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Publication Mail Agreement Number: 40050628

Cover art: Han © by Alex Janvier, Acrylic on Linen, 1995. (Family collection). Currently on exhibit at Gallery@501 in Sherwood Park.





Premier's comments are deeply insulting to BIPOC people

By Rob Houle

It has been just over a week since Premier Danielle Smith stumbled through her first media availability. Lamenting to her base, Premier Smith infamously referred to unvaccinated people in Alberta as "the most discriminated against group that [she's] ever witnessed in her lifetime." This statement, seen by many as detached from reality, was also deeply insulting to many groups who make up the cultural fabric that is Alberta. Not only was it a reflection of how far the Premier and her cohorts will go to garner support from a conservative base, but also how little the Premier knows of

Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Colour and their struggles in Alberta.

Born in 1971 in Calgary, Premier Alberta, Smith's lifetime may have started after the assimilation period of Indigenous people had begun to slow, however it is not as if the racism and discrimination halted. The last Residential School in Canada did not close until 1996. with the ramifications rippling through our communities. Ongoing injustices created the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) which travelled across the country seeking better outcomes for Indigneous people. There were Constitutional Conventions and First Ministers meetings throughout the 80s and 90s. Additionally, in her lifetime, Premier Smith would have witnessed the fight for equality of First Nations women, the Oka Crisis, Gustafson Lake, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry and the deaths of Joyce Echaquan and Brian Sinclair.

Each of these events, inquiries and deaths can be directly linked to discrimination faced by Indigenous people and the differential treatment we face. While it may be a stretch to expect the Premier to be aware of all these events, knowing she grew up in small town Alberta, it should be expected that she is aware of some of them. Which makes her words all the more troubling. Compounding the bewilderment of the situation is the fact that the Premier claims some connection to Cherokee heritage. While this in no way makes her Indigenous, or provides anything other than a tangential connection to American Indian communities, it should make her more than aware of the Trail of Tears and historical displacement of the Five Civilised Tribes.

To a reasonable person, it is simple to draw a clear distinction between discrimination faced by BIPOC communities and the experience the unvaccinated minority. When we examine the historical record, and present day report cards of the government, there exists a wide gap between restrictions on travel and extermination of Indigenous people by the state. In the days following the initial statements, Premier Smith has attempted to clarify. She has committed to learn about discrimination faced by minority communities in the Province in order to gain a better perception on their experiences. Additionally, she has also provided further explanation that her words should have included

"governmental discrimination" as a qualifier.

While this does not provide any real clarity, or lessen the damage of the initial words, it does further highlight how

little the Premier knows about violations against Indigenous people specifically. Perhaps her advisors and allies can educate the Premier on the existence of the Indian Act, and how only one class of people in Canada must carry separate identification due to governmental discrim-ination, pandemic or not. The qualifiers also outline how uninformed leaders are on the role of government, and the restrictions placed upon people in this country. It also opens the door to dangerous rhetoric and fear of the other, something else that First Nations

Roy 22.

people recognize as an everyday occurrence on the Prairies.

Rob Houle is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Janvier on exhibit at Gallery@501

By Terry Lusty, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

"The Healing Language of Alex Janvier" featuring world renowned artist Alex Janvier is currently on exhibit at Gallery@501 until November 20 in Strathcona County.

Curated in partnership with the Janvier Gallery, this exhibit features paintings and sketchbook drawings that reflect Janvier's experiences within Canada's residential school system.

In collaboration with Indigital Media and Gallery@501, and with funding from Canadian Heritage, Alex and the Janvier family have created powerful video and audio works to complement the exhibit. Through sharing Alex's impactful narratives, more light will be shed onto the history of residential schools, the lasting impacts for those who experienced them and their families, and the need for calls to action, connection and understanding.

A survivor of the ignoble Indian Residential School system, Alex Janvier has been on a long healing journey to dispel those lingering, traumainduced demons that have burdened him far too long.

The 87-year-old icon of Canada's art world is now sharing his story of loss, isolation, trauma, abuse, pain and loneliness through an era that most survivors would much rather forget and put behind them altogether.

Brilliant artist that he is, Janvier has stepped forward to unabashedly assemble and exhibit a remarkable group of his paintings that address the trauma. Of these a good number have never been exhibited as they have been part of the private Janvier family collection.

Born in 1935, Alex was spirited away from his home on the LeGeoff Indian Reserve at age eight and thrust into the Blue Quills Indian Residential School near St. Paul, Alberta. For him, his world came to an abrupt and harsh existence. In thinking back to that time, his most striking memories are of how severely those notorious institutions stripped him and his people of everything and isolated them from their parents, families, culture and language. Throughout his life, those memories have lingered with him and gnawed at him to no end. The system not only ripped him from all that, but also attempted to erase his identity.

That message shouts loud and clear in his art and it is particularly evident in this exhibit at Gallery@501, which is on display until November 20.

As far back as he can remember, Janvier always harboured a special love for art. He credits his first mentor, Carlo Altenberg, with teaching him such basics as drafting and the dynamics of positive and negative spatial relationships and the mastering of colour.

He struggled with identity and residential school memories. Nonetheless, young Janvier managed to persevere. He graduated with honours from a formal art program at the Alberta College of Art in Calgary and then instructed the subject at the University of Alberta.

In the meantime, he developed his own unique and distinctive art style - what became his "signature style" of curved and flowing lines that separated him from his contemporaries in the Indigenous art world and soon after, he was welcomed into the exclusive company of what would become the 1972 Indian 'Group of Seven.'

Fast forward to 2022 and we find Janvier, now in his twilight years, one of the two surviving members of the group. Over the past 15 - 20 years Janvier has been honoured with numerous commissions, awards, and recognitions. He's also been gifted with several Honourary Doctorates, an Order of Canada, Governor General's Award,



Blue Quills Scar @ by Alex Janvier, 1991. On exhibit at Gallery@501 until November 20.

Alberta Award of Excellence, lifetime achievement awards, and more. In addition, he opened his own gallery in 2003 at Cold Lake, Alberta.

That said, the Janvier family, in collaboration with Sherwood Park's Gallery@501, have developed a commendable reflection of Janvier's works that stand out in addressing healing and reconciliation.

Currently on display until November 20, the exhibit is a powerfully touching and emotive collection that's been largely garnered from Alex and the Janvier family. It consists primarily of art pieces that address the residential school system, Alex's years and experiences in that submissive and colonialistic institution and its subsequent impact on him and fellow survivors.

Thanks to a complex cross-section of Alex's works in varying mediums, colours, tones,

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Injury claim information your lawyer needs to help you

By Ronald Jewitt

Personal injury claims can be complicated due to issues of proving fault, medical evidence, and how your injuries affect your life. Also, dealing with insurance companies to get any kind of compensation is stressful. The key to not getting overwhelmed is organizing the necessary information and finding the right lawyer.

If you are dealing with a serious or lifechanging injury, you need a combination of a high level of legal expertise, advocacy and client care - that means a law firm with experience successfully handling a wide range of personal injury cases. Even then, the quality of advice and guidance you get from start to finish of an injury claim is based on the information you provide.

Tell your lawyer EVERYTHING

Try not to self-edit the information you give your lawyer. Lawyers are trained to assess facts and evidence and to identify what is relevant. You may think something isn't important when, in fact, it is. So, provide as much information as you can about the incident and your injuries. The rest of this article describes some things you can do to help your lawyer put your best case forward.

Information you will need

At an initial consultation, an experienced injury lawyer will walk you through collecting the facts and evidence they need to advise you on your options and to pursue a lawsuit. However, you can make the process easier on yourself by pulling together information you have about the

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incident and its impact on you even before that initial call.

That information includes:

Your insurance documents (e.g., car and health insurance documents, including WCB).

Written statements you made about the incident. Include date, location, time of the incident, and a detailed description of how the accident happened. Helpful details include the weather, driving conditions, state of the road, obstacles or events that contributed to the accident (e.g., construction, animals crossing, lack of visible signage).

Written statements made by anyone else about the incident (e.g., police reports, witness statements).

Handwritten documents from the incident scene given to you by other parties (e.g., insurance and contact details from the other driver).

Photographs of the accident scene. Photographs of your injuries from the incident. Receipts and invoices for out-of-pocket expenses you have paid because of your injuries.

Copies of any Proof of Claim forms you and your doctor have completed for your insurance company. Copies of your Employer's Confirmation of Income and Benefits forms which

your employer has completed for your disability insurer (if you have one). Other helpful information to have on hand

Names and contact details of any witnesses. Did the police come to the scene? If yes, is there a police report?

Did an ambulance come to the scene, and were you taken to hospital? If yes, which hospital and who did you see (if you know)?

List your healthcare providers (e.g., doctors, chiropractors, physios) with contact details.

Did you receive medical care at the time of the accident (provide details), and have you been receiving treatment since (provide details).

> Do you have any preexisting injuries or conditions? Insurance companies may try to claim that your injuries are the result of

something besides the accident. Even if you were not 100% before the incident, that does NOT mean you are not entitled to compensation, but you should tell your lawyer everything about your physical and mental health before the incident so that they can protect

your interests. Also, let your lawyer know about any injuries you have had after the incident.

Roy 22

Details of your employment at the time of the accident (e.g., name of employer, job, and wages/salary/commissions).

How much time were you forced to take off work, or are you still off work?

If you are a business owner or self-employed, gather information about your financial losses (if you don't know how to start, don't worry, your lawyer will help you).

Tell your lawyer about any social media accounts you have. Your lawyer needs to know what is out in the public domain that may present problems that need to be addressed. It's better to be prepared to meet an argument than to be surprised.

Continued on page 6



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Musician Pooky G wins Hip Hop Album Of The Year award

By Deena Goodrunning, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

All across Turtle Island, there are many Indigenous artists creating beautiful music that reflects their experiences and beautiful spirits. One of those artists is Roni Gauthier aka Pooky G. She currently lives in Edmonton, and her EP album *So Far So Hood* recently won the award for Hip Hop Album of the Year at the 2022 International Indigenous Hip Hop Awards.

In an interview with *Alberta Native News*, Pooky G spoke about her inspirations, music and several of her other non-musical projects.

Born and raised in Edmonton, she fell in love with music at a very young age. At around 12 or 13, Pooky G was always in her room listening to instrumentals, writing her own music, recording and dreaming about the life that she is living now. Her dad was an emcee and he introduced her to hip-hop and also helped inspire her in her musical journey. She has many inspirations for music, but what usually inspires her to make music is her own life experiences.

"Usually my inspiration is true events that happened in my life," said Pooky G. "I use music as therapy, so I get it out in journaling, poem form. But music is my forte."

Another factor that motivates Pooky G to keep creating music is the fact that she can provide a voice about issues that a lot of people deal with. Knowing that she inspires others also keeps her motivated and inspired.

"My motivation is knowing that I can use music as an outlook for healing and getting out a lot of stuff that needs to be said and a lot of issues that people deal with and don't speak about," Pooky G said. "So it gives them something to relate to; inspiring others keeps me motivated and inspired as well."

For the process of making her award winning *So Far So Hood* EP, Pooky G said that her friends helped influence the EP's creation.

"A lot of my friends kept asking for more and more music, so that helped to inspire and motivate me to make the EP album," she explained.

The 2022 Indigenous International Hip Hop Awards Show took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The event was both live and virtual. Pooky G flew to Winnipeg to perform at the event. She had been nominated for several different categories apart from the category that she won. She said: "I flew

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out to Winnipeg thinking: *Okay, I'm nominated.* I've been nominated before for different things and acting. And I thought just being nominated, I'll take it as a win. But I did promise them a performance. So in my mind I was set to go perform. When they called my name for the award, I was super stoked and surprised. I was very much in shock."

Pooky G is currently working on a new album. She said that she's been doing lots of collaborations this year and has been setting aside new tracks to put on her new album. She feels like the award she received for her EP is confirmation for her that she is where she needs to be on her path of life with music.

In addition to her work and art as a musical artist, Pooky G has many other pursuits in life. She is an actress and acted in a major lead role for the movie *Abducted*, which was directed by Daniel Foreman and follows the story of an Indigenous teenager searching for his missing sister. Pooky G played the role of Lisa Cardinal.

Pooky G also models and was recently featured in a Paris based magazine called *Moevir*. "I scored a ten-page spread in there," said Pooky. "And it just kind of gave a bio of me as a musician [and of some of the other things I do such as modelling and acting] and some of my pictures were featured from a photographer named Lane Jensen."

Additionally, Pooky G deejays for two Windspeaker Media radio stations CUZIN Radio and Raven Radio. Currently her radio program *The Flow* is scheduled to air Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 10 pm MST for CUZIN Radio, and at 10 pm MST on Saturdays for Raven Radio. On Sundays another program she hosts, *Vibe*, airs at 10 pm on Raven Radio.



Hip Hop Artist Pooky G (Photo supplied).

On top of modelling, acting and deejaying Pooky G is also an Aboriginal family needs support worker and a workshop facilitator for Going M.I.L.E.S. – a program that aims to empower Indigenous youth through various workshops.

Pooky G said her workshops are focused on empowerment through music. "I just teach people that you can heal through music," she noted.

When asked if she had any words of advice for other Indigenous artists who may wish to make music, Pooky G said: "I say: make music. Don't ever double guess yourself, because as artists we are our own worst critics. But, when we make stuff and art through music without having to re-analyze it and [without having to] keep going over it, some of the best music is created that way."

She also said that artists should never give up and she re-emphasized the importance of never double guessing yourself. Pooky G finished her words of advice with words of encouragement.

"Definitely go for it. Keep going. Don't stop for nobody. Let nothing stand in your way. And dreams can be lived for sure."

So Far So Hood can be found on various platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music and iTunes.



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Brandon McDonald shares his path to redemption

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Every individual has their wake-up moment or a wake-up call that signals they need to make significant life changes. Their life may spiral out of control, and they have missed the subtle warning signs that could have prevented them from reaching rock bottom. For some, it's as simple as an argument with a friend or family; for others, it's a Driving Under the Influence charge, court-ordered forced rehab, health concerns, or a loss of job, and for others like Brandon McDonald, it's Corrections Service Canada.

"Prison was a blessing in disguise," said McDonald, a proud father who lives in Grande Cache but was born and raised in Red Deer.

He bravely shared his story about his path to redemption through Corrections Service Canada with ANNews. He also spoke at North America's first Wellbriety Conference last month, sharing details about his healing journey. Unfortunately, his story is more common than one would hope in Canada but McDonald is a positive example for others in similar situations.

According to the latest stats in Canada, 36 percent of women and 25 percent of men sentenced to provincial and territorial custody in Canada are Indigenous—a group that makes up just four per cent of the national population. Add in federal prisons, and Indigenous inmates account for 22.8 percent of the total incarcerated population.

McDonald is half Cree and half Irish/German; his mother, Linda Lee, is a registered nurse, and his older brother recently signed up for 25 years in the Canadian Military. He says, "Growing up

was hard on my mother, who was a single mother. My older brother took care of me when my mom worked two jobs at school."

He says, "My dad's family's traditions were drinking and picking up the bottle." He said his father is Cree, but he never taught him culturally Cree.

McDonald also explained that his mother learned a lot about Plains Cree's traditional teachings from the Rabbit and Cattleman family of the Montana Cree Nation. However, he explained that she did not pass that information on until later years of his life. However, they helped her in her younger years.

He says, "My mom had Cree traditions, but at the time, she never taught them to me."

McDonald explained that he learned about Cree culture from prison.

"I went to my first sweat lodge and saw my first smudge ceremony there, and it was part of my correctional plan to keep going with the ceremonies to keep me on the right track," said McDonald. "Then I started to see all the blessings happening from the prayers to the Creator."

He said he continued even after his correctional plan was complete and his parole was up.

"I kept going with the ceremonies and Cree ways," said McDonald. "Prison was a blessing in disguise; I connected with some great elders who helped me stay on the right path.'

"When I was in prison, I knew I never really belonged there, I was involved with a lot of gangs that gave me that sense of belonging, but I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in prison."



Brandon McDonald. (Photo supplied).

He found a healthier sense of belonging in our traditional Cree ways.

"My prayers keep me going, they keep me grounded. I thank the Creator for the positive changes in my life, in my culture, I have seen people get sick and then healed," said McDonald.

"Even positive things in my life, whether it was housing, career, employment... and my son, they all give me purpose."

He said the only thing that his father ever showed him was drinking. As a very proud father, he explained that he is trying to break those cycles for his son and be the father he never had.

"My dad taught me how to pick up the bottle and drink. I'm not going to teach my son to pick up the bottle and drink," "I'm going to teach my son to lift the drum," said McDonald.

"I'm going to teach my son traditional songs and to use that medicine in a good way, and pray to the Creator."

Injury claim cont. from p 4

Keep Track of Your Recovery Process You will also want to keep track of any medical

> Best wishes to First Nations, Metis and Inuit families throughout the province.

MLA Adriana LaGrange Red Deer-North



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appointments you have had in connection with your injuries (e.g., doctors, physios, chiropractors, massage therapists, dentists, and acupuncturists). Keep all receipts for any expenses incurred from the accident and during your recovery. It's a good idea to start a file folder where you can keep all receipts, treatment instructions and appointments with doctors or specialists in one place.

This may sound like a lot of paper, and it can be, especially if your claim is serious and extends for a long time. But don't worry. An experienced lawyer will help you organize all the information and guide you in getting the medical treatment and rehabilitation you may need.

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If you have been seriously injured, it can take significant time before your claim is resolved. This is because your injuries need to plateau or resolve before it's possible to accurately figure out what compensation you are owed.

It is essential to stay in touch with your lawyer during your recovery and after any return to work. That includes informing them about all medical appointments with doctors, specialists, and surgeons and any return-to-work arrangements.

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Alex Janvier cont. from p 3

messages and expressions that beckon to a captive audience, the exhibit is one that will both move and educate viewers from all walks of life.

All the images are labelled with many of them including descriptions of the meaning behind the art. For example, the 1990 'Opposed Cry', tells of how the school survivors longed for parents, Elders, culture, history and stories, as well as what it was like to have the English language forced upon them.

Then there's 'Why Me?' which smacks strongly of discriminatory attitudes and behaviours of the school's staff, imposed "Euro-Canadian thinking" regarding values and beliefs that were programmed to strip the red from the Indian and bring out the "white inner being". Thus, society developed the term "apple Indian" to describe them being red on the outside but white on the inside. And, so, many were "left wondering, Why me?"

Overall, Alex's works are a reflection of his association with the schools, the survivors and the trauma they experienced and had no say or control over, due to the overpowering indoctrination process which, emphatically, tore apart the children's values system, habits, and behaviours, making many of them into "apples" and propelling many into the depths of low selfesteem, self-identity, despair, alcoholism and drug abuse.

In his depictions, there is an application of differing textures, soft colour tones, bold and bright colours, cross-hatch designs, curved and gracefully flowing lines, cultural and historical undertones.

Throughout is the message that is represented in each piece of art. Stories of loss, of anguish, of pain, helplessness, discrimination, segregation, and so much more.

One really must see this exhibit as it has so much to offer. Indeed, the artist Alex Janvier, demonstrates why he is an art master deserving of the highest accolades.

Additionally, it is such an honourable thing he does in sharing not only his art, but his deeper self - his personal life, loves and hurts. And his art with its messages and stories are extended not just locally or regionally, but internationally, globally

.... commanding recognition of him as a world-renowned treasure.

From the Janvier family comes the following: "Alex's Original Works of Art have touched people's hearts and evoked such emotion for decades. He has created a universal language that has addressed many of the horrific events of Canadian and Indigenous history.

"Especially after the little bodies were found at Kamloops Indian Residential School, many Canadians were shocked and became empathetic to Indigenous issues. Alex started to work on a series of orange background paintings as it triggered his abusive experience. We felt it was necessary to share this language, and his paintings, as a healing that all Canadians can feel



"We think it is a special time to share because more Canadians are listening with the intent to understand Indigenous issues better. Many survivors do not talk about their experiences at residential schools. So, generations later we are still not always clear about the abuses or how they affect our everyday life.

"Alex has always been a storyteller and has recorded history within his art. The works of art in this exhibition span over several decades, to show his experience over the years. It's a muchneeded voice at this time.

"Alex is a prolific artist with a vast collection. Throughout planning this exhibition, we brainstormed various ways to share the art to include a variety of senses. Using a variety of your senses can draw you in and capture your attention in an authentic way.

"We appreciate all the hard work of Kris and the staff at Gallery@501; it's been a beautiful collaboration! We are grateful to Damian Abrahams of Indigital Media for his production of the brilliant educational video.

"We hope that people will continue the conversation and continue to put themselves into those awkward spaces where healing can

occur. We are all responsible to ensure these genocidal acts never happen again. We want people to encourage others to experience the show, as we have created a safe space to engage with this truth.

"We are happy to

share these original works of art from our private family collection. They are just too beautiful and need to be seen by more eyes. The titles have contributed to the narrative of the show too.

"There is a certain discomfort and denial within some Canadians. Some people don't want to deal with that awkwardness... But it is perfectly natural to feel sadness, anger, guilt, shame... However, we do not want people to stay in the guilt and shame. We need to continue to move towards action and educating future generations of the true history."

Gallery@501 Curator Kris Miller said, "We are grateful to Alex and the Janvier family for sharing these powerful artworks with this community, and for their warmth and trust in collaboration on this exhibition."

In giving Alex Janvier the final word, he once commented, "What I love about art is that it is what I am. It makes my spirit and my spirituality complete."

The Janvier exhibition at Gallery@501 runs until November 20, 2022. Admission is free but do check online (Gallery@501/Janvier Exhibition) for hours of operation and site location. It is closed on Mondays.





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