



Leeanna Chipana

I have always existed in two places. The past and the present. The mountains and the city. The north and the south. In my exploration of time and self, I have built bridges between what used to exist and what is still unfolding. My father is an indigenous Quechuan man from the mountains of Peru with a daughter who grew up on the streets of Central Islip, Long Island, with an Irish American mother. My life has been a series of contrasts. In those differences, I have sought to find what is the same and what is true. I see complex beauty in the faces of people with indigenous ancestry that is often overlooked and unseen in Western art. I see indigenous ancestors in people even when they do not see it themselves. Through my painting, I grapple with the complexities of my own Indigenous and Latinx-American identity.

Using classical European oil painting methods along with my study of ancient Incan vessels and art, I paint figures existing in a world of their own, celebrated because they are "from the mountains." My portraits are often inspired by the individuals in my hometown community, my Quechuan family in the Peruvian Andes, and images of indigenous families seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. I am interested in portraying their emotional depth and human experiences with empathy and compassion.