

Florian "Slats" Fairbanks

I was born in 1948 to a father from Red Lake reservation and a mother from White Earth reservation.

Here is a funny story about how I got my name Florian and my nickname Slats. My mother wanted to name me Dominic. But my dad's brother was visiting us when I was born so he quickly named me after that brother George. My uncle George was a Catholic priest who took the name Florian when ordained. So I always say I'm named after my uncle George!! He took the name Florian after a missionary priest who froze to death walking across the frozen Red Lake serving parishioners in Ponemah, a small reservation town .

My family moved off the reservation in 1954. I graduated from San Francis Catholic elementary, the University of MN at Duluth, and then the University of Montana in Native American Art. I was a classroom teacher from 1974 until 2013.

In my work, I try to illustrate the smallness of man in nature. I use craypas, oil based chalk, oil, acrylic, water color, coffee and sometimes shoe polish. I work mostly on linen or boards. I am interested in how light reacts on each surface. The paintings are inspired by real places, mostly in northern Minnesota.



