

An artist's journey of resilience, renewal and healing with *Zaagigi | Growth*

Cody Houle's solo show is on view at AGH Art Sales + Services from October 2 to 26, 2025



Cody Houle, *Living in Gratitude*, 36x48 inches, acrylic on canvas.

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AGH Art Sales + Services is proud to be hosting *Zaagigi | Growth*, a showing of Cody Houle's remarkable work that runs from October 2 to 26, 2025. Through vibrant, expressive paintings, Houle explores personal and cultural transformation, reclaiming identity, healing from intergenerational trauma, and deepening the connection with his Indigenous roots. His work reflects a journey of resilience and renewal, offering inspiration to youth and community. *Zaagigi* represents more than growth—it is the courageous beginning of something new, rooted in spirit, story, and the power of art.

Houle began painting less than a decade ago, after being inspired by the television sensation, Bob Ross.

"I was just so captivated watching how he could systematically build a landscape from a formula," Houle recalls. "A lightbulb went off."

Like following a cooking show, Houle immediately took up painting.

“I painted mountains, over and over again. I probably painted hundreds of them.”

As he continued painting at a prolific rate, he also started studying the works of historical artists whose processes he found fascinating: the scraping of Gerhard Richter, the frenzied drips of Jackson Pollock, the textured layers of Jean-Paul Riopelle, and the gestural marks of Franz Kline. But most notably, he found a resonance with the transfigurative imagery of artist Norval Morriseau.

Houle is of French and Anishinaabek ancestry, and he grew up in North Bay. As a youth, he recalls seeing Morriseau’s work in the window of a local gallery and later being transfixed by the Ojibwe artist’s story.



Cody Houle

Houle’s father was displaced from his culture and community in his early years by the Children’s Aid Society, after the traumatic murder of his grandmother. He lost his connection with his culture and community. Houle’s parents struggled with a lifetime of substance abuse, and Houle was raised in an unsafe environment. Without a strong cultural connection, Houle grew up confused and with a sense of shame about being Indigenous.

During his fledgling years of practicing, Houle would sell his painting on the streets – lining them up on the ground and selling them for \$20 a piece. This immediate connection – between his paintings and other people – was his motivation to manifest a larger future for his paintings.

Nowadays, Cody works to free his soul, and to be a positive example for his daughter and Indigenous youth. Through art, he is transforming his relationships with his identity, culture, and family – including those who are no longer living, and those who were never able to tell their own stories.

The title *Zaagigi* is Anishinaabemowin for emerging growth – the part of growth that immediately proceeds sowing. For Cody Houle as an artist, *Zaagigi* | *Growth* perfectly illustrates this.

Please join us for the 'Cody Houle Artist Reception' in AGH Art Sales + Services on Thursday, October 2, 2025 from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. The artist will be attendance to discuss his work.



Cody Houle, *Being One with Turtle Island*, 36x48 inches, acrylic on canvas.

Photographs for use by the media can be found [here](#).

About Cody Houle

Cody James Houle (he/him) is an Anishinaabe/French artist based out of Brantford. Houle's family ancestry are Anishinaabe from Saugeen First Nations and French from Sturgeon Falls, Ontario.

Houle was raised in the small military city of North Bay, Ontario. In his youth, he was immersed in intergenerational trauma. His father suffered from a lifetime of substance

abuse and Houle grew up in an unsafe environment. Houle had to generate his own sense of security, and he survived through a deeply intimate connection to nature and a motivated desire to create something meaningful in this life.

Houle felt shame about being Indigenous and never understood where he belonged. Now, his art allows him to process these emotions and show his pride in being an Indigenous man. A self-taught painter, Houle has been active in the arts community for over six years.

Houle believes paintings are teachings and it is important to share art to inspire hope, self-belief and a better understanding of the struggles Indigenous peoples are faced with. He encourages everyone (especially youth) to create for the sake of creating – to express themselves and give expression to their lives because our stories matter.

About the Art Gallery of Hamilton

Founded in 1914, the Art Gallery of Hamilton is the oldest and largest public art gallery in southwestern Ontario. Its permanent collection, which is focused on historical Canadian, International, and Contemporary art, numbers more than 11,000 works and is recognized as one of Canada's finest. The AGH is a vital creative hub and centre of lifelong learning that enables people of all ages to enrich their lives by gaining a deeper understanding of art.

For more information or interview requests, please contact:

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