

On the Cover: November 2022



Ripples and Reflections is an original painting by Rhode Island artist Joel Rosario Tapia - a segment of the work was restructured for our November issue, to acknowledge Indigenous People's month. And because it looks amazing.

Tapia is a US veteran, author and Urban Aboriginal visual artist who has made it his mission to keep the Taino and Indian identities alive through his art. The topics of his art range from ideological, sociological, moral and family values. Each piece has a distinct story, often drawn from his culture in order to keep the true stories and true identities of his people and ancestors alive. He has spoken at schools like Brown University and at a wide variety of festivals and events all over the country.

Tapia, who often goes simply by his last name, has become a staple in the city of Providence, presenting his ideas and giving platforms to other artists. He has a Bachelor's degree in The Recording Arts and a Master of Entertainment Business Science from Full Sail University in Orlando, Florida. His career thus far has given him experiences in all realms of the arts from designing to performing and even teaching the youth how to work with steel at PVD's The Steel Yard. "It's important to use what you have to your

advantage and to share all that you can with others,” says Tapia.

This piece for *Motif* holds special value to Tapia as both an artist and a spokesperson for the Cibuco Bayamon Taino Tribe. The flags of multiple Caribbean countries are found beneath the ripples of water and reflection. Above that, two blue macaws are symbolic to the Arawak culture. The feathers of these birds are often used on headdresses and symbolize a guide through the tough times and a way to persevere and share their story, the right way. Those very feathers create the ripples that carry change across the piece. “I’ve been working hard to get here for a minute now and I do this because I worked hard and because now, I can. Why wouldn’t I share what I’ve learned, so more people take from that? I’ve learned so much about my ancestors from really looking into their stories and the discrepancies in information we have been given,” Tapia says. “I want to help others do the same.”

Follow Tapia on Instagram @**tapiauno1**