

Extended Biography

bailey macabre (they/them) was born on - and continues to work from - Snuneymuxw Territory in Nanaimo, British Columbia, on so-called Vancouver Island. They are a member of Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, with deep familial ties to the Red River, Turtle Mountain, and Batoche. Their lineage carries the names Gariepy, Morisette, Starblanket, Mistawasis, Parenteau, Brabant, Ayahoos, Gladu, and Desmarais, alongside Ukrainian and Romanian ancestry on their father's side. These overlapping histories of movement, labour, and survival quietly underpin their work, shaping a practice attentive to memory, kinship, and responsibility.

bailey's relationship to art began early and informally, rooted in touch, curiosity, and repetition. As a child, they made sun prints using cyanotype paper, drew and painted incessantly, sculpted found materials, and learned to sew and knit from their grandmother and a beloved elder who lived across the street. Art was not framed as ambition, but as a way of being present with the world. Their family moved often, and by the time bailey reached high school they had lived in ten homes and attended seven schools. This early instability cultivated a sensitivity to place, transition, and the quiet emotional labour of adaptation - elements that continue to surface in their work.

In young adulthood, bailey followed a nonlinear path shaped by AuDHD curiosity and necessity. They earned a diploma in Media and Cultural Studies from Okanagan College and moved through a wide range of work, including body piercing, pet store management, catering, and the construction of compressed natural gas fuel lines for heavy-duty machinery. Eventually, they trained as a cosmetologist specializing in hair colour, a practice they sustained for over a decade. Throughout these years, art remained a constant companion - sometimes central, sometimes peripheral, but never abandoned. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of the salon they worked from, bailey made the decision to pursue art full time.

That shift was swift and generative. Within a short period, bailey was commissioned for beadwork, book illustration, and editorial projects across Turtle Island. While their commercial practice developed quickly, they felt an increasing tension between productivity and anti-capitalist beliefs. Rather than orienting their work toward market demand, bailey began to cultivate a studio practice invested in material process, slowness, and refusal, creating space for work that could exist beyond legibility and commodification.

A pivotal moment came when close friend Whess Harman invited bailey into their first group exhibition at open space gallery in Victoria, BC. Presenting two digital illustrations of birds, the exhibition marked the beginning of a more public artistic trajectory. In 2022, bailey received the Geoff McMurchy Artist Development Grant and Mentorship through Kickstart Disability, mentoring under Jenna Reid. This experience deepened their understanding of granting systems, funding cycles, and the sustainability of a contemporary art practice, as well as the importance of disrupting them.

mentorship of Adrian Stimson. This experience reinvigorated their practice and catalyzed several new projects currently in development.

bailey macabre's work moves across textiles, illustration, comics, film, installation, and community-based programming. Grounded in Indigenous knowledge, disability justice, and care-based methodologies, their practice insists on tenderness as a political actone that honours lineage, resists extraction, and makes space for collective survival.