Traveling our way?

Stop on in for the 48th Annual Red Cloud Indian Art Show. The festivities kick off this year on Sunday, June 5. The annual show is the largest and longest running Native American art show of its kind in the country, and one of only a few held on an Indian reservation hundreds of miles from any urban area.

Since 1969, the Red Cloud Indian Art Show has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors to The Heritage Center and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to view impressive works of art from seasoned Native American professionals and young Lakota artists just beginning their artistic careers. The annual show runs for ten weeks this summer.

Each year the exhibition showcases more than 150 submissions in categories from painting and photography to beadwork and quillwork. The juried competition will feature the work of more than 50 Native artists, awarding over $7000 in prizes in 24 different categories.

The show is free and open to the public seven days a week, with free daily tours offered at just The Heritage Center, but also Red Cloud Indian School’s historic grounds.

Let us know if you’re headed our way by calling our Community Relations Office at (605) 867-8211. We can’t wait to see you!

Learn more at www.redcloudschool.org/heritage

A "HORSE NATION" ON THE RISE

MAJOR GRANTS FROM THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION SUPPORT INNOVATIVE EXHIBITION

Through the Warhol Foundation’s gift, The Heritage Center is pursuing exactly that kind of community engagement. Lakota artist Keith BrvineHeart, co-director of ‘We Are A Horse Nation’, the documentary films that inspired the exhibit, is helping to lead the collaborative effort by gathering with communities of the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ living in areas as far as Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and into Canada to encourage participation and involvement that truly represents each state, or nation. Together BrvineHeart and The Heritage Center staff have organized a series of community gatherings to promote healthy and inclusive dialogue among artists and other cultural leaders, tribal leaders, community members, and more. BrvineHeart and his team are documenting every moment of these meetings and creating an extensive archive that will help guide the development of the exhibition and catalog. The exhibition’s catalog will be produced under the direction of Lakota scholar Dr. Craig Howe and notable Lakota artist Arther Anikwe.

The community response to this process has been overwhelmingly positive and powerful; more than one hundred community members attended the six gatherings held so far. Participants have shared deeply personal reflections—speaking about the kinship of the horse, as well as the need to rebuild a shared community across the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, which was fragmented by the U.S. reservation system.

Mason and BraveHeart plan to travel to many Očhéthi Šakówiŋ communities to gather additional insights and stories. For BraveHeart, capturing that community insight is the most important part of the curatorial process.

“I believe in the reality that art can create social change. By acknowledging all the creative Relations of our Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, I believe that the strength of a combined effort of artists and community can cultivate the cultures of the Dakota, Lakota and Nakota or ‘Seven Council Fires,’” said BraveHeart. “As a Lakota person I want to see our identities be preserved with respect for the reality that we still exist among the world... to exist as more than the stereotypical negative statistic and over-romanticized cliché that most of the world envisions of us.”

Mason and BraveHeart have asked a core group of Očhéthi Šakówiŋ artists to write their relatives and communities by using their creative gifts to carry the voices of the Horse Nation. These artists, including Donald Montileaux, Nelda Schrupp, James Star Comes Out, and others, will create new works inspired directly by community voices and perspectives. Mason and BraveHeart have also issued a call for submissions, open through April 8th, to encourage all peoples of the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ to come work in honor of the Horse Nation. In addition, they will work with established and emerging filmmakers to document the show’s creation, the voices of community members, and cultural activities that include the Horse Nation. The full exhibition of contemporary art, songs, and stories, including pieces from The Heritage Center and other collections, will open on that day at The Heritage Center and will be available to travel to other regions after its initial showing.

For Mason, creating this show represents an important naming point for The Heritage Center. “Our mission has always been to support Native artists and to serve as a gathering place for Native communities—but with this exhibit, we are shifting the paradigm and providing opportunity for the people of the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ to lead the conversation about art, history, and identity,” said Mason. “I think their voices and shared stories will be reflected in the exhibit.”

Hope. Alive.
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Opening Doors

“I didn’t go into it with expectations, so when I got the award envelope it was surprising,” says Wayne.

Expectations are something Wayne has learned are often changing and surprising. A dream of becoming an educator one day, for example, is not where he always imagined himself. “Clare Huerter, who is now our Dean of Students, opened a lot of doors for me, English-wise, around the things that I could do and the possibilities that come along with it. She has played a very significant role,” Wayne explains. That inspiration, coupled with a passion for reading and writing, has led to plans of majoring in primary education with a minor in English.

“I’ve been writing a lot since sixth grade. I started turning to reading and writing as an outlet.” One day, he adds, he hopes to write a book. Until then, Wayne will continue to focus much of his free time applying to colleges, universities and available scholarships. It is hard work that has paid off so far. As of today, Wayne has been accepted into nine colleges and universities. “I’ve applied to...,” he pauses before continuing, “I don’t even know if I could count them all. But I’ve been accepted into nine colleges – Augustana College, Dakota Wesleyan University, South Dakota State University, University of South Dakota, Black Hills State University, Albright College, Richmond University, University of Sioux Falls and Southeast Minnesota State University.” He lists them with a modest tone, using his fingers to keep a tally.

Across the table his classmate Justin relays his own, sometimes challenging, path to today. As a determined and goal-oriented student, Justin has also been able to implement state-of-the-art tools, a range of classroom and after-school opportunities, and even a greenhouse. As a result, over the past several years, more Red Cloud graduates have worked toward a degree in a STEM field than ever before, with nearly a third of this year’s graduates planning to do the same. Justin follows in his footsteps. “I’m taking a computer programming class and it’s helping me to understand the programming part of engineering.” He also took inspiration from his Science of Food and Society class. “We were doing a lot of hands-on building and that really inspired me to want to build things.”

Looking toward the future, Justin sees himself coming home. “I look at my reservation and see how a lot of improvements, like roads and buildings, I see how engineering could open a lot of doors for the reservation.”

With graduation nearing both Wayne and Justin are anxious for the next chapter in their lives. “It’s kind of scared that I’m at this point because it felt like my freshman year was not that long ago,” says Wayne. Justin adds, “I’m going to be 1,700 miles away from home but this place will always be here. The only thing that I’m going to miss is my family and the freedom of living in a big open country.”

TWO RED CLOUD SENIORS FACE THEIR FUTURES HEAD-ON. AND IN DOING SO, SEEK TO OPEN DOORS FOR THE RESERVATION.

Keeping updated on postsecondary plans for Justin, Wayne and their classmates online at www.redcloudschool.org. Or follow us on Facebook and Twitter!