

Cosmos Out Of Chaos

Show Statement:

As a kid in Saskatchewan, my imagination would run wild with trying to re-imagine what the land looked like before western (colonial), human development. The grassland and parkland ecosystems that used to exist in place of fields, bunches of Aspen and willow groves in places of houses, herds of wild bison instead of cattle. As an adult, I find my mind still wanders off in the same way, but now reimagining what the Canadian mountain-scapes I have spent the last few years living and traveling through once looked like: the glaciers in their former glory, the past abundance of caribou and salmon, free-flowing rivers, old growth forests where cut blocks now lie. This daydreaming brings both utter admiration for the wonders of the natural world and unwavering grief for the current state of the climate crisis. While it is hard to not get completely overwhelmed, we still need to hold onto hope to adapt and mitigate, to “create cosmos out of chaos” (personal communication, Robert Sandford, September 22, 2022).

Artist Bio:

Growing up in rural Saskatchewan, Sarah Hicks developed a deep love and respect for the natural world. She spent her time exploring and photographing the banks of the South Saskatchewan River and surrounding grasslands, and drawing the local birds and animals. Her passion for nature continued to grow once she began canoe tripping in Northern Saskatchewan,

ultimately leading to Sarah getting a degree in Kinesiology in the Outdoor Education stream at the University of Alberta Augustana campus. It was during her time at university that she discovered her talent for painting with much encouragement from her professors. Art has since become a powerful tool for Sarah to connect with and advocate for the environment.

After spending two years living in her van across Western and Northern Canada searching for her next source of inspiration while climbing and skiing, Sarah now calls Revelstoke home. As an artist, her goal is to capture the breathtaking beauty of the natural world we live and recreate in in her paintings to share with others. Sarah believes that our connection to the environment is a vital part of our existence, and it is her hope that her work will inspire others to cherish and protect it.

Artist Statement:

Sarah Hicks is a place-based landscape painter, working primarily in watercolour and acrylic. Her stylistically flowy scenes are minimalist yet detailed to capture the vastness of the Canadian wilderness. Her work is created using either reference photos from her travels or in the backcountry en plein air. Painting these vast, wild environments helps her build a different relationship to the place by slowing down to look at how the small details of colour and/or linework flow together to make up the bigger scene. Her hope is that by bringing these landscapes to people's homes, it can help them build a connection to the place in their own unique way.

Despite working primarily as a painter, the concept for *Cosmos out of Chaos* has come from a lifelong accumulation of materials and love for animals and the outdoors. You could say it all started with an ever-growing pile of retro National Geographic magazines that she used to dumpster dive for as a kid in search of pullout maps and tales of faraway lands, which also inspired her eventual love for adventure. Overtime, more materials got added to the mix such as vintage photographs, more maps, old Sierra Club magazines, Gardner Dam development propaganda booklets from the 50's and 60's, and old pro- and anti- forestry pamphlets from the 60's onwards. This mishmash of material collecting into her years at university eventually became fueled by a fascination of how people connect to the land, especially looking at historical or past perspective and how that has influenced writing, art, legislation, and development. As the pile of magazines and maps grew alongside concerns for the climate crisis, so did her idea to overlay drawing, painting, and collage on to film photographs of places where humans and/or climate change have largely impacted the environment.