

Artists' Statement Justine Proulx

This mural reflects respect, recognition, and reconciliation for Treaty 1 Territory. It brings together elements of Indigenous culture, teachings and values to inspire connection, healing, and belonging.

At the heart of the mural is the Tobacco plant, a sacred medicine symbolizing respect and knowledge, offered to Elders and the Land in exchange for wisdom. The plants roots go deep into the land, representing the grounding power of knowledge and education.

An Elder stands to the right, holding a smudge bowl with burning sage. Her traditional garments and ribbon skirt colours honour missing Indigenous women and the message of Every Child Matters. Her presence in the mural signifies the importance of ceremony, learning, and honouring those who came before us.

A wolf is on the left, symbolizing humility, protection and community. Each wolf in a pack has a specific role and job that is beneficial to their community, and survival of their pack.

A turtle is central, representing Turtle Island. The Medicine Wheel or Circle of Courage is within the turtles shell, symbolizing the need for our values to be anchored in truth. Surrounding the turtle is a group of people, each in the colours of the rainbow, symbolizing community, belonging, acceptance, and that diversity is what strengthens us.

The mural is split into night and day, showing the cyclical nature of time, and the need for balance within every part of our lives. The Red River flows across the background of the mural, grounding it in the landscape of Treaty 1 Territory.

On the day side, we have an Eagle representing Love, and a Beaver representing Wisdom. On the night side, the Sabe, Bison, and Bear roam the dark prairies, representing Honesty, Respect, and Courage. These five animals, along with the Wolf representing Humility, and the Turtle representing Truth, make up the Seven Grandfather Teachings. These teachings are an anchor to guide us in healing and reconciliation.

By listening to Elders, reconnecting with the land, and fostering community and ceremony, we can move forward towards a more just and inclusive future. May this mural remind us that we have a responsibility to educate ourselves, and that belonging, acceptance and truth must guide our journey.
