

Multi-Medium Anishinaabe Artist, Author and Speaker, Kent Estey, an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe in Northwestern Minnesota, is known for his bold, bright use of color in his art. Kent's lineage includes many artists, where black-ash basketry, beading, birch bark, and fiber artistry were everyday occurrences in his home. Kent is a visual artist whose paintings feature his preferred media: acrylic, oil, and ink. Most often, the subject matter of his paintings is about land, sky, and water. His use of vibrant colors, reflecting his feelings and emotions, captivates the viewer as he captures the beauty of his surroundings. "I paint what I see every day," says Kent. "It's all I know and what I know best, so my paintings are about this piece of land, this sky, the colors and feelings as I walk through my gardens." Kent's work has been exhibited across the region, from Duluth to Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as in North Dakota.

Kent has begun to curate exhibits. His "Naytahwaush: History, Artists, and Stories" exhibit, as well as the "Emerging Artists Exhibit," were very well received at the Gizhiigin Arts Incubator in Mahanomen, Minnesota. He has just finished curating the Manoomin Arts Initiative's Takeover of the Red Door Gallery in Wahpeton, North Dakota. He will be a guest curator at the Watermark Art Center in Bemidji, Minnesota, this winter.

His newly published children's book, "Picking Sweetgrass," is a Native-written and illustrated children's picture book. In "Picking Sweetgrass", Kent recalls a cherished childhood memory of gathering sweetgrass with his grandmother, Ma. On a bright Saturday morning, he escapes household chores to join her in the field, where she patiently teaches him how to identify and pick the fragrant sweetgrass used in her black ash baskets. Through Ma's careful instruction and loving presence, the boy gains practical knowledge and a deeper connection to her artistry and Ojibwe traditions.

Currently, Kent's artwork is featured at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) in Detroit, Michigan, as part of the Contemporary Anishinaabe Exhibit. This exhibit is their first Anishinaabe exhibit held at the DIA in 30 years, and Kent's first national gallery show. Kent has been awarded the Minnesota State Arts Board Creative Support for Individuals grant, a financial gift from the Waterers Organization, and the Region 2 Arts Council Artist Fellowship for 2023-2024, as well as the Anishinaabe Artist Fellowship for 2025-2026. Kent has been an educator for most of his life, living and working in his studio in Naytahwaush, Minnesota.