



Sheila May

Winnipegger Sheila May was allowed to paint a mural on her bedroom wall at age 7. In her early 20s, she turned her basement into an art room. She stopped taking commercial art when she felt it was cramping her creativity, and has been self-taught ever since. Though she qualified as a developmental services worker and spent 12 years in that field, she never stopped sketching in her journal and she now values time spent with a group of artists who paint together. Sheila has been prolific at Artbeat. A nature-lover, she paints trees, leaves, birds, feathers, and landscapes. She produces large-stroke, bright, highly stylized work in acrylic on canvas, some with fragments of favourite song lyrics. "I look for themes that bring me peace and comfort. The process of painting is more important to me than the final image," she says. Sheila likes to have music and children around while she works. She starts by covering her canvas with a black undercoat, then layers bright colours on top; this process, she says, mirrors how painting lifts her mood, with happiness pushing out through the darkness. "I'm just not a pastel person, but I am a 'gross motor' artist," she jokes. "Painting, as the output of energetic body movement, keeps me centred." she adds.