

Last chance to see this striking Indigenous mural

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Nearly a year after Isaac Murdoch's mural 'The Petition to the Water Spirits' took centre stage at Seneca@York's Courtyard, the temporary art piece is starting to fray and will need to be removed.

If you haven't had a chance to visit it and reflect on the Indigenous images, now is your chance. It will be taken down on Aug. 19.

Murdoch, who is Anishinaabe and a member of Serpent River First Nation, northwest of Toronto, spent many years learning from Elders and is known for connecting traditional Indigenous knowledge and story through his art.

This piece, which depicts a person in a canoe, surrounded by nature, is meant to draw attention to the need to honour and care for the land and to the residential school legacy.

The mural, commissioned by Seneca Polytechnic, was unveiled as part of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation events in 2023.

Seneca will preserve the work in another form on campus.

Murdoch's artist's statement delves further into the meaning of the mural:

"For years, the Indigenous communities made petitions and offerings to the water spirits as part of the agreements between the people and the lands. When the newcomers came, this agreement was disrupted. It is said that an Indigenous man went to tell the newcomers of their obligations to make such offerings in order to not further upset the water spirits, but the newcomers did not respond. In fact, the newcomers took more from the land (resources) and even more devastatingly, took the children from the land (residential schools).

The Petition to the Water Spirits is a reminder of the offerings and obligations we have to the land we inhabit and to the children we have removed from their homes. It is a visual petition to return the land to what it was and to return the children to their homes. It is a reminder to offer respect that the water spirits deserve as a petition to get our children back."

[Watch the mural's installation here.](#)

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