



Ivan Shawana

Born on July 20, 1960, on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, Canada, Ivan Shawana is an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) artist originally from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and now residing on Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation. The land of Manitoulin Island — its forests, waters, and wildlife — remains central to both his identity and artistic expression.

Ivan began painting at the age of seventeen, encouraged by Elders and local artists who recognized his natural ability and storytelling gift. Guided by Anishinaabe teachings and a deep spiritual respect for Creation, he developed a distinctive style rooted in symbolism, movement, and vibrant colour. Working primarily in acrylic and oil on canvas, Ivan's compositions depict animals, trees, and the Earth as living relatives — interconnected beings bound together in balance. His paintings are visual teachings, reflecting the Anishinaabe understanding that humanity does not stand apart from nature, but exists within it.

In recent years, his work has increasingly addressed contemporary environmental concerns. Through his art, Ivan calls for awareness, responsibility, and a return to harmony with the natural world. His paintings are not only expressions of beauty — they are messages of survival.

In Ivan's own words:

"My work is for the young people. I want them to see the connection between humans and the environment and that we depend on each other."

"Harmony has to be achieved for our survival."

"In all my paintings, I use the Earth and the Trees as a solid base to portray my feelings."

Ivan Shawana's art bridges generations — carrying forward ancestral knowledge while speaking directly to the present moment. His work serves as both cultural preservation and contemporary dialogue, reminding us that the future depends on the balance we choose to create today.

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