

Message from the Artistic Director Rhonda Bobinski

In true northern spirit, our community artists came out to participate in the now well established Outdoor Art Gallery Program that is run through our Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre. Perhaps it was because of this year's theme, perhaps it was because it was such a long, cold winter, or perhaps it was because of the artistic camaraderie; but whatever the reason, we had an amazing amount of participants this year, resulting in 27 new banners being painted!

So please, take the time to look at the artist's profiles and read about the meaning behind their banner and enjoy our perspective of the spirit of the north.

Thank you, Miikwech,
Rhonda Bobinski

Amy Newport "Whiskey Jack on Pine"

This banner focuses on a whiskey jack sitting on the limb of a pine tree.

This whiskey jack is only one of the many animals that endure the cold winters of Red Lake, and thus, is one of the many "Spirits of the North" that make this place so special.



The whiskey jack reminds me of the fat little bird that was hanging out at the cabin I stayed at north of Red Lake during the winter. I sat and watched him perch on a little tiny branch that I couldn't believe could hold him up.

Ashley Majewski "The Calibre Trail"

This is an image of my dog and myself sitting in an open area off one of our local trails, watching the sun come up over the lake.

I took the image from a trail that I would constantly visit as a child, and still do to this day. The forest, the lake, and the sunsets in this particular spot, to me, are the epitome of "the north". So this painting is my artistic rendering of my own memories of being Outdoors in Red Lake with my best friend.

Brenda Drager "Snowbound"

This banner depicts the likelihood that we will be buried in a snow storm at least once in May or June. Some of the buildings in the painting are local ones in town that may be recognized.

We have an enduring spirit that allows us to continue on despite what the extreme weather throws at us (or rather drops on us). Our cold winters also allow us to have a much greater appreciation when we do finally get summer temperatures.

I am not a winter person, and dislike the cold weather, but I do like snow and the many other advantages of living in a small town such as the lack of serious crime and the feeling of safety while you are raising a family.



Carmen Storey "The Lime Kiln"



The banner depicts the lime kiln on Hall Bay of Red Lake. The kiln was built circa 1938 and produced lime on an experimental basis from rock quarried nearby. The kiln has not been used since about 1940 and has slowly deteriorated over the years. The image shows the kiln as seen from a boat just offshore. The water is very shallow and rocks and logs are clearly visible. On the land the site is becoming overgrown with deciduous and coniferous trees, the foreground is a grassy clearing leading back from the water to dense mass of small poplar and other shrubbery. Mature trees mark the end of the cleared area behind the Kiln. All the buildings and structures on the site except the kiln have collapsed and rotted away.

This is a unique structure that forms a significant part of our mining heritage. The site is a peaceful quiet place to reflect on the varied and colorful history of this region.

I have been to this site many times and took the photograph that the banner was painted from in 2005.

Caroline Upward "In a Hurry"

This banner depicts a winter scene featuring an outhouse in a forest accompanied by a visitor who hastily threw off the wool cap and scarf, leaving the mitten in the door!

Throughout the north, along its many evergreen trails are dozens of rustic wooden shacks, some more decorative and unique than others, but definitely a necessity where running water is not a luxury.

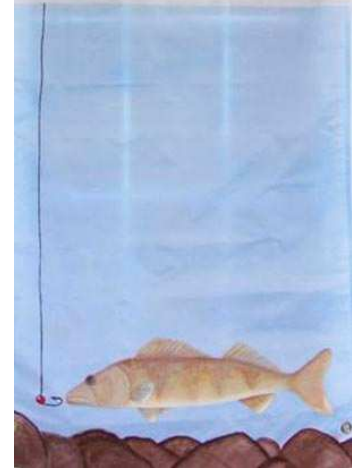
I am personally connected to this imagery because I love the outdoors! I have spent many hours of enjoyment in cozy cabins with wood burning homemade stoves, all located within a minutes distance of its own little unheated, cold seated, strongly scented "outhouse".



Crystal Hoffe "Patience"

I love Red Lake. I came here for a six week contract five years ago and now I call Red Lake home. I love the outdoors and all activities that Red Lake has to offer including ice fishing. Often while ice fishing I think of the first settlers to Red Lake and how they had to be patient and strong to endure the -40 degree weather without the high-tech gadgets of today. No snowmobiles or gas augers to improve the experience. So when defining "the spirit of the north" I believe that patience would be a crucial part of living and thriving in northern Canada, whether it be waiting for the next bite or waiting for Spring to come after a long cold winter!

The person in this painting is actually from a photograph I took of my sister ice fishing in my backyard on Red Lake.



Cherie Penner "Reflections"

This banner is a combination of our native culture and the beauty that is abundant in our northern area; from lakes to wildlife to peace of mind and soul.

The eagle plays a significant role in the native culture as does the raven with the eagle being the messenger to the Creator. The raven is a creature who symbolizes change and metamorphosis.

My love of nature and of this area personally connects me to the imagery I painted for this banner. The spirit and majesty of nature in this area touches every soul.

Debra Aubie "The Brilliance You Need"

My banner depicts the night sky lit up by a brilliant array of northern lights.

I think that when you gaze to the heavens and see the northern lights, that it is a very spiritual experience. The northern lights are an awe inspiring thing of beauty that truly captures "the spirit of the north".

The northern lights have always fascinated me. I have never lived anywhere else where they were so pronounced. I will always associate them with this chapter of my life spent in the Red Lake area.



Derek Boucher "Summer River"

My banner depicts a moose swimming down a river. I think this reflects the spirit of the north because there are many moose up North. I am personally connected to this imagery because I love the woods and going down the rivers here.



Emily Crick "Bush plane flying into the sunset"

My banner has lots of textures; trees that are different textures, puffy clouds, a dabbed plane, sparkly floats and runners, a drybrushed sky and a pinky-red sunset.

I think this image reflects the spirit of the north because there's a lot of bush planes here and we do have a lot of pink sunsets. I see these planes all of the time and wish I could fly one!



George Johnson "Tracks"

My banner depicts snowshoe and rabbit tracks leading into the sleeping bush.

All living things leave a lasting residual effect or track of their existence and the traces left behind are the inherent spirit of the north.

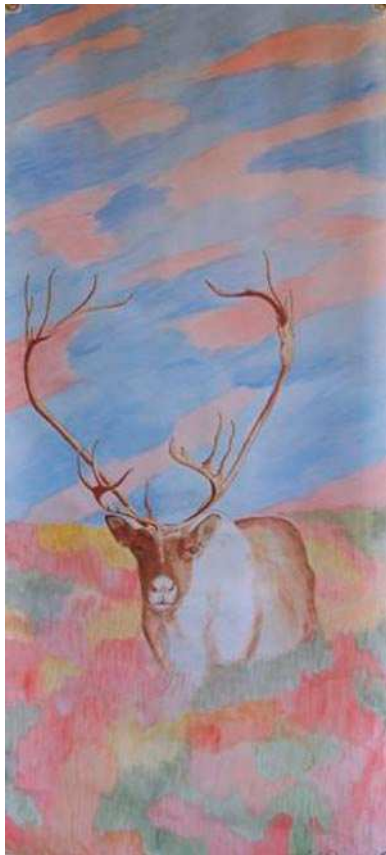
I leave tracks or traces of myself everywhere I go and I am a small part of the spirit of the north.

Janet Power "Golden Dreams"

The imagery of my banner depicts a prospector who sees the quartz vein. He dreams it will lead to drilling' then to a mine and finally to gold products.

The prospector was a free spirited man travelling off the beaten path. Most dream of making the ultimate discovery. Their grit and determination are the spirit of our north.

Forty years ago I came sight unseen to this mining area to teach children whose parents worked in the mines. These mines were found by the determined, dream-filled prospectors.



Jim Dodd "Caribou"

The imagery in my banner is copied from a photo that was originally published in Canadian Geographic, of a caribou.

It has been said that "So go the caribou, so goes the north". This painting reflects the theme of the spirit of the north and I am personally connected to this imagery because the Red Lake district is recognized as the "gateway to Woodland Caribou Park".

Karin Kolman "Angel in Memory of Dr. Miller-Williams"

When creating my banner, I was trying to combine painting techniques to look like an appliqué quilt. I also embellished to give dimension to the "quilt". The challenge was making the banner durable enough for the elements.

My banner reflects the spirit of the north because Dr. Miller-Williams was someone so special who served in the north for so many years.

I feel very blessed to have had him in our lives. He was an Earth angel and now an angel in Heaven.



Katelyn MacKinnon "Spirit Lines"

This banner depicts an outdoor scene of the northern lights with a moose standing in front of the shore, land, and trees.

It is a classic view of the northern lights, moose, water and trees and is made up of spirit lines.

All of the elements in the painting are all of the northern features I love about this area.



Kim Tennant "Nothern Spirit of Dog Sledding"

This banner depicts a dog sled driven by a racer, pulled by six dogs.

Dog sledding was originally a means for hunting and transporting goods/supplies up north. In the present, the spirit of the dogs is captured in dogsled races. Their spirited vocals at the anticipation of a races reflects the spirit of the north.

I was a volunteer at a couple of the Red Lake Gold Rush dog sled races. In February 2009, I drove a dog sled for the first time at Burton Penner's Borealis Dog Sled Adventures in Vermilion Bay. I have previously read about the significance of dogsleds to First Nations people.

Kristy Anderson "Family"

This banner shows a tree with water droplets falling off of it. Each droplet has a symbol to represent me, my father, my grandfather and my great grandfather.

To me, the north means nature so I put in trees and water droplets. The north also makes me think of strong families who tough out the long winters and enjoy the summer days with us. This is why I incorporated family in the banner.

My great grandfather, Nels Anderson, pioneered in Red Lake. I wanted to incorporate him in my banner somehow so I made symbols for him and his son, grandson and me, his great granddaughter.



Mary Wilson "Summer Serenity"

This banner depicts an Adirondack chair overlooking a Red Lake sunset.

My imagery reflects a restful evening at the cabin with a glass of libation, enjoying mother nature.

This picture was originally taken from my shoreline at my cabin at Rahill Beach.



Patrick Hunter "Movin On"

For my painting I chose to depict one of Red Lakes colourful residents, Erwin Shonmair walking his bike up the last big hill on his way home to Madsen. He was well into his 70's and was able to still bike the 10km each way to town a few times week until his passing in early 2009.

The colours towards the bottom of the hill are more natural (ie green trees and black road) and as your eye follows the up the road they become more vibrant, and not so realistic. The message that I wanted to convey was that he was leaving the rest of us and off on another great ride and another great adventure.

My painting is a tribute to someone who made the north his home instead of deciding to live in Austria. It's painted in the Woodland style which originated in the north by artists such as Norval Morrisseau. During my travels I have not seen a sunset as beautiful and vibrant as they are in Red Lake, so vibrancy comes across in my paintings which is inspired by the sunsets I miss sooo much.



My family was especially close with Mr. Shonmair. For the longest time growing up it was "Mr. Shoemaker" because we couldn't pronounce his last name if our lives depended on it. As much as I heard all of his stories at the dinners he would have with my family, I was always interested and asked questions that I had forgot to ask before. To me, he was a major part of Madsen, and his passing has left a huge void in the lives of everyone who's lived there. He will be missed and this was a way of making sure that he will be remembered for not being afraid to be who he was and showing us a way of life that we can all learn from.

Reg Bacon "Spirit of the North"

This banner is a depiction of the copper thunderbird; which was Norval Morrisseau's given name by his Shaman grandfather.

This banner is actually a gift to Rhonda Bobinski as an apology for a small misunderstanding that Reg and Rhonda had. They were able to come to an amicable solution and Rhonda was soon after presented with this banner. I (Rhonda) felt that Reg's spirit of giving truly captures the spirit of the north and the importance of respect and understanding in our small community. With that thought in mind, I decided that Reg's banner should be displayed in the community.

The banner was originally painted during the Woodland Art Festival, which Reg was an important part of. The Manitoulin Island theatre group De-ba-jeh-mu-jig came to Red Lake and had a banner painting night. This is what Reg decided to paint.



Rhonda Bobinski "Barefoot in the Garden"



This banner depicts a garden in complete production, with my son, Alexander, comfortably nestled in the midst of it. His shoes are off while his feet get tickled by the prickliness of a cucumber plant.

To me, this picture represents the spirit of the north for a plethora of reasons. I'm a gardener and there's nothing more exciting than the promise of fresh fruit and vegetables after a winter of eating tomatoes that taste like cardboard. Also, the idea of being barefoot means that we survived yet another cold winter where our feet were perpetually cold and numb. Being barefoot means heat has finally shone down on our little northern town! And finally, this banner also represents our northern spirit because of the simplicity of relaxing outdoors with the sound of buzzing bugs, birds, and kids squealing and playing. We aren't inundated with the chaos and hectic pace of "city life"

and are lucky for it. Life is good in a small northern town.

Sara Cuthbertson "Starry Night"

The banner I painted depicts black and white star bursts, framed in a black bubble border. One of my favourite things to do in winter is walk the lake with my dog. She enjoys running the lake and I get to enjoy being with her and the amazing starry sky above. You don't see stars like this in Toronto!! My banner consists of exaggerated or detailed stars in simple black and white. Millions of stars fill our skies here in Red Lake and they are clear and crisp and wonderful to see.



Silver Suggashie "Medicine Wheel"

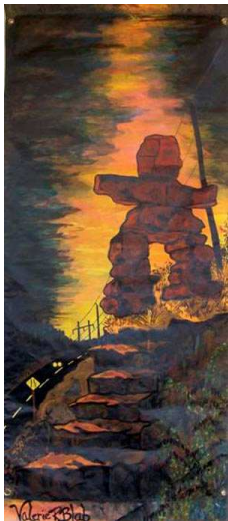
The imagery depicted on this banner is the northern lights, a medicine wheel, feathers, a pipe and fire. This banner reflects the spirit of the north by showing my First Nation's culture because I am First Nation.



Valerie Blab "Inukshuk Sentinel of the North"

The inukshuk, a commonly seen feature along our highways, originated in the far north where vast expanses of snow meant travelers could easily lose their way in the "endless white" which could be fatal given the harsh climate and lack of shelter. The position of the "arms" pointed the way to community, to shelter, to safety—the significance spanning the gamut from simply "finding your way" to quite literally "saving your life".

Along the juxtaposition of the "traditional" with the "modern", depicted by the symbol of the inukshuk directing highway traffic, there is also the pairing of the "practical" with the "spiritual" in the image of the highway and the "upward" pathway through stormy skies. The imagery implies that this "Spirit of the North" is safeguarding wayfarers on a "spiritual" as well as a "practical" journey.



The image of the Inukshuk seems to engender hope and protection in its function of safeguarding the journey of the traveler. It also indicates that someone desired to leave evidence that they passed this way...that someone was here and that I was here—am here—on this spot. Finding one, seeing one, implies companionship on the journey; I am not alone and I am linked to the past, the present and the future.

Sonia Boyce "A Community Man"

While growing up in Red Lake, visiting the Gustafson household which was only a couple of doors away was as natural and comfortable as being in my own home. John's philosophy for life regarding honesty, integrity, hard work, kindness and generosity was shared with us children regularly and undoubtedly influenced our lifelong value systems. If anyone taught us to think outside the box, it was John Gustafson who's conversation topics often included "how to's" for being inventive.

He would tailor a joke and tall tale to match our ages and share in the ensuing laughter so the smile and twinkle in his eye are legendary to me. I couldn't have depicted him without them or his suspenders and working-man's shirt.

As a Red Lake pioneer, John Gustafson's respect for humanity, industriousness and love of country have helped to make this community a memorable place. I am grateful for this opportunity to honor him with a banner. John Gustafson arrived in Canada with few material possessions. With his wit, intelligence and perseverance, the perfect ingredients for being "a spirit of the north", he became a much respected and successful family, business and community man.

