

In anticipation of Red Lake's first Woodland Arts Festival, each week until the Festival, the Heritage Centre will be featuring information about exhibitors, presenters and entertainers invited to the event.

The invited guests are all of Aboriginal descent and were all influenced by Norval Morriseau. They were selected for their artistic knowledge, their history of public exhibitions and presentations and their interest in connecting with youth.



Christi Belcourt

The first artist we are pleased to introduce you to is Christi Belcourt. Christi was born in Scarborough. Her ancestry includes Métis, Cree, Mohawk, English, French and Acadian. Christi didn't graduate from high school. She quit after grade 11 and entered what she calls "a dark period in my life."

She painted throughout her 20s as a hobby, experimenting with different materials. 1993 was a breakthrough year for Christi artistically and personally. She was 27 and getting back to her roots. In particular she had been inspired by the beadwork on a pair of Mukluks and had made the decision to try to 'paint' it.

"Every plant I came across, I looked at it in detail, I spoke to it, I asked it 'how did you grow like that?' My love for plants deepened further and further, and I began to understand what people meant when they said 'we are all connected'."

In 2003, Christi moved with her family to Whitefish Falls, near Sudbury, a move she considers to be the most important of her adult life. "Moving here allowed me the freedom to study plants, and to get to know the land on my own schedule. Here I'm focused, I'm relaxed - I've totally changed, and my art has benefited in every way imaginable because of it."



Christi Belcourt, Remembering Batoche, 2001
Acrylic on Canvas 48" x 48"

Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization

Christi's most recent exhibition, *Off the Map: Perspectives of Land, Water, and Métis People*, took place at the Urban Shaman Gallery Contemporary Aboriginal Art in Winnipeg. It closed on March 1st and received rave reviews.

For more information about Christi Belcourt, visit her website at:
www.christibelcourt.com

The Festival is organized by the Heritage Centre.
For more information contact us at (807)727-3006, email us at rlhc@gorelake.com,
or visit our website at www.redlakemuseum.com

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