES

Community

We embrace, respect, and honour our diverse background and approach to healing, restoring, and thriving.

Safety

We strive to support a caring, loving community that contributes positively and honourably to all.

Aansaamb

We do things together.

Integrity

We act ethically with transparency and accountability in our interactions.

MICHIF LANGUAGE

The Métis people are diverse, and their linguistic history reflects that diversity. Michif is unique to the Métis people, and there are three distinct varieties of Michif: Southern Michif, Northern Michif, and Michif French.

From a linguistic standpoint, these varieties are distinct languages, as speakers of one Michif language may not be able to understand speakers of another, and vice versa. Moreover, for each of these Michif languages, there are also regional dialects and other sources of variation across speakers.

However, all varieties of all Michif languages are inherently and immeasurably valuable, and together they are a strong marker of Métis culture and identity. In British Columbia, there are citizens with diverse connections to historical Métis communities, and MNBC is committed to supporting all three Michif languages.

Like many other Indigenous languages in Canada, the Michif languages are under critical threat. Colonization has eroded the natural course of intergenerational transmission of Michif languages, and today there are very few first-language speakers living in British Columbia.

However, there is a strong community interest in revitalizing Michif languages in B.C., a growing number of Michif language learners, and a small group of language champions who are committed to developing their proficiency and passing Michif languages on to future generations.

This language plan is focused on supporting the diversity of Métis citizens in B.C. who want to see their languages thrive.

Our approach is rooted in the understanding that Michif language revitalization is about much more than just language, as language is inherently intertwined with culture, identity, family, and wellness. We recognize that the work of reclaiming what was forcibly taken can be



BEADWORK

Métis people are known as the Flower Beadwork People. Métis women's involvement in the fur brought them in close contact with European trade items, including glass beads. By combining technique of First Nation quill work with European embroidery and floral patterns Métis women were the first to introduce beadwork as a new medium to decorate clothing and personal items.

Today, beadwork is used by Métis beadwork artisans to decorate items such as moccasins, clothing and jewellery. It is a point of inspiration for many contemporary Métis artists.

RIBBON SHIRT AND SKIRTS

Ribbon shirts are a cultural garment that symbolizes indigenous identity, resilience and pride.

Ribbon skirts are symbols of our identity as indigenous women, the colours of the ribbon can hold special meaning, though the symbolism varies by the wearer, their family and their community.

The Métis ribbon skirts were traditionally used in ceremonies. They are significant because the circle that the skirt creates around the feet of the one who wears it represents the circle of life. The women are the hearts of the family — they are the life givers, which is why it is symbolic that they wear the shape of a circle around their waists. In the old days, it was thought that as a woman, pants would disrupt the connection with Mother Earth. That is why ribbon skirts were usually worn at ceremonies when the connection with Mother Earth was intensified.



JACKET

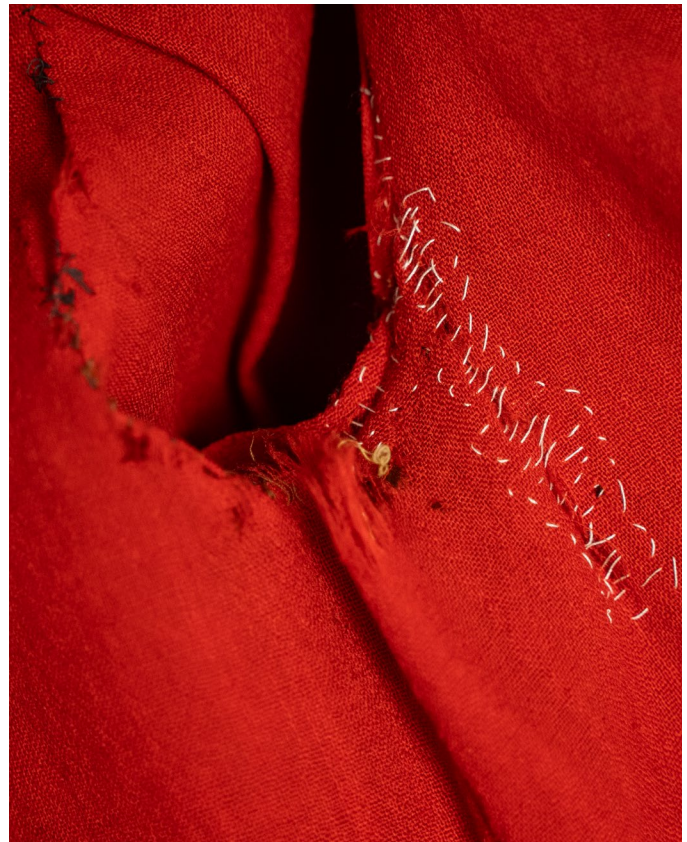
"Made in the 1940s, this beaded moose hide jacket carries with it the visible traces of time and use. Its beadwork remains intact, while the inside reveals careful hand-stitching and repairs, evidence of the attention and care given to preserving the piece.

"Looking closely at these details raises questions about the lives held within an object: Who made this jacket? For whom was it made, and with what purpose? Who has worn it, held it, repaired it, and cared for it over the decades? How many stories, hands, and generations has it accompanied?

"The jacket invites us to think about cultural knowledge not as something simple living in the past, but as something carried, cared for, and passed forward. In a world increasingly shaped by disposability and impermanence, the act of mending, preserving, and valuing what carries memory can feel deeply significant. It brings to mind the work of cultural and language revitalization: the ongoing care required to keep something alive, meaningful, and connected to the people who can carry it forward and keep it alive.

"For me, as an observer outside of Métis culture, this jacket offers a reminder that language and culture are inseparable from the acts of care through which they are remembered and shared."

- Gabriella Wong Hernandez, Curatorial Reflection



*Beaded Moose Hide Jacket | 1940's |
Glass beads, moose hide | Unknown*

mentally, physically, and spiritually demanding. Through this language plan, we aim to adopt an inclusive and trauma-informed approach that acknowledges, respects, and celebrates the hard work of MNBC citizens reclaiming their Michif languages.

Based on community feedback obtained through engagement sessions and focus groups, coupled with current understandings of best practices in language revitalization, this plan maps out ten years of activities for learning, using, and valuing Michif languages in B.C.

CULTURAL OBJECTS

Cultural objects and material heritage serve as tangible anchors for Michif language revitalization programs by linking vocabulary, storytelling, and identity. Language programs use traditional items — such as the Metis Sash, beadwork, drums, and moccasins to teach descriptive words, verbs and nouns. Handling cultural items while speaking or singing in Michif helps learners connect historical practices with ancestral voices. Teaching the names of ceremonial objects or daily tools ensures that language learners absorb the worldview and values embedded in Metis heritage rather than just vocabulary.

KISHKEEYIHTTEETAAK — LET'S LEARN!

Taking photos with our Elders, community members and our youth creates powerful visual context for words, phrases, and traditional teachings. Collaborating with Elders and knowledge keepers to label images or create photos bridges the gap between fluent speakers and younger learners. Exhibiting or publishing photography alongside Michif captions transforms art galleries into accessible language-learning environments.

Participants in our program can act as active listeners by attending, listening and learning the language without any pressure to take on extra duties. Other learners engage in group activities and share language learning experiences. Some participants volunteer to host gatherings, provide a welcoming space and managing set up. Advanced learners transition into roles where they can teach others, preserve oral traditions, and keep the Michif language alive within our community.

In this exhibition, language, cultural knowledge, objects and personal stories came together by anchoring the learning experience in our cultural tradition of sitting together, listening to our Elders and knowledge keepers — the historical heart of Metis community life where language is spoken, remembered, and passed down.

Community Drum | 2024 | Yellow cedar, elk hide from the Sayward area, elk hide lacing | MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Cowichan Drums



Bryce Mennadi

Bryce is one of the founding members of the MIKISIW Metis Association. He was born in Fort Smith, Yellowknife was where he was raised. He is from descendants who worked in the fur trade with the Hudsons Bay Company. He worked previously as a mine technician across British Columbia, Papua New Guinea, the Yukon and Port Hardy, he later served as a supervisor for the Cawak ?gin Forest guardian program.

Bryce is one of our most respected elders, an advocate for over 25 years, he co founded the North Island Metis and has been part of the Mikisuw Metis Association since 2004. Bryce acts as an Aboriginal Education Council member for over 20 years and as a cultural presenter for Komox Valley Schools, sharing Metis history, regalia and stories with Metis Students.

DRUMS



Personal Drum | 2024 | Maple, elk hide, elk hide lacing | Luke Sample, Esther Sample

In many Indigenous traditions, the first drum you make is traditionally given away as a gift to someone else. Luke gifted his drum to his Grandma. Luke's Mom painted the Red tailed hawk.

Our Community Drum represents the heartbeat of our Métis Culture and offers a meaningful way to gather.

CAPOTE

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Métis and voyageurs repurposed durable wool trade blankets — frequently from the Hudson's Bay Company — into functional, warm outerwear for hunting, trapping, and traveling.

Capotes are traditionally cinched with a colorful, finger-woven sash, which could double as a tool, tow rope, or bandage. Historically, wearing the sash under or over the capote helped signal cultural or familial origins.

It is a thigh or full length, hooded wrap-coat designed for easy movement and protection against cold, wet weather.

Elder Bryce wears it to cultural events and is kind enough to lend it for cultural teachings.

THE BEADED EARRINGS

The beaded earrings were made by Mary Young. The history of Indigenous beading in Canada spans over 8,000 to 10,000 years, evolving from natural carved materials to intricate glass trade art that represents cultural resistance, resilience and identity. Long before European contact crafted beads from local resources like shells, bone, stone, teeth, copper, wood and seeds were used. The

Beading has always been part of her life, she learned at a very young age from a longtime friend. These earrings are made with delicate beads. Their exact tubular shape allows them to lock together seamlessly like tiny bricks. The beads have larger holes, the thin walls and wider holes permit multiple needle and thread passes.

Through every precise stitch and bead, Mary carries forward a rich legacy of her Indigenous culture.



The Beading Earrings | 2024 | beads, earwire | Mary Young.



Elder Bryce Personal Capote, Métis Sash
Capote | 2019 | Wool | Brenda Beatson

Scott LeBlanc

Learning Michif is important to me because I want to pass it on to my children. I believe it is important to preserve our language and culture for future generations of metis.

The Goats,

When we drove up to their house to take their pictures, Ben and Bowen were waiting in the driveway. I said "are you ready to get your picture taken"? Ben said "have you seen our goats"? That's how the goats got to be part of the pictures.

Diane Sampson

Métis is part of my heritage. Language is a large part of any culture. To understand my culture and the part of me that is Métis, ~~I need~~ I need to learn its language.

Scott, Ben and Bowen

Scott, the dad is taking Michif lessons, sometimes the boys come too. They sit quietly listening and taking everything in. Scott is encouraging them to learn Michif along with him. They are trying to learn to say in Michif "can we go to the store to buy candy"?

I WANT TO LEARN Michif
BECAUSE I CAN FEEL MORE CONNECTED
TO MY ANCESTORS AND SO I CAN
TEACH LATER GENERATIONS
HOW TO SPEAK Michif

Although I am not Métis my son is, and I want to support him in learning about his Métis culture. Learning Michif alongside him gives us the opportunity to do something meaningful together. Hearing him speak Michif makes me extremely proud ♥

Chrys Sample

I'm proud to be learning the Michif language. I think it's so wonderful to be part of this initiative. One of the reasons I'm learning is because I have 4 grandsons, 1 granddaughter and 1 great granddaughter. I want to pass our language on to them. We are having a wonderful time at the classes, we sit together after the class and talk about the lesson, our culture and how far we've come and how much farther we want to go.

Michif Language Lessons Participant Handwriting

OUR PARTICIPANTS

OUR PROJECT OF REVITALIZATION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IS POSSIBLE THROUGH THE DEDICATION OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO CONTINUE TO LEARN AND SHARE THEIR CONNECTION TO THE LANGUAGE. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO :

BRYCE MERCREDI,
SCOTT LEBLANC, BEN, BOWEN,
CHRYL SAMPLE,
DIANE SAMPSON, ZELIE,
JACK WILEY,
CHELSEY NEWTON.

FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION, COMMITMENT, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS PROJECT. THEIR PRESENCE AND INTEREST REMIND US THAT EVERY STEP TOWARD LEARNING AND PRESERVING MICHIF HELPS CARRY THE LANGUAGE FORWARD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2026 Michif Language Revitalization Project is instigated and organized by the MIKI'SIW Métis Association Comox Valley.

Many thanks and much gratitude to: Department of Canadian Heritage and its Indigenous Languages Program; MNBC for the Michif Language Initiatives Program; MIKI'SIW Métis Association for the classes; Reid Hala of MNBC for the translations; Our Métis Community for coming out to the classes; our Instructors Mara Kersey and Corinna Stevenson; a huge thank you to Katya and Sasha, of ARTparadox for the fabulous photos; Denise Lawson, Gabriella Wong and Dave Lawson of CVAG, for going above and beyond to make this display happen; Jennifer Casey of Comox Valley Arts for the conversation and encouragement, and Elder's image; Zane Weller for being enthusiastic about our program and helping us whenever we needed it; and the Courtenay Branch of Vancouver Island Regional Libraries for space to hold classes. We appreciate all of you.

The Comox Valley Art Gallery is grateful to operate on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks Nation. CVAG programming is made possible through the support of our funders: City of Courtenay, Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, Government of Canada, Province of BC, Comox Valley Regional District, and Town of Comox. And local support from: ABC Printing, Hitec Screen Printing, and SD71 Printshop.



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