

For my culminating, I decided to make a drawing that relates to an issue that First Nations, Metis and Inuit face today. I focused on FNMI in media and pop culture. That's includes art, music, TV and film, photography and much more. I wanted to touch on the positive influences, successful FNMI in media but also showed the negative stereotypes that the media has inflicted onto the people. The top of the artwork displays a thunderbird, the native symbol for strength and power. I chose this to represent the strength and power of the FNMI that have overcome stereotypes and prejudice and became successful. The thunderbird is 'sitting' on top of the medicine wheel, which is a very important part of FNMI culture. It represents a numerous of things but I chose to include it because it symbolizes the interconnectedness of life and that life and all things around it goes in a circular motion. On either side of the medicine wheel are two traditional FNMI dancers, a hoop dancer and a jingle dress dancer. Each are a representation of FNMI art before European contact and modernization. Underneath the medicine wheel is a banner that reads 'Just Like You'. I chose it as a statement to go against the stereotypes such as that there are no successful FNMI and that all of FNMI are 'lazy drunks', etc. I wanted to include this to say that FNMI are just as capable of success as any other person. Below it I included popular and successful FNMI musicians, activists, etc. I put Buffy Sainte-Marie, who is one of the most notable FNMI musicians and has been very successful. On her left is Susan Aglukark, an Inuit musician who was very popular in Canada in the 90s. On Buffy's right is Wab Kinew, a FNMI hip hop artist and public speaker. He is the host on CBC Radio and CBC Television. On the far left is Disney's Pocahontas, this depiction of Pocahontas has become iconic and is very well know but it is also very controversial. The movie has been criticised for sexualising Pocahontas (who in real life as only around 12 years old) and portraying the FNMI culture improperly. On the far right, is the stereotypical 'Indian' from old Western movies, which were very popular in the early-to-mid 1900s. Again this characters have become iconic but have been criticised (rightfully) for the complete backwards FNMI representation. They were often casted as 'savage' and 'unlawful' or as mysterious and strange beings. The films took the extremes from FNMI stereotypes and blew them out of proportion. At the very bottom of the artwork are symbols of all the negative stereotypes and ideas that media has helped put on FNMI, such as being drunks, lazy, addicted to gambling, etc. It also shows 'newspaper headlines' and various negative things that have been said about FNMI. I also included a tomahawk because it symbolizes the stereotypes that all FNMI are brutal and out for blood. It shows a wine bottle because of the stereotype that all FNMI are drunks and have problems with alcohol. I also included gambling chips, because of the stereotype that First Nations are gamblers. Overall, I'm proud of my work and I think that I was able to capture FNMI culture, successful people and the stereotypes inflicted on them, all in one.