

OWNERS

MANUAL

In Ojibwe language 'Bear' is pronounced < **muck waa** >, written in SRO* as "Makwa", and in **Ojibwe syllabics** symbolized as **L·b**.

As a side note, as this image was created in Cree Territory, "Makwa" [**Lb·**] in Cree, denotes a loon; a diving bird.

* *Standard Roman Orthography*

"MAKWA", is a **visual medicine narrative**, using traditional Ojibwe images, and created in the early spring of 2020, at a time when all humans, regardless of race or locale, are literally under siege by Covid-19, a microorganism virus racing around the earth. And like all potentially lethal viruses, observable by the people only by its cruel effects of rapid death, high contagion, morbidity and ensuing economic and social carnage – but mostly **FEAR**. We Ojibwe are a people of a thousand stories arising from diverse worldviews and complex rich extensive Indigenous Teachings that are still taught and followed, and forming the foundation of many peoples lives today. *The ratio of the original image is 1.27, the original being 11 x 14 inches.(28 x 35.5 cm).*

ANISHINAABE PEOPLE

We Ojibwe, Chippewa and Saulteaux are an **Anishinaabe people** living in Canada and northern Midwestern United States. Ojibwe are one of the most numerous indigenous peoples north of the Rio Grande, and in Canada, the second-largest Indigenous population (160,000), surpassed only by the Cree (350,000).

Covid-19, a contagion, was alleged at first, as coming from a ‘wet market’ in China, caused by people eating bats.

The public narrative of this calamity being nature/animals attacking humans, when in fact the danger is humans destroying/attacking nature/animals. Hence, the **BEAR, A HEALER**, wearing a mask to protect it, and fellow animals, from defilement by humans, and standing against humans seeming need for **subjugation of ‘the other’**.

In the same way there are diverse beliefs, and expression of those beliefs, in your own immediate family, similarly within Aboriginal Families, Communities and Tribes — traditions, philosophies, community dynamics and **Medicine Teachings vary** from First Nation to First Nation and from one geographic region to another. **For more applicable traditional information, please consult with a local Traditional Elder, Healer or Medicine Person.**

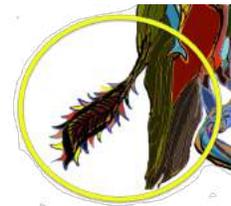
Covid-19 is not the first major deadly pestilence or disease that the Indigenous people of North America have had to battle. Now, as we have historically, we wrap ourselves in our **protective inheritance of a deep-rooted spiritual lineage which truly is a vessel of ancestral insight, wrapping us in moments of joy, fear, laughter, awe, sorrow, love, and surpassing all, a sense of hope. The blues and reds in this image originate from such traditional teachings and medicine lodge ceremonies.**

The measure of the character of our communities and leaders will be measured in the response and reaction to all attacks on the community, and contamination crisis. Defilement/contamination is one of the prominent themes of our collective human experience, and is expressed in historical and modern visual art, writing, films and other such storytelling. As the Christian scriptures tell us, it is not what goes into a person that defiles them, but what is done in response, and what comes out of a person that has the capacity for defilement. *Mark 7:15: ‘there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man’.*

PROCESS

Creating anything successful in a visual language shares much the same cornerstones as writing – as in *‘there is no such thing as good writing, just good re-writing’*. Most pieces of art, in whatever medium, while being created take on a voice of its own and the artist follows along.

By way of example, you can see that little leaf like thing attached to Raven. It actually came into the piece *before the Raven*, and seemed like it best stay, so was eventually weaved into the final piece.



COLOUR TRIANGLE



Placing triangles within an image is a good way, I think, to buttress the overall composition. The can be done by colour patches or various images. Here you will see that I've placed three dense colour patches in a triangle shape, at the top of the bear, and then inverted at the bottom. My theory (*and I appreciate this may only be something I see, or think I see*), is that the weird mirror image of the triangle shapes is a statement of the juxtaposition of do humans need to protect themselves from doom by animals, or do animals need to try to protect themselves from humans?

ELEMENTS, ICONS AND MOTIFS

THE BEAR

The first step to appreciate that a **'bear' is not merely a 'bear'**, is a basic understanding of the Ojibwe Clan System. It has not been killed by modernity, and is still a foundation of our world. Us Ojibwe people ARE divided into a number of doodem (clans) named after the animals that populated the Ojibwe world. This served as a system of government, as well as a means of dividing labour to meet the fundamental needs: food, protection, education, medicine and leadership.. The five main totems are **Crane, Catfish, Loon, Bear** and **Marten**. The Crane Clan the most vocal, and the Bear Clan the largest — so hefty in fact, that it is sub-divided into body parts such as the head, ribs and the feet. Of course, it is not surprising that other Indigenous tribes have Bear clans, e.g. **Chippewa, Cree, Algonquian, Huron, and Hopi**.

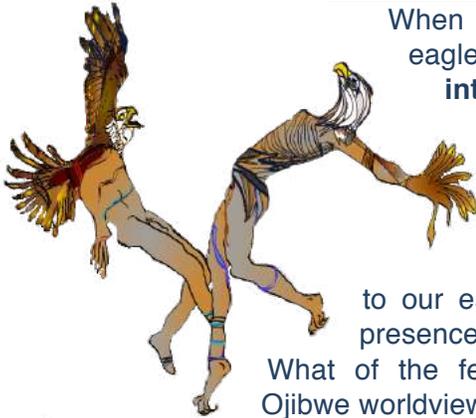
There were at least twenty-one Ojibwe totems in all, [as recorded by William Whipple Warren], the **Crane, Catfish, Loon, Bear, Marten, Wolf, Reindeer, Merman, Pike, Lynx, Eagle, Rattlesnake, Moose, Black Duck, Sucker, Goose, Sturgeon, White Fish, Beaver, Gull, and Hawk**. Some totems indicate non-Ojibwe origins, such as the Wolf Clan for Dakota, or Eagle Clan for *American*. There are other totems considered rare today among us Ojibwe because the totems have migrated to other tribes, such as the *waktcexi'*, Water-spirit, see Water-spirits Clan of the Winnebago's.

Not only is Bear representative of the largest Ojibwe clan, but also commonly among most Indigenous North-Americans, **Bear represents robust medicine, bringing healing, potency and wisdom** in addition to a number of other teachings. Many carry Bear religious fetishes⁺ charms with them at all times, example, see the Zuni tribe who have a strong Bear presence. Pueblo tradition tells us Bear guards the Western quarter of creation. And outside of North America, the **Ainu in Japan** have a belief that Bear is a god disguised as an animal. Likewise during the Han Dynasty in China people worshipped Bears, and where they have Bear as a totem animal.

⁺*the veneration of objects believed to have magical or supernatural potency, springs from the association of spirits with particular places or things and leads to idolatry, in which the image is viewed as the symbol*

of a spiritual being or deity. (Britannica) The word fetish is derived through the Portuguese feitiço from the Latin factitius (facere, to do, or to make), signifying made by art, artificial (cf. Old English fetys in Chaucer). From facio are derived many words signifying idol, idolatry (Catholic Encyclopedia)

'TRANSFORMING EAGLES' ARE ALL ABOUT PRAYER

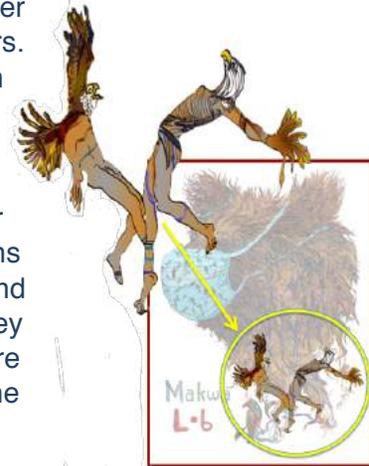


When we pray for others in ceremony, we transform into eagles, the eagle being a reflection of the Thunderbird in this world. As with all **intercessory prayer** we are required to take on the burden of others pain, difficult situations and trials, as others pray for us.

In authentic ceremony, and if we are able to do so with an honest heart, we transform in an eagle, adorned with eagle wings and feathers that equip us to fly up to the Creator with those prayers and if necessary carry others pain/injury adhered

to our eagle feathers. Once we are in her presence, the Creator cleanses our feathers.

What of the feminine, the place of women in Ojibwe worldview? Women are our first teachers; they share their bodies with us for nine months, and then their homes for always. They gift us their hearts, their compassion, and shoulder most of the troubles within, and of, our communities; a weight bore out of tradition, love and for reasons that to some appear 'old fashioned' – an obligation of duty and responsibility. We pray for others especially the feminine, as they deserve to know we acknowledge their gifts, and when they are weary, be given actions of gratitude. Women are a glimpse of the face of Creator in this troubled and unsettled world.



The duty to attend ceremony and pray for others is all of individual and collection obligation, which is why here you see both male and female in transformation, into eagles wrapped amongst an eagle feather.

DEER WOMAN

The Deer Clan is a sub-clan of the 'Hoof Clan'; the man and women of the Deer Clan are known for their kind and gentle nature and, historically, fulfilling their obligations to the community advancing housing, having a 'home' and healthy community life. If you wanted to look for poets, one of the places you'd find them is in the Deer Clan. Many of the women of the Deer Clan are healers, warriors against spiritual sickness/unbalance, physical disease and emotional and mental unbalance. Their mission is stability of 'the people.'

Turtle Medicine is Women's medicine. The Turtle has 13 scales around the back of it's shell, one for each of the 13 months in a year. This is reflected in our human experience, women have since the time of the sky people had 13 moon times across the four seasons. I have told this story



about turtle medicine before on various occasions; most great truths are told by story. This story explains some of the *simplicity on the other side of the complexity of Aboriginal societies* used for education within communities, tribes and medicine lodges. Turtle Medicine is 'women's medicine',

In a number of our committees when people are need their end of life event, you will see a large number of their community sitting near them. In some groups, and at some times, this is because of a historical belief that, near death, a person for a time, stands in both worlds, in a way a conduit and as such sometimes people hold onto the sleeve or other clothing of a person. When one of my aunties was, literally, on her deathbed I asked her to explain turtle medicine a bit more to me? Through her oxygen mask she asked me if I was a woman? When I said 'well no' – she then told me 'Turtle medicine, Deer medicine' was none of my business.' Everyone looked at me, my auntie coughed a bit, I added that as I had daughters I likely needed to know. After a drink through a straw and another cough, she asked me if I was a woman? No. She repeated that Turtle Medicine was none of my business. And she was/is correct. Indigenous women are a combination of strength, bullheadedness and endless compassion. While I have picked up bits here and there (*being a Nosey Norman*), if you are interested in knowing more about for turtle medicine, would work best if one is a woman and can then find an elder, who will share.

I did insert a turtle motif in this image



RAVEN

Raven lives amongst various Indigenous peoples, and is known as a powerful trickster, using his wiles to teach, provide and heal 'the People'. He also is known as 'Raven who makes things right,' beginning when he beat his powerful wings with such potency, that he beat the darkness down from the sky with such force the darkness became dirt, and into the world came light.

Raven is also known as a shape shifter. Our ancestors come to us in the form of Raven, full of mischief and adventure, and get cleverness. Of all aspects, Raven is most revered for **bringing fire to the people**.

HOW RAVEN BROUGHT FIRE TO THE PEOPLE

[This is a VERY Short Version, and is an example of how story teaches . . .]

Prior to bringing fire to the people, Raven had bright multi-coloured plumage, and pride and ego to match. But when the people were cold and in need, Raven was selected by the animals to travel to the Sun and bring back fire, and he did returning with a burning tree branch held in his mouth. Yet amongst all the joy of the people Raven was not recognized for his courage and effort. And so he was alone, and due to his journey to the sun and flying back with the burning branch, his plumage was blackened, his voice harsh, his ego destroyed.

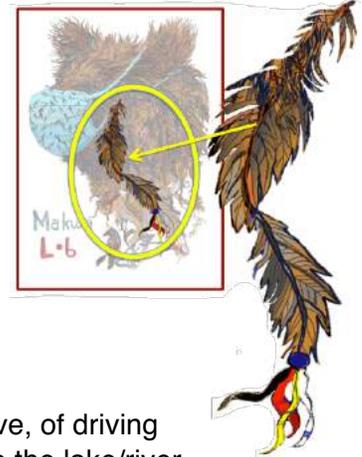
While the people forgot and were indifferent, Creator did not, and she told Raven 'so people don't forget your sacrifice, I won't give you back your original form. You will stay as you are from now on...black



feathers, choked voice and you will always scrounge for food...to remind people of your sacrifice. But as recognition, only when the sun shines on you will all your black feathers reflect all the colours of the rainbow like you once had. Your voice will strike a shiver in all humans, to remind him of what they did to you. Also, so you will never be hunted for food your meat will be bitter. And that's how people got fire, and why Raven now looks like he does.

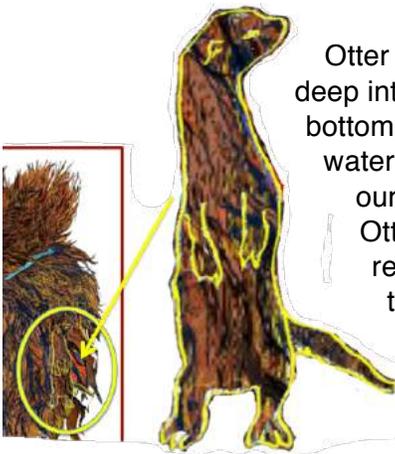
EAGLE FEATHER

In the context here, when we pray for others, their pain/injury, their troubles, adhere to our transformed with Eagle Feathers, and which we fly to Creator where the Creator cleanses those impurities from the feather.



OTTER

Otter is about balance, both the playful and reflective, of driving deep into ourselves like the Otter diving down deep to the lake/river bottom, and searching out food/truths. Otter lives, plays and seeks all in living waters of moving rivers and tidal seas. We are a mirror of our world and see ourselves in that natural environment, and individually ought seek to be like Otter, with its sense of commitment to parenting, family strength and joy reminds us, and teaches us of the need to balance earth and water. Not to overthink or be too serious, but to remain curious about all – we are all called to a life of adventure. Not all who wander are lost.



MASK

This mask (*wearing masks is increasingly required in public*), has people of various sizes and activities, symbolizing that our lives are having to be masked.



DoSeV
bruce barry ✨

Website: www.brucebarryart.com

Email: bruce@brucebarryart.com

Instagram < [brucebarryart](https://www.instagram.com/brucebarryart) > [random photos of work in progress or completed works, or Spirit Dog Tig]

Twitter: < [@brucebarryart](https://twitter.com/brucebarryart) >

FURTHER BACKGROUND I INVOKING THE OTTERS CURIOSITY

The history of Aboriginal syllabics

Canadian Aboriginal syllabics were conceived by James Evans (a missionary to Norway House in what is now Canada) in the 1840s. Originally, Evans' system of syllabics were created for the Swampy Cree and Ojibwe languages but quickly spread to other language groups such as other Cree dialects, Naskapi, Blackfoot, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Slavey, Dēnesų́łiné (Chipewyan), Carrier, and Tsek'ehne (Sekani).

While James Evans developed the script and was undoubtedly aided by native Cree and Ojibwe speakers, most of the characters were borrowed from shorthand scripts which have roots dating back to the 1500s. Timothie (Timothy) Bright is often seen as the father of shorthand and many other scripts have been derived from it including the Willis script by John Willis. John Willis reworked Bright's script and published it in his book "The Art of Stenographie". Both Moon type by William Moon, and Canadian Aboriginal syllabics by James Evans were based off of these earlier scripts.

Accessed May 6, 2020: <http://www.syllabics.net/history>

WHO ARE THE OJIBWE?

According to our own Ojibwe tradition and oral teachings, we came from the east, from the water. Advancing along the Great Lakes, and had our first major settlement, referred as our "fourth stopping place", in our present country at Sault Ste. Marie and our second major settlement, referred as our "seventh stopping place", at Shaugawaumikong (or Zhaagawaamikong, French, Chegoimegon) on the southern shore of Lake Superior, near the present La Pointe or Bayfield, Wisconsin.

Third party records buttress our history, with our first historical mention in the Jesuit Relation of 1640. Through our friendship with French traders we were able to obtain guns and thus successfully end our various hereditary wars with the Sioux and Foxes on their west and south, with the result that the Sioux were driven out from the Upper Mississippi region, and the Foxes forced down from northern Wisconsin and compelled to ally with the Sauk. By the end of the eighteenth century the Ojibwe/Chippewa were the nearly unchallenged owners of almost all of present-day Michigan, northern Wisconsin, and Minnesota, including most of the Red River area, together with the entire northern shores of Lakes Huron and Superior on the Canadian side and extending westward to the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota, where we became known as the Plains Ojibwa.

We Ojibwa were part of a long term alliance with the Ottawa and Potawatomi First Nations, called the Council of Three Fires and we fought with the Iroquois Confederacy and the Sioux. We expanded eastward taking over the lands alongside the eastern shores of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. We allied ourselves with the French in the French and Indian War, and with the British in the War of 1812.

