

Danika Naccarella Bio & Artist Statement

Danika Naccarella is a Northwest Coast artist from the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw and Nuxalk Nation, who first began her art practice in the 7th grade when she moved to her mother's home community of Bella Coola in 2009. While attending Acwsalcta School for high school she had the opportunity to create and learn Nuxalk art,



culture, and language. Danika enjoyed painting with acrylic mediums and continued to dedicate her spare time to painting Nuxalk designs drawn by her art teachers. Eventually, her Nuxalk art teachers encouraged her to start learning how to create her own designs. That began her studies of Northwest Coast art forms, from books to museum research. When the time came to pursue post-secondary education in 2014 it was without a doubt that Danika would decide to enroll in the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art, at Coast Mountain College in Terrace, BC.

While attending Freda Diesing School, she was instructed and mentored by Stan Bevan, Ken McNeil, Dean Heron, and Dempsey Bob. She learned the very basics of Northwest Coast 2D formline drawing, knife making, and basic wood carving in her first year. Which gave Danika a very solid

foundation. It was in her second year when they began more complex studies and projects such as bentwood box designs and crest mask carving. After completing the Freda Diesing Diploma program in 2016, she returned home to her community where she became the Nuxalk art teacher's assistant. She helped plan and teach Nuxalk art lessons for Kindergarten to Grade 12.

In the summer of 2017 Danika was accepted into the Earthline Tattoo Training Residency, where six participants became qualified cultural tattoo practitioners including design application, cultural safety, and the health aspects of tattooing. Danika learned traditional hand poke and skin stitch tattooing. Culture is very strong in the Bella Coola Valley where the Nuxalk Nation strives on teaching and reviving traditional ways of life. Danika is now reviving traditional tattooing in the Nuxalk community and ensuring that the culture is being translated in the proper and healthy way to bring strength to Indigenous identity.

Danika is currently working at Acwsalcta School as a teaching artist. Integrating and creating an art curriculum for the students. She is also working on larger mural projects around the school involving student participation. The projects will focus on awareness to suicide prevention using Nuxalk traditional designs. While Danika continues to work within the community, she still practices her art through tattooing, jewelry, and digital art.



The next challenge for her is expanding her skills in Indigenous identity by learning wearable traditional silver and gold jewelry design.

Artist Statement

"From a very young age, I knew traditional art would play a central role in my life because growing up in East Vancouver and Bella Coola, I have witnessed many youth who have gone down the wrong path. This has motivated me to use my artwork as a tool to express myself to inspire others to connect with their own cultural heritage. Defeating the Indigenous youth stereotypes, I am driven and inspired to prove that we can be successful in today's society. Myself as an example I would like to demonstrate to the youth, that by connecting to our culture we can achieve our goals with dedication."