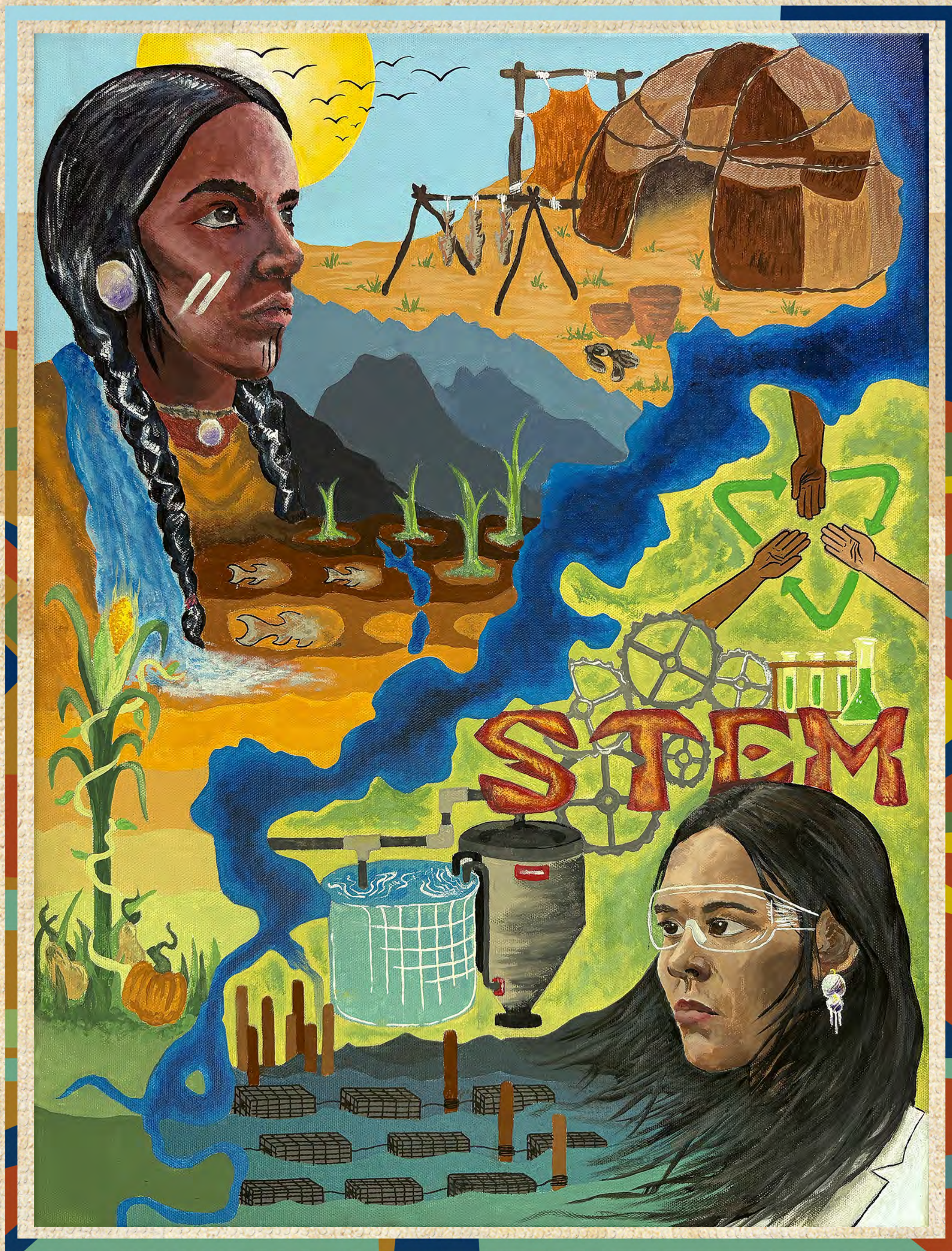




AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH

ARTIST: *Joseph Badamo of the Nansemond Indian Nation, Virginia*

My submission is a collection of images drawn from my own Tribal experience depicting the role of our matriarchs in caring for the environment and future generations. My Nation's name, Nansemond, means 'Fishing Point.' In the middle of the work is an illustration of the Nansemond river that flows through my ancestral land. The upper portion of the painting shows a traditional Eastern Woodlands woman and the ways that they cared for their tribes through sustainable food practices and the efficient use of all materials available to them. This includes the agricultural technique known as the "3 sisters." Corn, beans, and squash are planted together to conserve land, soil, and nutrients. Along with the gift of a fish to the Creator that helped to enrich the soil. Additionally, the matriarchs were stewards of other gifts from Mother Earth such as deer meat and hides, dried fish and materials to build longhouses. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are also represented. The bottom portion of the painting demonstrates the marriage of traditional environmental practices with modern scientific techniques; used to restore and conserve our natural resources for future generations. Inspired by my Assistant Chief, who is an environmental scientist, working for fifteen years in the EPA; I have worked in my Nation, planting and harvesting oyster spat to clean the inlets of the Nansemond river. This method of reintroducing oysters to the waters naturally restores its water quality from dangerous to safe levels. This practice is being replicated in many brackish ecosystems.