



Ursa Burdenkeeper

Ursa Burdenkeeper was born in Thompson, MB in 1988. Her father was a hunter-trapper; her mother was a sketch artist; and her brother did traditional Indigenous drawings. Her art-oriented family has kept the drawings she made long ago on paper hung on the walls in their house. While in high school in Wabowden and in adult education, she evolved from pen and paper to making her own clothing – both to express her individuality and to supplement the limited fashion choices she found in the small community. Ursa's traditional drawings fully express her personality, despite the simplicity of her medium. She very recently has begun making acrylic paintings on canvas, starting with black or acrylic-pour backgrounds. Her subjects include nature – especially black bears – and Indigenous and Pagan spirituality, with clear and representational symbolism that makes the meaning obvious. "I don't go in for guesswork," she says. Ursa also tools, carves, and embosses images in leather, wood, and cloth: Indigenous symbols such as dream-catchers and drums, along with fantasy medieval attire. "Artbeat is healing," adds Ursa, "and my art gives me a feeling of accomplishment. A decade ago I wasn't a perfect citizen. But I've faced my past and moved beyond it. I want to be judged by who I have become and the positive energy I put into my work."